



COWBOY

BOOK THREE OF RAGE MC

- THE PROSPECTS -

Elizabeth N. Harris

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Cowboy.

Book three of Rage MC-The Prospects.

Elizabeth N. Harris

ISBN 9781915977045

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Cowboy.

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Cowboy.

He was a younger brother and a daredevil until life took a turn neither he nor his brother saw coming. Brought up under an abusive father, they had to take matters into their own hands. Turned away by the one place they thought would protect them, life took a route neither saw coming. It left them damaged, scarred, and constantly on guard.

She'd put up with his abuse long enough. One desperate weekend, she saw her chance and fled with her children. Safe at last, she didn't expect events to happen as they did. Instead of being cast adrift, she was pulled into a new family that showed her the true meaning of love and loyalty. No longer alone but always alert to danger, she'd learned a harsh lesson from life.

Two wounded souls come together, each seeking their own version of healing. There're problems, age gaps, children, the past haunting them and a vicious woman out to ruin everything. Rage shows their growth and support when one of their prospects is threatened. But this time, the culprit isn't dealing with the brothers. The old ladies are on the warpath.

Can a damaged young man and a woman, whose focus is her children, find one another, heal each other and commit to a future? A Rage prospect goes all out to claim his woman.

Books by Elizabeth N. Harris

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The Hunters Rage.

The Rage of Reading.

The Crafting of Rage.

Rage's Terror.

The Protection of Rage.

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The Hope of Rage.

First Rage.

The Innocence of Rage.

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Rage's Model.

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The History of Rage.

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Rage MC–The Prospects

Calamity.

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Waverley Hall.

Corelle Abbey.

Eléonore Castle.

DeLacy Park.

Love Beyond Death–The Inns.

The Jekyll and Hyde.

The Black Cat

Dedication.

This dedication is from Jamie-Lee Harris, my cover model!

I'd like to dedicate this book to my mum, dad and brother for always supporting me in whatever I do in life. My beautiful fiancée Yiota for helping me achieve so much, without you it wouldn't be me. And finally my biggest fan, my son, Cameron, you make me proud every day. Family is everything!

Love Jamie

Thank you Jamie for being my cover model,

Elizabeth.

Thanks to the following people :-

Cover by Joe Prachatree @
<https://www.indiepremakes.com>

Editor: Ellie Race

Proofreader: Jordan Howes.

Beta readers: Tammy Carney, Jayne Rushton, Natasha Kemmer, Jacqui Edge, Christy Pritchard, Julie McLain-Berger, Linda Cameron Brashears, Rachel Bay, Victoria Rae Stewart Hine, Marleyy Koinaki.

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This book was written, produced and edited in England, the United Kingdom, where some spelling, grammar and word usage will vary from US English.

A Quick Note!

After a couple of reviews and emails commenting on grammar and spelling errors, I thought I'd explain. My work is edited thoroughly, and some grammar and spelling will differ from US English. For example, color to colour or focusing instead of focussing. But I type as I imagine the characters to speak. I've been around several MCs and also know a good many bikers, and believe me, they don't watch their grammar! So you may find errors when one of the characters speaks; that's intentional! Even educated characters may drop their p's and q's from time to time, and we'll let them off because we love them so much!

Drake may use *don't* instead of *doesn't*, *it don't make sense* instead of *it doesn't make sense*. Or I *be* angry instead of *I am* angry! Or Phoe may say *me and you* instead of the grammatically correct *you and I*. They also drop words, possibly one of my own personal pet peeves! *You won't do it* becomes *won't do it*, or *it ain't right* turns into *ain't right*. However, typos are not deliberate, and if you find any, I sincerely apologise!

I hope you enjoy the book because I write from the heart and genuinely love my Rage MC characters and the world I'm creating around them.

*“You’re the light in the darkness, the sun in the sky, the beauty in
my world.”*

Happy Reading!



Elizabeth N. Harris

This book contains triggers around child abuse.

Chapter Six contains graphic descriptions of torture and violence.

Prologue.

Cowboy

August 2020

I watched as a certain lady raced past, chasing two kids. I was minding the pool today and was enjoying the view. If Klutz caught me, he'd kill me, but I'd had eyes on Jemma since she arrived five months ago.

It was obvious that Jemma had been through a rough time. She flinched at every man, including my brother and me, and was only comfortable around Klutz. The brothers broke their backs welcoming her, and Jemma, Klutz's ex-sister-in-law, was finally settling down. Jemma hadn't smiled at all when she'd arrived five months ago. Now she dished them out rarely.

The lady was a goddess. All curves and dark chocolate skin that I yearned to lick and taste. Jemma's hair was long and curly with huge deep, brown-coloured eyes. The colour was so dark they almost looked black. Jemma's, simply put, a stunning woman. And for a guy who'd had many easy pussies thrown at me, she was a diamond amongst rocks.

Who cared that Jemma was older? Thirteen years meant shit to me. She was the first woman to properly capture my attention, and I wanted her badly. Jemma was everything a guy could wish for, kind, generous, caring and all that wrapped in a sexy bundle. But she didn't notice me, for that matter, she didn't pay attention to any man. Not unless she perceived them to be a threat. Perhaps I could tone down my personality, but Jemma would still be skittish.

My eyes fell upon the children she chased.

Jemma's kids were great too, shy and timid, until the Rage Hellions, as I called them, got their grubby hands on them. Suzie, six, and Kendrick, four, had been so frightened at first that it had been worrying. They dropped their heads and curved their shoulders whenever a man spoke to them. Their constant glances at their mother seeking reassurance told us everything we needed. The adage of 'children should be seen

and not heard' had certainly been enforced in their former home, and brutally by my estimation.

It filled me with a cold chill because I recognised intimately what those babies suffered. Wild, my older brother, broke through with Suzie and Kendrick first. Even Klutz had been amazed at how they finally opened up to Wild. Sure, the Rage Hellions constantly surrounded them, and they were a great help, but adult-wise, it was Wild who made inroads. A smile crossed my face, and I looked for my brother. Yup, there he was, eyeing up the woman who'd got his attention. Wild needed luck with her because she was a ball-buster!

I turned back to Jemma and stared as she caught Kendrick and ran towards the pool with him. Kendrick was shrieking at the top of his lungs with laughter while Suzie was dancing around them.

I may have been eighteen, but I knew what I desired, what I needed, and it was time to go and get it!

Chapter One.

1st September 2020

Jemma

I smiled at Klutz as my former brother-in-law headed towards me with Aurora Victoria. They made a striking couple. I'd come to love them both over the last six months. Aurora was beaming as Klutz helped her over a pothole. Now Aurora's pregnant, Klutz treated her like glass.

It was hysterical watching the frustration blossom on Aurora's face even while it cut me deep. Daryl and I had met when I was eighteen, and by twenty, I'd married. Daryl was eleven years older, and I'd been flattered that such a sophisticated man was interested in dating me.

I should have been warned by how the family acted, but Daryl had well and truly sucked me in by that point. Jermaine, his father, was cold, calculating and stern. He ruled the household with an iron fist, and nobody crossed him. As soon as we were married, the ink not even dried on the paper, Jermaine called Daryl and me to his study. There I was informed I would finish my education, and then Jermaine fully expected a grandchild to carry on his dynasty. Obviously, I'd been horrified, standing in my wedding dress and listening to this man treat me as a broodmare.

Having been bolder then, I'd snapped that I would have a child if and when I felt ready. Jermaine had looked down his nose and then, ignoring me, turned to Daryl. He calmly told Daryl to teach me my place and obey his command. Instead of the wedding night I thought I would get, I spent the evening huddled in my bed after Daryl had beaten me black and blue. The next day, in a show of defiance, I wore short sleeves and shorts showing my bruises, and Jermaine informed Daryl that I hadn't learned.

For the two weeks of my honeymoon, I barely left the hotel room as Daryl kept beating me until I finally broke. However,

buried deep, I held onto some stubbornness. I became as frigid as Jermaine. Daryl loathed that. All the passion we'd shared before the beatings disappeared, locked inside me, and when we had sex, I lay there like a wet fish. Daryl hated that, and when challenged, I would merely reply that I'd learnt my place. For six years, I hid the fact I had implants to stop me from getting pregnant, which caused Jermaine no end of fits.

Jermaine would confront me, and I watched my icy, detached demeanour disturb him. I was no longer malleable in Jermaine's eyes, so nothing he did bothered me. Jermaine grew to ignore the new me. At twenty-six, I decided I wanted a child and had the implant removed. Long ago, I accepted that marriage wasn't about love. Daryl had killed that on our honeymoon. Which really annoyed him. I noticed that. Daryl would try taking me out for romantic dinners and bring me flowers, which I invariably gave to our maid, and she would place them somewhere.

His anger grew, and while beatings occurred, they were out of frustration to gain a reaction. Daryl desperately needed my love, and I would not give it to him. Why should I? He'd picked a young woman to groom and then beat her for being what she was. As far as I was concerned, Daryl could go fuck himself.

Once, at dinner, Daryl threw his plate at me and screamed, *'Why won't you react?'*

I lifted an eyebrow and asked him if he hadn't wanted this frigid bitch as a wife, then why had he beaten the girl I had been out of me? It had stunned Daryl so much that I'd been able to pick my food up and walk away to eat it in the kitchen. That had commenced Daryl trying for a year to win me back.

Finally, he accepted it would not happen.

When I informed him I wanted to get pregnant, Daryl stared in confusion. After all, Daryl came to my bed once a week and fucked a non-responsive wife. With sheer hidden glee, I told Daryl I'd been on birth control but now wished for a child. And should he beat me going forward, I would reconsider my

decision. I'd fallen with Suzie immediately and suggested that Daryl take his dick elsewhere for the year.

My girl was born and the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. But for Jermaine, who wanted a boy, it was deeply disappointing. Coldly, I'd informed Jermaine in front of doctors and nurses that should he wish for a designer baby, then next time, he should make his wishes clear. It would mean I no longer have to suffer Daryl's poor performance in the bedroom. Jermaine and Daryl had both flushed in embarrassment. But Lynda had been present, and her gaze snapped at my words.

Lynda's sharp eyes studied me, and then a small smile crept over her lips. Lynda offered a wink, and I knew I had an ally in the accursed Edwards family. I fell pregnant with Kendrick, when Daryl decided to take his husbandly rights by force. Lynda and I began making plans for my escape as soon as he was born because of Daryl's actions. Daryl had finally resigned himself to never regaining the girl he'd married. The one who looked at him with stars in her eyes and pure love in her heart. The asshole knew he'd killed it. And the beatings increased as Daryl witnessed my adoration for Suzie and Kendrick.

Daryl became possessive, frighteningly so, and eventually, his family noticed it.

Lynda and I kept smuggling money into an account he knew nothing about. As Daryl rarely left my side, apart from work, we struggled to find a time to escape. Even at work, he watched me like a hawk, taking my cards and driving licence with him.

But Klutz, however unwillingly, had provided me with the perfect opportunity.

Sadly, I wish I could say I was surprised that Daryl was completely nuts and kidnapped Aurora, but I couldn't. Daryl was obsessed with me and would have done anything to have his prize possession back under his control. I felt terrible for what Daryl put Aurora and Klutz through, but I knew it wasn't my fault. When Lynda said she was moving to South Dakota

to be with her brother, I nearly died. As much as it sucked, Lynda had become someone I could rely on, and the thought of losing her had been terrifying. Until Lynda informed me that Klutz had a home for me, too. I'd been shocked beyond belief.

Klutz had been gone when I came along, and we'd never met. His generosity in helping me find a house was an act of kindness that took my breath away. Daryl's life insurance had paid out after his car accident, and I had the money I'd hidden. I never knew the balance in his private accounts, which shocked me. And when I sold the mansion we lived in, I had nine million dollars. Even though I could afford to buy a home and not worry, I wanted to wait until I knew we were staying.

My parents had got back in touch openly, which was a relief, and they were heading our way in their RV. Daryl had completely removed me from my family, and we'd had to exchange communications secretly. My brother and sister planned to meet up now that I was free of the tyrant too! It was something to look forward to. I'd not seen them since before Suzie was born. Our meeting would be bittersweet.

"Jemma?" Aurora said, her face appearing in front of mine.

With a screech, I leapt into the air and backed away, hands held out.

Aurora immediately stepped back.

"Sorry! I got lost in my thoughts!" I gasped.

"It's okay. Do you want space?" Klutz asked, concern in his voice.

My reaction scared and worried him. Such a good man. So opposite to his brothers.

"No, come in. I'll make drinks," I said with a faint smile.

Klutz swapped a wary look with Aurora before entering my home. It was as neat as a pin, something I'd been unable to relax on, even knowing Daryl was dead. For example, all my labelled jars and cans remained in alphabetical order with labels facing forward. Tops were hung up according to colour and sleeve length. Towels folded to colour and size. With a

scowl, I kicked my shoes off, intending to leave them randomly placed. Moments later, I hurried back and put them on the rack, the sense of control soothing a part of me.

Aurora and Klutz exchanged glances again, but I ignored them as I put the kettle on to make myself a lavender tea while Klutz and Aurora had decaffeinated coffee. It was so cute how Klutz would only drink what Aurora did, but they had been bears with sore heads while their bodies adjusted.

“How’re things?” Klutz asked as he watched Suzie and Kendrick out of the window. The house I was renting from Gunner came with a small backyard, but I’d still put up play equipment.

“Slowly plodding along. But I want to get a part-time job,” I replied, and Aurora’s eyes widened.

Klutz immediately turned around, and his soft chocolate eyes, so different from his asshole brother, studied me carefully.

“Do you need money?” Klutz sought.

To his clear surprise, I snorted. We’d never discussed finances, but Klutz had offered before, which I’d gently refused.

“No, I am very well set up, thank you,” I replied gently.

“Then what’s wrong?” Klutz asked.

“Honestly? I’m bored silly. The kids will return to school in the next few days, and I need something to occupy me. Even a job in a shop,” I said as Aurora continued to stare.

Suddenly her eyes clouded, and I twitched. I’d seen Aurora do this twice before.

The first time I panicked, Klutz had to calm me down. I didn’t believe in that type of stuff, but there was no denying Aurora was the real deal. She’d witnessed things that had come true, and I wondered what Aurora saw now.

A small smile crossed her lips before it faded, and her mouth opened in horror. Aurora blinked and was back with us.

“What happened?” Klutz demanded, pulling a notebook from his pocket.

“Cars, again, falling from the sky. But it’s imminent. Slick in a garden, frowning. A funeral, but I can’t see whose, and something is swirling around you, Jemma. You’ll have some difficult decisions to make. Everything is foggy, but you will have two paths to choose from,” Aurora said, sitting down. “However, I know of a job that would suit your skills very well. Silvie’s SPD (Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction) is not easing. She has been recommended for hydrotherapy, and Phoe is sending her to visit a specialist. Apache is going out of his mind as Silvie wants to keep working.”

“And Apache doesn’t want her to?” I guessed when Aurora paused.

“Nope. So, they’re fighting, which does not help. But if we could offer Silvie an assistant, it would ease the burden off them both. Silvie had helped Lindsey set up the new business, and being the manager means too much to her. Especially how Made by Rage has expanded. Don’t forget, Silvie also manages Gunner’s and Manny’s side of it too. Particularly on those days where Silvie painfully climbs out of bed to head to the shop,” Klutz said, and Aurora nodded.

I thought of the blonde, wheelchair-bound woman. Silvie was so friendly but in so much pain; it radiated from her pores. Silvie’s condition was linked to her pelvis and was a rare side effect of giving birth. Each step she took caused agony to radiate through her, and now Silvie used a wheelchair to get around. Even in my short time, I was aware Apache blamed himself for getting her pregnant, which was ridiculous, but showed what a good man he was.

I smiled when I thought of how Apache and his son Ace had stolen Silvie’s wheelchair and kitted it out. She now sported the Rage emblem on the back. The inner wheels had spoke guards Calamity had designed, and they were kickass. They’d even added little pipes that fired flames when Silvie pressed a button for fun. Drake and Apache had made cushions to cradle Silvie’s frame and absorb any blows or knocks.

What had flabbergasted me was Apache's next move. Silvie was very clearly unable to ride behind Apache on his Harley. Which bothered him more than her. But Apache bought a brand-new Trike, a Tri Glide Ultra. Then Drake and Texas completely tore it apart and made it as comfortable as possible for Silvie. She had cried when Apache revealed it, and it hit me hard because the man appeared panic-stricken. Daryl would never have gazed at me with such concern and worry. But Silvie had been crying tears of joy.

"Hey Jemma," Klutz called gently, and I realised I'd drifted off again.

"Oh lord, sorry, I was thinking about Apache and Silvie with the trike. I would love to help Silvie out, and I don't need paying because I've got money," I answered.

A scowl descended quicker than I could ever believe.

"The club or Lindsey will pay, Jemma. No one works for free," Klutz replied.

"I'd be happy to volunteer."

"Designs by Lindsey is huge. Lindsey has ten staff now and is searching for a space to expand. Drake and Lowrider are considering converting the shop's top two levels into an open-plan workroom for her. The orders keep piling in, and Lindsey needs more workers. Lindsey's got Silvie as the business manager and Carly as her second main designer after herself. Including Lindsey and Carly, there are eight women working their asses off. Silvie and Lindsey are also in a tizzy because their receptionist just met someone and left. So, you'll be doing long hours," Klutz explained.

"But you can drop the kids off at HQ, and they'll catch the school bus with the others. And if you ask to leave when the bus drops the children back off, I'm sure Lindsey and Silvie won't mind. Hell, Lindsey will snatch your hand off if it helps Silvie, as Lindsey can't stop worrying about her," Aurora added with a smile.

"I'll go talk to them," I exclaimed and felt a weight lift off my shoulders. If there was one thing I was good at, it was

organising!

Drake.

“Hey honey,” I heard a soft voice say, and I looked up from the hood of the car I was working on and noticed my pretty wife strutting towards me. I grabbed a rag and wiped my hands before wrapping my arms around Phoe.

“Hi, babe,” I muttered and gave her a quick kiss.

Phoe pulled back, bit her lip, and her eyes searched my face, clearly determining my mood. My stomach sunk, and I held Phoe’s gaze.

“Is it Silvie?” I asked. Phoe frowned and shook her head. “One of the kids?” Another head shake. “Fuck, Marsha?” Head shake again. “Which wounded lamb is it this time?” I questioned.

Something crossed Phoe’s expression, and I felt it in my gut and stiffened.

“Not an old lady, Drake,” Phoe whispered. She stepped back and gave me a pad she was carrying, which I’d missed.

“Phoe?”

“Please, honey, just look.”

I strolled my ass to the car, hitched a hip on it, and began flicking through the book. A few pages in, I stopped and returned to the beginning. Taking my time, I studied each drawing, noting the details, colour, etc. I was struck by the attention paid to the shading and the colours used to draw an eye to detail otherwise hidden. Finally, I got to the end and peered at Phoe.

Biting her lip, Phoe handed me a second book, and I began looking through it. In this one, using charcoal, watercolours, and pencils were drawings of our builds, perfectly sketched with every detail captured. I closed the pad and looked at Phoe.

“Explain.”

“I don’t usually get involved in a brother’s business.”

Um, okay, that was a joke in itself, but my gut feeling got worse. Someone had been hiding this talent.

“Babe, spit it out.”

“The prospects, Wild and Cowboy, left them out by accident. Seen them drawing a few times, so I couldn’t help but look. Snatched them this morning while they were at the shop,” Phoe said, biting her lip.

I could have slapped myself. After Wild had redesigned the patch, I’d not considered asking if they had other sketches. I looked back through them. Both sketchbooks were filled with artwork.

“You know about their father?” I asked quietly.

Phoe shook her head and twisted her ankle in its high heel.

“I don’t get involved unless they tell me,” Phoe replied.

Okay, that was beyond far-fetched. A pig just flew past Rage, oinking all the fuckin’ way. That shit wouldn’t cut it with me. Undeterred, I raised an eyebrow, and finally, Phoe smirked.

“Their father owns one of the best tattoo shops in the state. Man was a cunt though. Beat those boys, from what I guessed and heard. Tell me a kid who applies to an MC at fifteen and then returns for three years straight, dragging his brother with him.”

Phoe gasped, and I saw it in her eyes: two more kids she would have mothered. Fuck me, my wife, so much love. But Axel and Ellen had Cowboy and Wild now. And they were settled and earning a well-needed education in how family acted. It tickled me how Willow bullied them as younger brothers. Only the other day, I’d see Ellen mothering Cowboy, much to his chagrin. Gunner had begun giving the kid shit when Ellen turned her eye on him, and Gunner belted out of the clubhouse. Ellen wasn’t above mothering any of us, including the old guard, which made me chuckle.

“Baby,” Phoe whispered for a different reason this time. I felt that in my cock. My wife, sheer fuckin’ magic.

“The boys are ours, babe. Do you see Ellen letting anyone take them from her? Don’t matter; they’re now eighteen and twenty-one. Those kids finally have a mother, and Ellen has someone to release her pent-up love on. Wild ran as soon as he hit sixteen and took Cowboy with him. Don’t know where they went, but we do know those brothers wanted to be part of Rage with a fire I ain’t seen for years. Not since Rock, and he was full of it. We have their backs, Phoe,” I reassured her.

“Good kids.”

“Not sure they’re youngsters anymore, darlin’. They’re locked down tight. Cowboy is more open, but not a fuck load of openness. Do recognise they got Rage inside them. Cut them, and they’ll bleed Rage. Wasn’t aware of this talent, so I’m unsure why they hid this. Especially after we took Wild’s patch and claimed it as our own.”

“Time to find out?” Phoe asked, biting her lip again.

I looked across and spotted Phoe was worried sick. And I knew why. They were the same age as our oldest boys.

“You did great,” I told Phoe, and she ran over to me and shoved herself into my chest. My arms held her tight.

“I rarely interfere. Drake, I don’t want prospects to think I’m spying on them, but I saw those tattoos, and they are good. Cowboy’s sketches could even be framed and hung around the garage or sold in the shop as Made By Rage.”

“My business-minded woman,” I muttered and, dipping my head, kissed her hard.

Eight hours later.

I sat and watched as Cowboy walked in first, Wild taking his back as always. Cowboy never entered any room without his big brother behind him, ensuring no one could strike unseen. Something my brothers and I had clocked as a habit a long time ago. They looked around at the inner sanctum and frowned upon seeing it was just us there.

“Sit your asses down,” I ordered.

They began sitting away from me, and I shook my head and pointed at the chairs on either side of me. The kids paused, knowing that Ace sat at my right hand and Texas at my left, but they moved to the seats and sat cautiously.

“Problem?” Wild asked.

Curiously I studied him, pursed lips, and then checked Cowboy.

“Maybe.”

Both men stiffened, and I saw the protective glance aimed at Cowboy by Wild.

“Wanna tell us?” Wild spoke, and Cowboy relaxed back and let his brother talk.

I was right, neither was verbose, and they watched each other’s backs with an intensity I hadn’t seen the like of for a long time. Not since Chance and I made moves to take over our respective clubs. Wild and Cowboy already proved themselves when they walked out to defend Calamity, which made me wonder if they truly felt settled here.

“Want to know why you think some brothers display their talents and make everyone a fuck load of money, but you believe you can hide it?” I asked calmly and saw them swap confused looks.

“Dunno what you mean,” Cowboy muttered.

“You don’t?” I pulled out Cowboy’s book, placed it on the table, and shoved it at the kid.

Cowboy recoiled, and Wild was behind his brother as if I had drawn a gun. Wild’s hand rested on Cowboy’s shoulder; his stance was aggressive and protective. Nothing would get to his younger brother.

“They’re scribbles,” Cowboy said. “Ain’t no good.”

My eyebrows raised into my hairline in surprise.

“You kidding me?” I growled.

Cowboy shook his head, shooting back, “You shitting me?”

I stared at them impassively, looked at Wild, and shoved his book at him too. Wild also stiffened.

“You went through our stuff?” he accused.

This time I got pissed and let it show.

The two recoiled.

“No, I didn’t go down your belongings. Nobody searches someone else’s shit. You both know that,” I bit out, annoyed.

“How did you get them?” Wild snapped in return.

“Son, you left them out. Phoe discovered them and, being Phoe, looked. She brought them to me, and I tell you now, no backlash. Not against her.”

I offered a strong warning, and both nodded, not that I expected a reaction. Every brother loved Phoe. Wild appeared stymied, and I noticed that neither realised how fuckin’ good they were. Their confidence was at rock bottom.

“They’re just scribbles. Shit artwork. Why are we here?” Cowboy asked.

My anger faded at them being dicks and redirected towards the one person who’d shoved that shit into their young heads.

“Your fuckwad of a father tell you boys that?”

“Yeah. Dad’s the best in the business. Used to rip up my designs and make me burn them in front of him. So, I know the fuckin’ value of my scribbles,” Wild said.

I bent down and got three framed sketches out.

“Someone bought them. Look at the figure they sold for on the bottom corner.”

Both men leant over, stared, and Cowboy gave a slight noise of surprise, but other than that, nothing.

“You took and sold them without our permission?” Wild demanded.

I snapped. They needed sense knocking into their thick skulls. I rose to my feet and towered over them. Vibes hit the room, and they both flinched, sensing my anger.

“Knew your dad. Rio was a dick, a total fuckin’ motherfuckin’ cocksucker. Your ma ran after Rio, beat her once too often. Bitch left you behind, and that’s her fuck up. Three years, Wild, you and Cowboy returned but were too young until you weren’t. You proved your worth when you came after Hunter and Mina to protect them. Took a lot of balls doing what you did, especially acting on behalf of basically what amounted to strangers.

“You boys are Rage through and through. That much is obvious. Your brothers got a lot of time for you both. But wake up. Dudes, I ain’t your dad. I’m your president, your brother, and a businessman. And I recognise skill and value when I see it.

“Rage took you two on to give you something you hadn’t had. Family. Gave you that, and you’ve been holding back, clear as a fucking day, that you two got each other’s backs. Easily take a knife for each other without pause or hesitation. Believe you’d do similar for a brother, and I’ll include the old ladies. So, I watch, and when I see kids fucked up by a jealous shit of a father, I act.

“Wild, we wear the patch you designed. I remember asking to see more of your art, but the bullshit that hit the club took precedence. Which meant you hid away in the background again. Ain’t happening anymore. You have the skill, art, and a special talent. Listen to me, not your dad. Me!”

“We listen, Drake,” Cowboy said.

I shook my head.

“Boy, I went behind your backs so you could both fuckin’ open your eyes and see the value of the gift you both own. Fuck what that asshole drove into your heads. The only opinion that matters is mine and your brothers here. Free that poison Rio told you. Let the love your brothers have for you in.”

“We let you in,” Wild said uncertainly.

“You let us in so far. You didn’t let us in completely. Can’t blame you. The life you lived was shit. Gave you time to deal

with that. Got all the time in the world for you boys. Love you both already. All your brothers do. You won't be prospects long. We recognise that. What you get from Rage, let it soak in."

"We'll be brothers?" Cowboy asked finally.

"Was there any doubt?"

"Yeah."

"Fuckin' idiots, the pair of ya. Both of you survived the shit around renewing the club. Stood with Klutz and Calamity; that move could have cost you everything. But ya still did the right thing. Wake up and look around. This is home. Hear me? Nobody's gonna judge or shit on you. But open your eyes. Everyone here, brothers, old ladies, legacies, and princesses, accepts who and what you are. So, knock down the barriers keeping you back. Because you wear Rage's patch, and only a select, elite few can say that!"

I hoped my words were making some impact on the kids. Man, I felt old, but I saw Rage's future right in front of me. Cowboy and Wild had more courage than common sense. But hopefully, we'd get them to where they needed to be. I wasn't prepared to lose a brother, not after what we'd just survived.

Cowboy stared at me with emotion in his eyes I couldn't distinguish.

"They're good?" he asked, uncertainty in his voice.

"Dude, I ain't no liar!"

Cowboy peered at Wild. Wild's knuckles were turning white on Cowboy's shoulders.

"If you're lying to us, we'll walk. But you're not, are ya?"

"No, son."

"What are you planning to do?" Cowboy quizzed, looking me straight in the eye.

"Boys, get ready!" I warned and laughed as they both gained a pensive expression. This was gonna be fun!

“Shit, everything was a lie?” Wild asked, referring to the bullshit Rio had driven down their throat, and his shoulders slumped.

My heart broke for a kid who clearly needed approval. He’d get it from us. And I’d make sure he got it from me, too.

Chapter Two.

Drake

“Listen. Rage doesn’t take people on as prospects unless we are damn sure they’ll make brother. So, any doubts you have, get rid of them. Some fail because they don’t fit in, but we won’t let ya. Rage will put you through the wringer to weed out any crap in your head. Don’t mean we gonna aim to fix that shit, but just tell us triggers and how not to trigger you. No doubt in my mind. You’re going to be a brother, but you don’t hide this shit. You’re both beyond talented.” I jammed my finger in their direction.

“Dad said...” Wild began.

Annoyed, I rolled my eyes. Obviously, my words weren’t sinking in quite yet, although Cowboy had something in his eyes.

“Rio’s a jealous fuckwad. Fuck, your stuff is better than his, and Rio knew it. The best way to ensure you didn’t beat him at his own gig was to knock you both down, so Rio did. Mentally and physically. You beat him when you got candidate and prospect. And you’ll both beat him when I lay my plans out.”

“Huh?”

“Have ideas. Always do. You enjoy the good life, and Rage has a great life. But we got space to grow. Now sit your ass back down.”

Wild complied and kept looking from the sketchbook to me.

I sensed the hope that I wasn’t fuckin’ with them and then gonna knock them down. Time to bring in the big guns. Loudly, I whistled, and Axel, Ace, and Texas, who had been on alert just outside, came in.

Wild and Cowboy scabbled to their feet and shoved out of Ace and Texas’s chairs. They both sat when hands landed on their shoulders, forcing them back down. Ace and Texas sat on either side of them. Axel stood glowering at them, and they ducked their heads.

“Sit,” Texas growled.

“Oh yeah, you’re in shit for not telling me about this fuckin’ talent. And wait till Ellen gets hold of you!” Axel threatened.

Unsuccessfully, I tried to hide a smirk, as both seemed alarmed. Okay, time to give them something.

“Got plans, prospects, huge ones,” I muttered and looked at Ace. “You called Chance?”

“Levi, Chatter, Smokey, and Wraith are on their way. ETA ten minutes,” Ace replied, looking at the two in front of them. He pulled Wild’s sketchbook to him and opened it to a page. “You tattoo yet?”

Wild gave him a ghost of a smile and nodded towards Cowboy, who lifted his tee and showed them his chest. It was covered in the kind of skilful art that only a tattooist who had been practising for years would design.

“Want you to do this one with Artemis’s name under it?” Ace said. He was tapping a picture of a woman hunting with a bow and arrow, with curly hair piled on top.

“You want me to tattoo you?” Wild queried bluntly.

“You deaf?” Texas asked.

“Could fuck it up.”

“Then I’ll get it lasered and covered. You gonna screw it up?” Ace shot back.

Wild shook his head.

A knock banged loudly on the door, and I spotted the Hellfire brothers outside. The four men walked in and took chairs next to Ace and Texas, and then Ace slid the book over to Levi.

Levi flicked through it and passed it to Chatter before it was given to Wraith and Smokey. Levi studied it with more detail before nodding at the second book. Drake handed it over, and they all watched as Levi turned the pages and looked closer at some of Cowboy’s drawings.

“Who is whose?” Levi asked finally.

Texas reached over and pushed the sketchbooks to the right owner. Levi faced Cowboy.

“Cowboy, do you have any of your own tattoo designs?”

Cowboy nodded.

“Get ‘em.”

Cowboy left the room, came back moments later, and passed the books to Levi.

Levi then shoved them at Chatter and the others.

I watched closely. I knew these guys as well as my own brothers, and if they thought Cowboy and Wild sucked, they’d speak up.

“Either of you tattooed before?” Levi asked and got shown chests and arms. He studied them intently.

“Gotta say, Drake, this makes it more worthwhile,” Chatter muttered.

Drake nodded.

“Chance said if we liked what we saw to tell you we’re in.”

“I like our plan better now I’ve seen this shit,” Levi agreed.

“Wanna let me and my brother know?” Wild asked and received glances his way.

“Hellfire wanted to open a parlour. With your dad claiming Spearfish, it was not a great idea for us. Here near Rage, we ain’t got a good one within twenty miles. Levi, Chatter, Smokey, and Wraith all have skills with a needle. Hellfire claims Spearfish, and we claim Rapid City, so it wasn’t feasible to have Hellfire open a shop here when Rage didn’t have a share in it. Got you two, so have a foot in it,” I explained.

“You want us to work in a tattoo parlour with Hellfire?” Wild drawled slowly.

“Son, you don’t understand that those sketches aren’t great. They are way above anything a shop produces in the local towns. We own that vacant lot next to Manny and Gunner’s

workshop. People who had it couldn't keep the business operating. Rage bought it, but it's been sitting empty for a while," Texas interrupted and drew out a folder.

"Chance already has figures. What's the betting they match yours?" Levi said with a grin.

"Chatter, you stepping away from car designs?" Axel asked.

"Yeah. Too many of us, and tattooing was my career. When we tried to open a shop, Rio ensured we didn't get customers. Fuckers got some payback heading his way," Chatter growled with a look at Wild and Cowboy.

"Rooster checked the figures three times and again this morning. They should match yours," Chatter confirmed.

"Rooster's anal about shit like that," Levi told Texas.

"Don't I fuckin' know it? How's he doing? His leg?" Texas asked.

"Roo's having a better time of it than Diesel. What happened to him rocked Diesel to the core. Alice helps in his low moments, but he keeps spiralling. Roo's going through therapy, and Chance is having his house built first. But the guilt is eating Diesel up. He's gonna be facing a come to Jesus talk soon," Levi announced.

"Wait, we're prospects. We can't open a parlour," Cowboy interrupted as I nodded.

"Says who?" I demanded, and Cowboy looked around.

"Kid, Lindsey turned up here, her shit all over the place, and we set up an old lady in a workshop that cost Lowrider a whack. Ezra laid out a lot to give his sister a corner of the shop and convert it into something that would show her stuff off. She's raking it in. That's an old lady. What you think we'll do for a prospect or soon-to-be brother?" Ace questioned, leaning forward, not knowing he was confirming with the two brothers what I'd told them.

"And you believe these are worthy?" Wild asked, turning to Hellfire.

They nodded. But doubt showed in his eyes.

“Your dad did a couple for me. Rio’s good, but he isn’t you. Kid, you bypass his skills and reach the outer hemisphere,” Chatter stated.

“Dad said we were shit. He burnt our stuff,” Cowboy replied.

For a few seconds, everybody saw the kid who’d begged for his father’s approval and been knocked back. Wild was moving before everyone else and reached his brother’s side and put his hand on him. Cowboy closed his expression quicker than anyone could blink.

“You ain’t crap, boy; that’s some talent on you and your brother,” Levi announced, carefully peering at me.

I slid a piece of paper towards Wild.

Wild glanced at the design.

“Phoe wants that one. I’ll take that,” I said, tapping a drawing I’d been looking at in Cowboy’s sketchbook.

“Phoe wants that?” Wild asked, stunned with a sparkle of hope.

I saw it and gave a curt nod. The fact my wife wanted their designs on her skin finally broke through. My woman, who loved the club and brothers but was particular, and they all knew it, wanted them on her.

Wild blinked.

“Phoe won’t let anybody tattoo her unless she trusts them. Think I’d let anyone ink my woman, knowing I gotta see it, if I didn’t trust them?” I asked Wild to reinforce my point and ensure the kid got it.

The faint hope in the man’s eyes flared hotter, and I added one final poke. It helped that everyone in the MC idolised Phoenix. Phoe was the perfect old lady and fucking hot to boot.

“Jodie wants one too,” I said, and Wild sat back.

No way on earth would I let anyone tattoo my woman if they were crap, but I would take someone apart if they fucked

up my girl. I watched as shadows left the brothers' eyes, and I instead saw dreams and hope flare. I knew shit with these two wasn't done. But hopefully, I'd given them something they could build on.

Chatter slammed a hand down on the table, and they jumped. He was flipping back through a pad and nodding his head.

"How many more sketchbooks do you have?" Chatter asked curiously.

"A lot," Cowboy answered.

"Get them, kid, all of them. We'll put them into displays and folders. I know a girl who does body piercing. You may want to bring her on board, as she's good. She got a hot rep and just walked out on her last job."

"And Axel and Slate will join you. Slate has a background in tattooing but was with Ezra because we didn't have a parlour. And Axel tattooed for years. You get his name on a store; customers will roll in. Now I know Chance is planning to open a shop in Spearfish. He wants us to link them both and rotate those working in them. So, you'll work a month in Spearfish and one here.

"Mac's gonna create a booking system which can be accessed by both shops, so nobody gets double booked. He'll also have your rotas up in advance. My concern is, do we have enough artists?" I asked.

"There's eight altogether. Be good if we could get a couple of female artists," Levi admitted. "I'm only tattooing part-time. I got my landscapes, so I'll do a few mornings or evenings, but not much more. Can't imagine Axel will want full-time either!"

I spotted Wild and Cowboy swapping glances.

"You have someone?" I inquired.

"Kyra Jersey, Ariella Norman, Reggie Patrick, Bailey Rogers," Cowboy answered.

"How'd you know them?" Chatter asked.

“They apprenticed at Dad’s shop, and he fired them. Dad claimed they weren’t up to spec, but they were. They’re qualified, but Kyra and Reggie are actively seeking a new parlour. Kyra is being held back, and Reggie’s boss is an asshole for taking credit for his work,” Wild said.

“All four are qualified?” Texas inquired, jotting their names down.

“Yes. They’re a bit older than me, but they are good. They’d come and work for us,” Wild said confidently.

“And we’d need another person for piercing. Who’s the one interested in working?” Ace urged.

Levi shot him a grin.

“Blythe London.”

“Shit!” Texas exclaimed.

“As in the one that worked for Rio?” I quizzed.

“Only one Blythe London I know of, so yeah,” Levi replied. They looked across at the brothers. “Think Rio will stand for it knowing his sons are opening a shop, and he lost his best girl to their parlour.” Levi’s eye had a wicked glint, and Wild and Cowboy smiled.

Cowboy

Eight weeks later, Hellfire and Rage stood together outside the building next to Made By Rage. I watched, smiling, as Phoe cut the ribbon on the grand opening of our business and Rapid City’s new premier tattoo parlour. The building was a single shop front but went back a fair distance. It incorporated six tattoo stations and a station for body piercing with privacy screens for each.

It had a black slate floor, several large mirrors reflecting the light into the shop, and top-of-the-line chairs, tables and equipment. There were drawings of framed tattoos on show everywhere. The walls were painted white, with a curved wooden desk at the front and a barrier closing the stations off from a waiting/visiting area. Each artist had their work hung

on the walls, and I was proud to spot mine there. I never thought it would happen.

Phoe had found a girl who would work five days a week and a Saturday morning as a secretary. The shop was renovated and ready to rock and roll. Drake had released the news on Rage's website, and Chance had done the same on his. The parlour already had bookings, and Rage had also sent out a press release. They had pumped this up massively because of Wild and me.

Drake wanted it to get back to Rio and to rub his nose in it. I understood wanting Rio to suck up the bitterness he had spilt into his son's life and see the success we were about to become. Drake had no doubt that we'd all make the parlour thrive. Rage and Hellfire never failed at anything.

Due to many newspaper articles and positive media reports, Rage was a hot product in Rapid City and South Dakota. Hellfire was the same in Spearfish, where Rio lorded it as a master artist. The day after the RC shop opened, the Spearfish one launched in a department building Hellfire was converting. It had given me great pleasure to pose for a photo with Wild in our cuts outside the parlour while we used our club names. There would be plenty who recognised us.

Applications for candidates tripled after the newspaper articles, which mentioned our other highly successful businesses, and Drake was grumpy. Women came to the compound often, looking to score with a brother, and the old ladies loved booting them off. The no cheap whores rule was firmly in place.

With the parlour's opening, focus was also given to the other businesses and sales in the store, bar, and shops were up. Made By Rage was kicking ass all over, and both Hellfire and Rage garages had bookings for up to a year for their designs.

I looked out to the front of the shop, with two huge glass floor-to-ceiling windows. One side held a frosted glass inlay of Hellfire's patch. The other side had Rage's patch. Under each patch was the respective club's motto. Above the door, in a wild script, was the parlour's name.

It was called Rage's Hellfire Designer Tattoos. I had everything I could need except my woman. Jemma unknowingly gave me the run-around while I'd been tied up in the shop. Now it was time to make her mine. Instead of bringing in candidate wages and doing scut work, I was making money. Drake and Chance took the running costs (including receptionists' salaries) and split them fourteen ways between the artists and body piercers. Then we paid thirty per cent into the pot, and what was left was ours. Which meant my savings rocketed overnight.

Like Wild, I wasn't stupid enough to let it go to my head and immediately started squirrelling it away. I wanted a home and, hopefully, a family, if Jemma could see past my age. I handed some to Phoe for her investment team to grow and was already seeing a decent return.

Wild and I lived at the clubhouse or with Axel and Ellen. God forbid if we did not turn up for Sunday dinner. The first time we didn't because we'd been working in the bar, Ellen arrived and tore Drake a new one. He didn't interfere with dinners now!

Having a mother figure after not having one for so long was strange. Ellen confused me. She did not take but gave. The concept was weird and uncomfortable. Wild and I had done some crap to survive. Shit that made me ill, but we'd managed. I steered my mind away from those days and sat back, forcing myself to relax.

I had everything I needed to offer the woman of my dreams a good life. It was time to make my move.



I was in the parlour just tidying up my station after finishing a cross across a man's back and shoulders when the doorbell tingled.

"Can I help you?" Claire asked at reception.

"Hi. I am looking for one of the brothers," a hesitant voice replied, and my head snapped up.

“Well, if you tell me what you need, I could help,” Claire replied.

“I’d like a cover-up and a Rage brother to design it.”

“Sorry, we don’t have any free. I could book you an appointment,” Claire suggested with a snark.

“No need,” I interrupted, bridging the barrier between the artists and reception. “Hey babe, you okay?” I asked gently as Jemma glanced between Claire and me.

“It’s fine, Cowboy. I’ll come back,” Jemma muttered.

She began backing away towards the door, and I stepped forward. Jemma kept glancing at Claire, and I guessed Claire had made her feel unwelcome. Shooting Claire a dark look, I reached out and held my hand out.

Jemma stared at it before peeking at me.

“Trust me, babe,” I whispered.

Jemma bit her lip, and I felt that shoot to the heart. Damn, she was cute.

Slowly, as if expecting a slap, Jemma took mine. I curled my fingers around hers and led her gently forward.

“You said you wanted a cover-up?” I questioned, leading her to my station.

Jemma nodded, sending a sideways glance at Claire.

“Look at me. Claire works for us, not the other way around. Don’t worry about her. Now, where’s this cover-up?” I asked.

Jemma glanced around, looking at the openness. With a grin, I held a finger up and rose. To Claire’s disbelieving gaze, I drew my screens to give Jemma privacy. This was the first time I’d ever used them, and I could understand why Claire was so surprised.

I had a strict policy of not being alone with a female. Too many had hit on me, and it got tedious quickly. I dreaded to think what would happen should I be alone with them. If a girl had a tattoo done privately, then either Claire, Ariella, or Kyra

sat in with us. It was a hard and fast rule of the shop. One Axel ruthlessly enforced. And nobody liked to argue with him.

“Show me,” I said gently, and Jemma turned, and I hissed in a silent breath as she lifted her top and showed me her lower back. My fists curled, and I wanted to beat the shit out of someone. Tattooed in black with white shading and outlining was the word Slave in capitals. Woven through the design were handcuffs and chains leading to ankle cuffs. It was highly offensive to start with, even more so because Jemma was African American.

“Okay, babe, put your top down. Any ideas for the cover-up?” My mind was already working.

“Don’t know,” Jemma whispered, embarrassment in her voice.

“Hey, look at me,” I murmured, but Jemma kept her head down. I reached out slowly, so she could see my hand coming, and cupped her chin. I lightly lifted her chin, so she met my gaze.

“That shit ain’t your shame. That is his. It’s how he felt about himself as a guy. Daryl wasn’t no man. That was Daryl putting a mark on you to make him feel better. Because he wasn’t a real man, just an abusive asshole. Now we’re gonna design something together. Tell me what you like,” I inquired, smiling.

“Flora and bright colours. A paradise scene.”

“Like this?” I asked as I began deftly sketching. I had no clients for the rest of the day as I’d been planning to deal with walk-ins.

Jemma watched as I outlined a waterfall with flowers flowing through it and ending in a pool full of large flora. We both flinched as I drew the word Slave and then showed her how it would be worked into the new design.

Jemma’s head bobbed happily when I heard Claire’s voice rise.

“Cowboy’s in there alone with a woman, Axel. One who walked off the street. The rules state he can’t be alone!” Claire

exclaimed stridently.

Jemma stared, stricken, and I reached out and patted her hand.

“Let me deal with the bitch!” I grinned at Jemma, who was curling into herself, and she stopped and looked at me, startled.

I slid outside the screens and approached the desk where Axel was glowering at me. Axel opened his mouth, but I got there first.

“Number one, the woman’s not a stranger. Two, I’m gonna say a name and then go to my client.”

Axel shut up and waited.

“Jemma.”

Axel’s eyes widened as he glanced at the screen before nodding.

I moved back behind the screens and smiled in reassurance at Jemma.

“All sorted. Let’s look at this,” I said, taking my seat.

Half an hour later, I had the design, and Jemma looked excited about it. The waterfall would start just above the base of her spine, not touching the old tattoo. The pool it flowed into would cover it, and the flowers would hide the word underneath along with the ripples. It would give me great pleasure to cover that vile tattoo.

Jemma straddled the chair, and I lifted her top up, tucking it under her bra. I knew asking her to remove her top would make her very uncomfortable. Jemma settled down and braced herself. I don’t know who had given her a tattoo before, but clearly, they had badly hurt her.

“Relax. A tattoo will hurt, but not so much you should be as frightened as this,” I commented, preparing my station. “We’re gonna take this slow and gentle, honey,” I soothed as I pasted the transfer onto her back. Jemma, bless her, tried to relax, but she didn’t until I started the outline. When Jemma realised I would not hurt her purposely, she visibly relaxed.

“Who did your tattoo before?” I asked as I ran my fingers over some lines in the word. It felt like they’d been carved into her skin. And my jaw set. Somebody had ensured the word would still be visible, even with a cover-up.

“A friend of Daryl’s, and it really hurt. This feels awkward but nowhere near as bad,” Jemma said.

“Well, he did a terrible job, honey. No tattoo should be etched into someone’s skin. And it should not cause agonising pain,” I answered.

Jemma nodded as she leaned her head on her arms. She sighed, and I waited because I knew she would move. Jemma twitched before settling. I smiled as I wiped her back and carried on.

I worked for three hours before stopping. Jemma had finally had enough, and as I cleaned her and wrapped her up, I could see where the swelling was. I was bitter that Daryl had carved a mark into her beautiful skin just to be an asshole.

“Claire will give you cleaning instructions and make your next appointment,” I said as I led her out.

Claire sent daggers our way, and I wondered what her bad behaviour was for.

Jemma nodded, avoiding eye contact, and headed for the desk.

“Jemma, no payment,” I uttered, and Claire looked even more surprised.

“Oh no, I have to pay,” Jemma replied, shocked.

“Are you family?” I asked, and she cocked her head.

Jemma was clearly thinking her answer through.

“I’m loosely Klutz’s,” Jemma muttered.

My amusement fled, and I folded my arms.

Jemma ducked her gaze again.

“Klutz is my brother; you are his family, which makes you Rage. So, family doesn’t pay unless you’re an asshole brother

we want to charge!” I said as Axel’s booming laugh echoed through the room as he lumbered towards us.

Axel cuffed the back of my head before moving in on Jemma. It struck me how she didn’t flinch from the walking mountain heading towards her for a hug. No woman was ever afraid of Axel. That was a skill I wished to learn from the guy who’d taken me in. Yeah, I might have a large dose of hero worship where Axel was concerned!

Chapter Three.

Jemma

The receptionist glowered as she took my details and booked me in for three months. She claimed it was the earliest she could get me in with Cowboy, and I shrugged. That was fine. Now Cowboy had started the cover-up. I didn't want anyone else to see it. He'd completed the outlines and began shading the colours in the pool, and the letters A and V were gone. That gave me a real confidence boost. I could wear a swimsuit again instead of a tee and shorts. Cowboy had been so gentle when tattooing me and wiping my back.

This experience had been a less painful encounter. What was it Cowboy claimed to have been done to me? Carved? Yes, it had certainly felt like that. With a bounce in my step, I left the parlour and walked the few doors down to Lindsey's shop. Klutz had spoken to her, and Lindsey had said to drop by anytime. When I entered, it was chaos. The phone was ringing, customers were standing around fed up and angry, and Lindsey was dealing with something on her mobile. Silvie was nowhere to be seen.

"One second, ladies and gentlemen. Let me answer this call. Then I'll deal with you promptly," I said as Carly glowered at a woman clicking her fingers at her. Carly didn't have a pleasant expression on her face.

I grabbed the phone, and relief rushed through the shop.

"Hello, Made by Rage, Designs by Lindsey; how may I help?" I asked. My insides were shaking, but luckily, this was a straightforward call. The person simply wanted the shop's opening hours. As I spoke, I spotted a coffee machine out of the corner of my eye and switched it on. It looked rather complicated, and I hoped I was doing it right. I ended the phone and turned to the first customer waiting.

"How can I help you?" I asked with a nervous smile.

"Hi, I'd like to order a quilt, but I don't know your designs. This shop was highly recommended, but I can't say I'm

impressed so far,” the woman snapped.

“Unfortunately, the Business Manager is very ill and isn’t in today. And the receptionist is on her lunch.” I had no idea if she was or wasn’t, but it was an excuse. “Here, this is a catalogue. Why don’t you sit, and I’ll bring you a coffee in a few minutes.”

Lindsey nodded as she dealt with the customer, who was now flapping their arms around. Hell, I couldn’t tell if it was excitement or anger.

Deftly, I sorted the next five customers, giving them copies of the brochure on a shelf behind me before taking drink orders.

“Here!” Lindsey said and showed me which buttons made which drinks. Luckily, they were all labelled, and I only had to press a button.

“Oh, so easy!”

“Yes, and our lifesaver. Thanks, Jemma, for stepping in. I think Carly was going to stab someone.”

Warily, I glanced over at Rock’s tiny wife, who had dropped her scowl and was once again focused on the quilt she had been making. A shy smile crossed my lips as I looked around.

“Where is the receptionist?”

“Run off with some freaky dude and left me in the lurch. Klutz said you wanted part-time work? It would be great if you could help. I’ll take any hours you can offer!” Lindsey almost begged as I began making and carrying the coffees to the relevant customers.

“Yeah, I wanted part-time, but I can work around Silvie?” I offered, remembering Klutz mentioned a school bus.

“Silvie honestly needs to sleep late in the mornings. It’s not helping her SPD, Silvie getting up so early. Could you be here when the shop opens at half eight and maybe stay until the kids finish school?” Lindsey asked, hope bleeding into her expression.

“Klutz said I could get the children to school on a special bus?” I questioned, biting my lip.

“Oh yeah, just let the nursery know at HQ that Suzie and Kendrick will be coming in. They are going to the schools Phoe owns?” Lindsey inquired.

“Yes, Klutz had them registered there before I moved here!” I admitted with a laugh.

“Great. Just pop Suzie and Kendrick over to the children’s centre at HQ and come to work. The bus will bring them home once school is finished. Then the team gives them an afternoon snack, and you can pick them up anytime,” Lindsey replied.

“How much is childcare?” I inquired. Not that it would be a problem, but I was trying to stick to a budget and not let the fact I owned millions affect me.

“Oh, that’s free for everyone. Phoe pays for the staff and licences herself,” Lindsey answered with a smile.

“No, I can’t let someone watch the children for nothing!” I exclaimed.

“Honey, we all send our kids there. You’re part of Klutz’s family, which makes you Rage. So take advantage, girl, we all do!” Lindsey grinned.

“Cowboy said that earlier,” I muttered, and Lindsey nodded.

“Jemma, none of us old ladies have pried. Nor would we. But we’re here should you ever need a shoulder or an ear. Or a helping hand. I get you’ve been alone and scared. Most of us have experienced those emotions. But please believe me when I say you’ve got support and family around you now.”

“Cowboy said that too!”

“Then Cowboy’s not that stupid, considering the position he was in. The kid realised when to reach out and grab a helping hand. So emulate Cowboy’s wisdom and do the same. And while you’re considering that, please work for me! As you can see, I am desperate and pay good wages!” Lindsey teased cheekily.

“Oh, I’m not fussed about what you pay. I just need to stay busy. Being a trophy wife is boring. Hell, I wasn’t even allowed to clean the house as we had maids. And Daryl rarely let me go anywhere. But I’m trying to reclaim my life and stand on my own. I don’t want to be pathetic anymore!”

“Jemma, nobody here thinks that. We’ve all been through personal shit, some more than others. You survived, and that means something. Girl, you even escaped! Be proud!”

“But me escaping got Aurora kidnapped,” I murmured guiltily.

“Did Aurora survive? Is Aurora happily knocked up and with the dude of her dreams? Yeah, Aurora Victoria doesn’t care less. Bitch is living in the present and future. Do the same. Move forward, Jemma, because life is never boring around an MC!” Lindsey smiled.

“Okay!” I said with a physical shake and grinned at Lindsey. “You have a new office girl!”

“Fantastic!” Lindsey exclaimed. “Now let me inform you about Designs by Lindsey and Made by Rage. Because you’ll also be responsible for the grumpy pair over there!” Lindsey pointed, and I saw she was pointing at another workshop just seen through a gap in the wall.

“Who’s that?”

“Gunner and Manny, and they loathe being disturbed! They get really miserable and grunt a lot. But ignore them!” Lindsey grinned as Gunner appeared and sent her a dark stare.

“Welcome to the team,” Gunner grunted before moving past Lindsey and yanking a lock of her hair.

Lindsey smirked as he walked out.

“I love Lowrider, I do, with everything in me, but Autumn is one lucky woman. Look at that fine ass!” Lindsey chirped.

I laughed. But another fine ass sprang to my mind.



When I got home, I faced peace and quiet. Klutz and Aurora kindly took Suzie and Kendrick so I could meet with Lindsey and get my cover-up. The house was silent, which wasn't unusual. Kendrick and Suzie were beginning to relax from their stiff exteriors, but they were miles away from the free-spirited children in Rage. Desperately, I hoped they'd forget their father's moods, demands, and tantrums in time.

My mind flipped to Cowboy and how sweet he'd been. If I were ten years younger, I'd make a play for him. The man was gorgeous. Or teenager, I believed Cowboy was eighteen, which made anything between us off-limits. But Cowboy's soft eyes and gentle hands had relaxed me in a way a guy hadn't for a decade.

I felt disgusted, lusting after a boy who was barely an adult. But Cowboy, with his dark hair and tattoos up his arms, looked more man than a teenager. The sharp planes of his face outlined a handsome fella. Cowboy's arms were muscled, and I knew from seeing him at the pool his torso was wracked with them. Long cords of sharply defined muscles outlined a chest I'd like to lick. And there it was again, a dirty thought that would probably cause Cowboy to run for miles.

I was responding to his kindness, but I could have sworn there was interest in his eyes today. And the way Cowboy had leapt the barrier, almost as if he was rushing to make sure no one else grabbed me. When Cowboy looked at the tattoo on my back, his disgust hit me, and I nearly cried. I did not react as his fingers gently traced around the word. Nobody had ever seen that apart from the idiot who tattooed it and Daryl. And Daryl thought it was pretty fucking clever. I'd found it demeaning and sickening. But Daryl didn't care.

Possibly I was responding to Cowboy because he appeared interested in what I said. He actually listened and asked me questions as he worked. What was sweeter, Cowboy instinctively knew when I was about to move or when he was touching a sensitive spot. Cowboy either withdrew the needle or warned me. To this miserable excuse of a woman, that was something I'd not experienced in aeons. Trying to force myself to understand that Cowboy had treated me that way because he

was a kind, decent kid seemed hard. Truthfully, I liked the idea Cowboy might like me, even though I was far too old for him. But he'd made me feel special, and that was what mattered.



Suzie hit with a more subdued entrance than Kendrick did. It was clear they'd been around the Rage children, and Kendrick was fired up and so excited, and I was happy to see it. Suzie was talking but quieter, clearly allowing Kendrick to have his moment.

Klutz and Aurora waved as they dropped them off. I invited them in for coffee, but they had a dinner appointment. Sadly waving goodbye even though I wore a smile, I went through the motions of cooking the kids' food and then sorting their bath time.

Once they'd been safely tucked up in bed, I wandered into my bedroom. In there was a full-length mirror that I'd covered with a sheet. Tonight, I felt ruthless and ripped it down and stared at myself. My face was unlined, despite being thirty-two, my eyes almond-shaped, and my lips plump but not a trout pout! My cheekbones were high and offered definition, and I supposed I was passable. Someone wouldn't be ashamed of having me on their arm.

Slowly but determinedly, I stripped off my clothes and forced myself to look at my body. My arms were toned and slender, and I liked them. My boobs were nowhere near as perky as before I had children. They were a generous handful but had slight stretch marks around them from breastfeeding. A good bra made them pert, but here, naked, they drooped a little, and I couldn't avoid that.

My hips were wide and had some extra weight. A man could hold on and not grab bone, and I had love handles. My stomach had a pouch and wobbled. While not overweight, it was visible. There were stretch marks from carrying the children, which were noticeable. My thighs were thicker than I would have liked and had a definite wobble once again, but at least they weren't thunder thighs. Without looking, I knew my

ass was generous and what men called a peach. Or slapable. Finally, my hair was soft and silky and flowed down to my bra strap.

I guessed I was attractive... but not pretty or beautiful. Clothes hid the wobbles and stretch marks, and I knew how to turn myself out right. Lynda had made me give away all my boring, staid mommy clothes, and I now had jeans, tees, and wool jumpers. My sense of style kicked in when I heard Daryl was gone for good. And I threw out the armour I'd bought to keep Daryl at bay.

Yeah, I supposed a man would be attracted to me. But did I want them to be? Brown eyes flashed into my mind, and I bitterly regretted not being ten years younger. Wrong time, wrong place, wrong generation. I needed to understand that Cowboy, as nice as he'd been, wasn't interested in me.

A week later

Cowboy

I was puzzled why Jemma hadn't returned to finish the tattoo. We'd been busy, but when I finally checked Jemma's appointment, it had been booked three months away. Shit, had I done something to make her not return? Upset, I checked my appointments for this afternoon and saw I was free. It was worrying me that Jemma hadn't returned. Christ, did Jemma think I'd pushed her into the design?

"Axel!" I called as I left my station.

Axel's head popped out of the room we used for a break.

"Cowboy?" he boomed.

"Just popping out to see someone," I replied.

Axel's brows descended, and concern crossed his face.

"Need backup, son?" Axel demanded.

I couldn't help it. The smile hit my lips before I knew it. Axel would always have my back.

"Nah, it's a friendly visit."

Axel studied me, and then an expression of enlightenment shone in his eyes.

“Off you go, boy. If you’re going to be late for dinner, let Ellen know. I won’t be in her bad books because you can’t communicate!”

“Will do!” I called back as my boots hit the street. I went to the forecourt, where our bikes stood outside the recently erected walls. Behind those walls was a life many wouldn’t have the privilege to witness, experience, or participate in. The old clubhouse was gone, becoming a kickass playground for the Rage kids. There was a plaque with the founders’ names on the fence, keeping them safe and one in the ground on the outside.

The new clubhouse was open, and the swimming pool was already well-used. We also had the guest accommodation and everything else Drake and Axel had dreamed of. The artists amongst us had gone nuts decorating the walls inside so Klutz didn’t feel imprisoned. On one wall of the clubhouse was a mural of the founders. Meanwhile, the other long wall held a mural of every brother, prospect, and candidate who’d been present when this was all built. The back wall of the clubhouse had messages painted on it from everyone here in Rage today, including the kids, while the entrance had our patch above the doors.

No, many would never experience Rage’s comradery. And I didn’t care if they did or didn’t. This was ours, Rage’s heart, something we’d built and designed. It didn’t matter where my life went or what had happened; we were doing this together. Even after the recent drama splitting the club in half.

I spotted my Harley and swung my leg over it. Axel had bought Wild and me one. Claimed it was his right. At first, we wondered what he’d expected in return, our suspicious nature being natural because of how we’d lived. We’d been mortified and tried to devise a payment plan when we realised Axel wanted nothing. Axel simply had got joy out of buying us a bike.

Drake had pulled us to one side after we'd upset Axel by trying to give him money. Quietly, Drake explained how Axel's son had turned down the wrong path and broken his father's heart. That had made me angry to think of the love Axel had offered his boy, only to have it repeatedly thrown back in his face. Wild and I would have given anything for a father like Axel. Instead, we got Rio. Keith did not know how lucky he'd been, the asshole.

My bike roared, and a happy smile crossed my face. This was where I was at one with the world. Nothing beats the throttle of a Harley, the vibrations of the road under your wheels, and the wind rushing through your hair. Nope, nothing could ever top this feeling. The knowledge that this wondrous machine could take me anywhere and we'd be free. This was real freedom, being on the back of a bike.

I pulled out of the forecourt and headed towards Jemma. Today was Saturday, so hopefully, she'd be off.

Jemma

I heard pipes from the kitchen and assumed it was Klutz. Therefore, I was shocked when there was a knock. Klutz usually let himself in and bellowed that he was there, which warmed me inside. He treated me like family. Whoever was knocking wasn't Klutz. Quickly, I dried my hands and opened the door, and the person on the other side surprised me.

"Hey," Cowboy said with a shy smile.

"Hi," I replied dumbly.

Cowboy shifted his feet and looked behind me.

"Can I come in?" he asked.

"Oh, sorry, of course. Do you want a drink?" I winced, my manners kicking in late, even as a blush started. How rude was that? Cowboy strolled past me and stopped. "I was tidying the kitchen," I said, heading back towards it.

Cowboy followed, and I could feel the heat from his body. Christ, I needed to get my hormones under control. The poor lad would die if he knew what I was thinking.

“So, what’s wrong?” Cowboy asked as he sat at the small table.

“Huh? What would you like to drink?”

“Anything cold. I’m never fussy, just grateful for what I get. Is something wrong with the tattoo? Did I push you into it? Did you dislike the design, or did I hurt you, Jemma?” Cowboy demanded quietly, holding my gaze.

“What makes you ask that?” I exclaimed as I finally tore my stare free and pulled out a cola. I offered it to him, and Cowboy nodded thanks.

“Because you aren’t booked in again for three months,” he answered, looking bewildered.

“That’s the first appointment the receptionist said you had!” I replied, feeling confused.

Cowboy’s mouth tightened, and he yanked his phone from his pocket and jabbed angrily at it.

“Don’t know what Claire’s problem is lately, but if she carries on, then I’m gonna get Axel to fire her,” Cowboy muttered.

“Oh please, I am sure she…” I broke off, unable to find an explanation.

“Exactly. Claire’s being a bitch. There’s no need. I’ll deal with her as soon as I go back. Wild’s going to move your appointment. How are you healing?” Cowboy asked, looking concerned.

“It’s scabby but not as painful,” I answered.

Cowboy frowned.

“Jemma, it should have healed. Can I see?” he urged with obvious concern.

I turned around and lifted my top a little. Those gentle fingers explored my skin, and I heard a hiss.

“Jemma, what were you told as aftercare?” Cowboy asked softly.

“To moisturise once a day,” I replied.

“Fuck me, that bitch. You should have moisturised several times with a gel we sell. Did Claire even give it to you?”

“No,” I answered, and anger hit my back. Instinct kicked in. I immediately moved out of reach, and Cowboy stepped away. Cowboy’s hands were in the air as I spun around and faced him.

“Not angry at you, babe. Fuckin’ furious at that bitch. I’m gonna ride to the parlour and fetch the cream. Although it’s too late, it can heal the last bit. Luckily, you appear to be an excellent healer. There’s not much damage to the tat, thankfully.”

Cowboy looked really contrite and worried, so I forced a smile.

“It’s okay. I get jumpy,” I explained.

“And I don’t blame you. You be you, baby, and I’ll be here when you need support. Now, I won’t be long. Where’re the kids?” Cowboy asked, looking around.

“On a playdate with Phoe’s bunch. Phoe came and kidnapped them this morning,” I said.

A cheeky grin lit Cowboy’s face, and his eyes warmed.

“That makes you mine for the rest of the afternoon. You ate?”

“No,” I replied, wondering what Cowboy meant by me being his.

“Good. Don’t make anything; I’ll be back soon,” Cowboy promised and left.

I stood there thinking, what the heck had just happened!?

Cowboy

I stormed into RHDT (Rage’s Hellfire Designer Tattoos) and glared at Claire. She looked at me, flustered, as my eyes narrowed.

“Collect your shit and get out! You’re fired!” I announced loudly.

“What?” Claire asked, shocked.

“Get your stuff and fuck off! You’re sacked!” I yelled in her face.

“What’s going on?” Levi demanded from behind Claire.

Axel came from his station, and Wild and Wraith also appeared.

“This cunt has a problem with Rage women. I tattooed Jemma last week and told this bitch to book her back in. She booked Jemma in for three months. That’s spite. Neglect comes in when she sends Jemma home without the aftercare gel or advice on how to treat the tattoo. Which is damaged, and I’m going to have to re-tattoo. So, this bitch is fired!” I shouted.

“Did you do that?” Axel boomed.

“No, I booked her in for Cowboy’s earliest appointment,” Claire bit back.

“Bullshit. Wild?” I asked, turning to my brother.

“Cowboy had one free in two weeks and this afternoon. Jemma could have been booked in for today or the one in a fortnight,” Wild replied.

His eyes searched mine, and I knew he was seeing too much. I turned sideways and eyed Axel.

“The aftercare?” Axel boomed.

“She hurried out of the shop,” Claire said weakly.

“So, you didn’t think of telling us? It was fuckin’ obvious we know her!” I exploded.

“I... I...”

“Wanted Jemma to suffer? Why? What made you treat Jemma like that?” I demanded.

Wild’s arm snapped out and hit my chest.

“Oh, I won’t hurt the cunt; not worth dirtying my hands over. But she goes. Don’t care who she is, we do not abuse clients. Or damage the art,” I growled at Wild.

“Get your shit, Claire. You’re fired!” Levi ordered.

“You can’t fire me!” Claire gasped.

“Just did. The door’s there. Don’t come back!” I snarled with a dirty look. Whatever Claire’s problem was, I didn’t know or care. Nobody should leave without proper aftercare, as tattoos can get infected. I watched as Claire gathered everything together before sending me a stare I couldn’t decipher and leaving.

“We need a receptionist!” Wraith grumbled as Wild kept a sharp eye on me. I walked around the counter and grabbed a jar of the cream and the leaflets Jemma should have been given.

“We’ll find someone!” I muttered as I headed back out the door.

Jemma needed these.

I missed the look my brother and Axel exchanged.



I stopped on the way and picked Jemma up a bouquet of wildflowers. They seemed her style, and I also collected an order from Bernard’s. My saddle bags were full when I arrived at Jemma’s house. She’d heard the pipes as she opened the door as I walked up and presented her with the flowers. My ego was soothed as Jemma’s eyes softened, and she sniffed them.

“I love them,” Jemma murmured as I grabbed the containers from the bags and balanced them.

“Hurry, babe, before these fuckers burn my arm!” I explained, hurrying inside as Jemma stepped aside. I dropped the containers without an apology on the table, and Jemma laughed softly.

“What did you bring?”

“I went easy, ribs, steak and fries. Nothing fancy. I didn’t know what you liked. But I’ve seen you eat these,” I replied.

“Yes, I do,” Jemma said.

I reached into my pocket and pulled out the jar. “Turn around, honey, and let me rub this on you.”

Jemma obeyed as I inspected the damage. Yeah, a good part would need re-doing; there were cracked lines and spots where scabs had fallen off. I could throttle Claire for the damage to my art, but it could be remedied.

When I finished dabbing the cream into her skin, Jemma moved away and pulled out two plates. She seemed to be wrestling with something, so I gave her time.

“What is this?” she asked finally.

Chapter Four.

Cowboy

“I’m taking care of you,” I replied. The question was there in Jemma’s eyes, and I wondered if Jemma would ask.

“Why?”

“Because I like you a lot. Jemma, I want to get to know you and, in time, when we’re both comfortable, date,” I answered honestly.

Jemma bit her lip, which made her even cuter.

“There’s a huge age gap, and I won’t be used again,” Jemma said, although her voice quivered.

“Not planning to use you. One day you’ll wear my cut with my name on, and I’ll have yours on mine.”

Those gorgeous eyes opened wide. Jemma was thinking that over.

“Cowboy, I’m too old.”

“Jemma, I’m nineteen in five months. You’ve just turned thirty-two. Yeah, there’s a thirteen-year age gap. Who gives a fuck? I don’t. I want you. We’re both wounded and got things to hide. I’m probably more aware of your ugly than you are of mine. But if you wanna know, I’ll tell you. But I do not want pity or disgust if I tell you my story. That’s what I am terrified of, honey,” I said gently.

Jemma cocked her head to one side.

“Disgust?”

Unhappily, I sighed and raked my fingers through my hair. Jemma watched, and I took a deep breath and released it slowly.

“There are things that could make you turn away,” I replied, avoiding Jemma’s sharp gaze.

“Same as mine,” Jemma countered.

She put the plates down, reached out, and grabbed my hand. Fuck, I was shaking. Jemma looked down, appalled at how my fear was manifesting, before leading me into the lounge. We sat on a sofa, and I slumped forward, resting my elbows on my knees and dropping my head into my hands.

“Talk to me,” Jemma said softly.

To steady myself, I took another couple of deep breaths. The fear turned my gut into a tense knot, and I wanted to run. This wasn't how I planned today.

“Jonas, Wild, approached Rage when he was nearly sixteen and I was thirteen. Wild wanted to join the club to protect us from our dad, a complete asshole. Rio Valden did nothing but tear us down, beat, starve, and break us when he wanted to. At first, Wild wished to join Hellfire MC, but that's the same city Rio is in. So, we searched and heard about Rage. We fled Spearfish to see if Wild could join Rage, and then I'd hide with him. Drake refused. Said we were too young.”

Unsteadily, I took a deep breath, trying to bury the agony deep inside, but Jemma sensed it and scooted across to kneel in front of me. She gripped my hands tightly.

“Cowboy, I'm here,” she said softly, and I could have drowned in Jemma's eyes. They weren't judging but were full of support.

“We returned home, and Rio came back drunk as a skunk. Rio was so fuckin' pissed he beat me within an inch of my life. Wild tried to interfere, and Rio knocked him out. When I woke, Rio had Wild bent over a table...” I swallowed hard.

“Oh no, no!” Jemma muttered.

“Wild's pants and boxers were down, and there were welts across Wild's back and ass where Rio beat him. That wasn't the worst. Rio had his pants down and was stroking his cock. Asshole intended to rape Wild. Rio was muttering all this shit about breaking the boy, forcing Wild to behave. Luckily, Rio couldn't get hard, too drunk, but I leapt up and smashed him in the head with a bat he kept. Wild and I fled that night with the clothes on our backs and the money we stole.”

“Fuck!” Jemma muttered, “Cowboy...”

“Babe, if I don’t get this out now, I never will. Jemma, you gotta let me finish,” I stated, and she squeezed my hands.

“One of Wild’s friends had a dad who was a doctor, and he took us in. He wanted to call the law, but we said that I’d hit Rio with a bat and may face assault charges. So, Kyle’s father kept shit on the down-low and healed us both. Wild hadn’t been raped, but the damage had been done. Kyle’s dad took pictures and kept them in case they were needed. We both studied hard, and Wild graduated early. Rio came around, but Kyle’s father showed him the photos, and Rio backed straight off.

“Just before my fifteenth, Kyle and his dad were killed in a car accident, and we were again homeless. No lie Jemma, both of us tried to get work, but Rio knowing we didn’t have protection made life hard, so we left. Headed over the state line to Wyoming. Wild was looking for a job in a bar when an older woman picked him up and offered three hundred bucks to show her a good time.

“We were starving, Jemma. There was nothing to do except turn to crime, and we wouldn’t do that. Wild took the money, lost his virginity to Mrs Jeannot, and got us a hotel room and a decent meal. And that was the start. Mrs Jeannot really liked Wild and bought him expensive suits and taught him manners, and then he’d take her out. Wild started charging five hundred per night. He took a couple of women out and brought home one thousand bucks.

“Then Mrs Jeannot saw me. I was fifteen. She offered us a thousand bucks, and Wild declined. She upped it to two thousand, and we still said no. Finally, Mrs Jeannot suggested five, and I accepted. Wild nearly tore the place up, but that was too much money to refuse, and Mrs Jeannot knew it. Bitch took my virginity just like Wild’s. I felt nothing but disgust but put on a performance that satisfied her.”

“Oh, God!” Jemma muttered, tears in her eyes. “Why was nobody looking out for you?”

“Because there was no one, babe. After that night, Mrs Jeannot decided she needed to groom me. I brought home five grand for each lesson. And I did and allowed things, Jemma, that I won’t ever discuss. It sickened me. Mrs Jeannot kept passing Wild out amongst her friends. He was charging more now out of spite for what she’d done to me. And we only did it twice a week. We had a decent house, clothes, and food in our bellies. Nobody gave a fuck about two kids being abused.”

“How long did it go on for?” Jemma asked, gripping my hands so tightly her knuckles turned white.

“Until 2018, when we joined Rage. I was just sixteen and Wild nineteen. Wild was old enough to legally challenge Rio for custody. We’d put money away, but Mrs Jeannot found out and had a friend who worked in a bank access our accounts and steal everything. We couldn’t do anything because we’d be asked how we earned it. Bitch gloated she owned us, and we would do whatever she wanted. Mrs Jeannot was making money hiring us out to her friends. Once we discovered that she’d stolen all our savings, we returned to Rapid City. There we came across Hunter and Mina and realised Mina was being stalked, well you know the rest.”

“Sixteen? You were a child,” Jemma said hoarsely.

“Yeah, life’s shit for those on the street, babe. But we survived.”

“Did that bitch use you? Do bad things?” Jemma whispered, her voice filled with horror.

I swallowed hard and avoided her eyes.

“Yes.”

“God, I’m going to be sick!” Jemma cried and, scrambling up, rushed from the room.

A door slammed somewhere, and I heard Jemma retching.

There went the future. Fuck, I should have kept my mouth shut. Of course my ugly was too much for someone as gentle as Jemma. Why the fuck did I confess? Angrily, I berated myself as my head sank into my hands. The truth was, I was a paid whore. Jemma wouldn’t wish to be with me. Defeated,

sick at losing beauty, and so tired, I rose to my feet and grabbed my keys. It'd be best I leave now before Jemma had to face me. It was the least I could do.

Scum. Rio's voice echoed in my head. A hollow feeling swept through me. I'd exposed my filth and tarnished a good woman. I hoped Jemma would keep my dirty secret. Woodenly, I moved towards the door in sheer despair. Why had I allowed myself to believe Jemma would want a prostitute because that's what I'd been? Those women used my body, which I sold for food and shelter. That tore me apart because a part of me said it was what I needed to do to survive, and the other half was as disgusted as Jemma.

I was dirty scum, lower than shit. Becoming a Rage candidate and then prospect had given me fake confidence, and I'd wallowed in the feeling. Damn, I'd felt worthy, but deep down, I knew I wasn't. Falsely, I'd filled myself up with being Rage and untouchable. Jemma was the first woman I'd ever voluntarily got hard with. All those other women, I'd needed the little blue pill, same as Wild. But I wouldn't let my vileness touch Jemma's life anymore. I'd been deceiving myself by thinking she'd accept me. But I'd wanted Jemma to know was that despite her own ugly, she was not alone. Instead, I'd repelled her and filled Jemma with horror and revulsion.

As I opened the front door to leave, a figure slammed into my back, and slender arms wrapped around me.

"I'll kill that bitch," Jemma snarled. "Where are you going?"

"Jemma, I was mistaken. I believed we could have something special, but we can't. You're too good for me. You deserve better."

"Cowboy, look at me," Jemma begged.

I shook my head, not wanting to see the rejection.

"Please?"

That last word stabbed deep, and I steeled myself before Jemma stepped back, and I turned around. My gaze stared

somewhere over her shoulder, and Jemma's tiny hand came up and cupped my face. Finally, I glanced down and lost myself in Jemma's eyes. There was acceptance, anger, and disgust, but the look on her face explained it wasn't aimed at me.

"Come inside," Jemma whispered.

Numbly, I let her lead me back into the lounge, where we sat down.

"Cowboy, you've not slept with anybody since running away, have you?" Jemma asked astutely.

"No. The thought of hands on my body makes me feel sick. And should anyone go near my ass..." I broke off.

Jemma nodded.

"I understand. Believe me, I do."

"Yeah, but you threw up. Jemma, my ugly made you vomit!"

"Because someone took two beautiful children and abused them. Oh, Cowboy, I wasn't sick at what you did to survive. I was disgusted that instead of helping needy kids, this bitch abused them in the worse way. And her friends, God, I would light them on fire!" Jemma said heatedly.

They were just words. Simple words a good woman would utter. That didn't mean that Jemma was interested in me. Jemma was merely being kind. It was too late, I'd blown it. I should have hooked and reeled Jemma in before showing my ugly. Life would always turn and bite me.

"Cowboy, you're not looking nor seeing," Jemma chided, and I sighed before searching her face. "My revulsion is not aimed at you or Wild but at those bitches who took advantage of children. And how many more innocent children have they victimised?"

"Could you see yourself in a relationship with me?" I asked bluntly.

Jemma didn't reply.

“Babe, I know I can trust you not to tell anyone. But I’m begging you to keep my secret.”

Tired, I tried to get up, but Jemma leaned on me, pinning me in place.

“Answer this. Cowboy, you said you wanted to claim me. Is that because I’m an older woman?” Jemma whispered.

I recoiled at Jemma’s words. Did she really think that?

“No!” I blurted, horrified.

“Tell me why.”

“Because I see you, Jemma. The hurt and wounds you try to hide. But I notice the strength, honour, dignity, kindness, and hope inside. Daryl tried to smother your light. Asshole failed dismally. I’m attracted to you because of the sheer beauty you put out. I want to claim that, nurture, encourage it and stand proudly by your side and say, ‘That’s my woman. Look, but don’t fuckin’ touch’.

“Jemma, I want your family and to fill you with my seed and watch you grow round with our child. Jemma, I wanna teach Suzie and Kendrick how to let rip. Not got a lot of experience, but I understand how kids should behave. Two years of experiencing the Rage Hellions was a great example. I wanna watch Suzie let rip with Eddie and Kendrick let it all hang out. I plan to show Kendrick how to ride and Suzie how to kick ass when she needs to. Honestly, I crave everything you offer and more.

“We are wounded, Jemma, but I think we’re meant to be together. Nah, fuck that, I know we are, but my ugly is too much. And I won’t drag down a good woman,” I said, my heart breaking.

“I have ugly too, Cowboy. Are you going to judge me on that?” Jemma asked cautiously.

My answer meant a lot.

“Never!”

“Then why would I judge you?” Jemma questioned.

Jemma

Christ! Cowboy had been abused so many times, and as for betrayal? Everyone Cowboy had come across had failed him, bar Wild and Rage. Anger blossomed inside. I hurt so badly for the child he'd been. And that damn bitch, how this Mrs Jeannot must have lorded it over them and then stolen their money. Christ, it must have amounted to a couple of hundred thousand. No kid should be used so vilely.

Cowboy was bracing for rejection. Obviously, I had doubts about the age gap, but Cowboy seemed genuine and honest. Could I start something, or would I be like those bitches and abuse Cowboy too? The age gap was huge, but I wanted Cowboy, and maybe, because we're two wounded, damaged creatures reaching out for each other, we heal one another? Bury the past and move forward into greatness?

"Because you're clean," Cowboy finally answered my question.

I snorted.

He'd bared his soul. It was time to do the same.

I settled between Cowboy's legs and grasped his hands. To tell my story, I needed Cowboy's warmth. Slowly I began speaking, telling him everything, from the wedding night to my escape. I explained the forced anal penetration and lying there zoned out, and I saw understanding in his eyes. He'd experienced these feelings himself. Cowboy wasn't sympathising but emphasising. Each trigger and emotion I spoke about, Cowboy had experienced, and some of the darkness leached away.

Our souls reached out and connected in the maelstrom of raw, bitter emotions. The pain, hate, terror, loathing, and lack of confidence we each owned, met, clashed and merged. We became one as we opened up and spoke of how we'd suffered, trapped and betrayed, with no escape. Until a pinprick of hope, Rage MC, came our way and saved us both. A therapist would

probably advise us to stay away from each other. But a tiny lost piece inside us latched on tightly to the opposite person.

We could heal with one another. We both had issues with sex, intimacy, and trust. But we were willing to work hard for the bright future that could be ours. Cowboy and I talked for so long, we were raw, bleeding messes, but we never released each other's hands. Cowboy and I are turning into lifelines for those drowning emotions an abuse victim suffered. Together, we rejected each other's guilt and shame. We'd survived, and we would come through it stronger.

The lonely, abused, twisted part of ourselves unfurled and reached out, looking for love and approval. And something responded in each of us. By the time we finished speaking, we were both highly upset, and I was not the only one crying. Cowboy had tears streaking down his face.

A noise made us look up, and to our horror, we saw Phoe standing in the doorway, a hand over her mouth. Fury was written all over Phoe's expression, and her body was tight, as if she was ready to kill someone.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to overhear, but I couldn't leave. No mention of what I heard will pass my lips. But I want a name, Cowboy. A fucking name!" Phoe hissed. Cowboy blanched.

"Phoe, I can't..." Cowboy said brokenly.

Phoe marched across the floor on a mission as Cowboy flinched back. She bent, her arms wrapped gently around him, and Phoe kissed Cowboy's forehead.

"Soon, you'll give me a name, and I'll tear that bitch to shreds. Cowboy, I will destroy the ground those cunts walk upon. I'll ruin them. For now, I can wait, but you'll give me a name, darling," Phoe said softly.

Cowboy's shoulders hitched under Phoe's hug, and he rested his head against hers for a moment.

"Tye and Carmine... you could be one of my sons. You are one of my boys. Like a mama bear, I'm going to tear their goddamn throats out!" Phoe whispered.

Cowboy nodded, but his hands remained clenching mine. This was too emotional for him.

“And Jemma, Daryl may be dead, but the rest of that fucking family ain’t. They’ll learn what happens when you mess with Rage,” Phoe promised me. Phoe pulled her phone out and typed before my and Cowboy’s phones beeped.

“I sent you my therapist. She’s dealt with a few old ladies now. She’s good, so book an appointment. Don’t allow what you two are beginning to be ruined by the past. And my lips are sealed, although I’m so excited. I’ll be the one standing with the smug grin when you announce Jemma as your old lady!” Phoe grinned.

Cowboy snorted, and I gave Phoe a weak smile.

“Now I sent Drake out to get ice cream with the kids. He’ll return soon, so let’s clean you two up!” Phoe said and held out her hands.

We rose and grasped them, and Phoe stared us in the eyes.

“Trust me, I’ll get revenge for you both. Never worry about that. You two, grow this spark you have. Those scars will never leave, but they’ll heal. And I’ll be here to kill any nightmare heading your way,” Phoe stated solemnly. She hugged us tightly, and her phone pinged.

“That’s Drake. Go and clean yourselves up,” Phoe ordered, searching our faces before disappearing outside to wait for Drake.

Cowboy and I exchanged looks.

“I’ve heard about Phoe’s mama bear,” Cowboy said.

“That woman had murder in her eyes.”

“Never underestimate Phoe. She’s head old lady and a sister in Hellfire for a reason,” Cowboy replied, then chuckled.

He hauled me into his arms and hugged me tightly. It felt amazing to be held like this, and my arms wrapped around him. Holding Cowboy just as tight, I relaxed. Together, we may have something special!

Drake

“Gonna talk about what that was at Jemma’s?” I asked as Phoe wiped her face with a cleansing wipe.

“Private,” Phoe retorted.

I sighed and shucked off my clothes before laying back on the bed. I loved watching Phoe perform her nightly routine. Which always ended with her bringing a hairbrush to me to brush her hair. Which often led to something else happening!

“Do the brothers need to buckle up?”

“Not in the way you think. But supportive and non-judgemental? Yes. The old ladies will handle this,” Phoe replied, and I heard the steel in her voice.

That meant whatever Phoe had overheard was bad. Because Phoe only used that tone when one of our kids was in danger. I decided to throw out a line and see what I hooked.

“Shall I tell Fish and Texas to stock up on cleaning supplies?”

“Yes, we’ll need the wet room. And tell Calamity not to overfeed his hogs,” Phoe replied calmly.

Shit! What the fuck had Phoe overheard Cowboy and Jemma talking about? There was a look in Phoe’s eye as she met my gaze that made me want to cover my dick and run.

“Some bitches are gonna die, Drake. Please inform Gunner and Rock I’ll need disposal services,” Phoe said.

“You won’t tell me?”

“Gave my word, husband. I will not break it,” Phoe retorted with a grin, and I cursed. Once Phoe made a promise, she never backed down. Phoe picked up her phone and sent a message before deleting it.

“Not alone!” I warned.

A wicked smile crossed those delectable lips. Phoe rose from the stool and sashayed over to me, clad in a lace teddy and shorts. My dick reacted as she sat down and touched my bare thigh.

“I’m never alone, Drake. You know that!” Phoe said with a silky grin.

Jeez, Phoe was a bitch at times, but she was my bitch.

“Brush my hair, husband!” Phoe demanded, handing me the brush.

She lowered her head and took my cock in her mouth as I brushed her hair. Fuck me. Life couldn’t be any better!

Marsha

‘Want muscle, arrange a meeting, honey, please,’ Phoe’s text said. I read it before deleting it, so Fish didn’t see it. I typed out a message to Carly, Lindsey, Autumn, Alison, Silvie, Artemis, and Casey, telling them we needed to meet in two days at the clubhouse in our church. Knowing we had to get home for the kids, I set the time for seven.

Yawning, I chucked my phone back on the table as Fish sauntered in, wearing a pair of boxers. Jeez, I didn’t care how old my man got. Fish was as sexy as ever. We’d grow old together, watching our grandkids run riot, and I’d still want to fuck Fish’s brains out.

“Gonna kill that little fucker,” Fish grunted.

Only one little fucker he could mean. Our Maverick. Jesus, the kid had 666 on his head; I swore it. No lie, the Rage Hellions, as the kids were called, were handfuls at the best of times, but Maverick, like Eddie, had that extra something. Only Mav’s was being a shit, whereas Eddie was just outrageous. My baby boy, now four, was a decided horror. Nobody could handle Mav for long. Even Axel only had Maverick for two hours before handing him back. The only people Mav would listen to were his mama, Auntie Phoe, and Nana Ellen. Everyone else could go fuck themselves as far as the brat was concerned.

I didn’t like to admit it in front of Maverick, but how he stood up to Fish was hysterical. Mav’s little shoulders went back, his head popped up, and his lower lip jutted out, and the scowl on his face would always match Fish’s.

“That kid’s gonna be in juvie before he reaches double digits,” Fish swore as he lowered himself over my body.

“You sure Mav’s asleep? Not providing Maverick with Daddy doing push-ups on Mommy again?” I demanded.

“Yeah, and I put the sensor alarm on. Mav crosses the threshold; we’ll know about it!”

I snickered as Fish dipped his head to kiss me. We’d bought a piece of ghost-hunting equipment, an infrared light that sounded once broken. Much needed after Maverick had caught us five times ‘working out’. Just as Fish nestled between my legs, an alarm screeched through the silence.

“Fuck me!” Fish muttered, dropping his head into the hollows of my throat. I laughed as Fish rolled off me and stormed out to find his errant son.

I wouldn’t change anything!

Chapter Five.

Cowboy

Wild had watched me with a worried expression for the past two days. My blow-up at Claire may have looked odd, but I wasn't about to turn into a raging nutcase. I'd felt Wild's concerned gaze squarely situated between my shoulder blades for half an hour, and I turned around and met his eyes.

"Wanna ride, brother?" I asked, and Wild nodded.

We grinned at Harley, who was manning reception while we tried to find another receptionist, and walked out. Harley threw a paper ball, and it hit Wild on the head.

I laughed as Wild sent him a scowl. Harley smirked.

We said nothing as we mounted our bikes and headed to the hills. It's where we always rode. Wild led the way towards Magic's bar, which was undergoing serious renovations, before taking another turnoff and moving west of it. Finally, we parked in a clearing and looked down at the mountain underneath and around us.

"Never tires," Wild said.

"Nope."

"You okay?" Wild urged, and I knew there was no lying to him. Hell, I wouldn't, anyway; I owed Wild.

"Bared my soul to Jemma," I muttered, and silence fell.

"Everything?" Wild asked after a few minutes.

"Yup. Jemma knows every tiny, filthy little detail," I said and got off my bike. I walked a few paces.

"How did Jemma handle it?" Wild questioned, walking behind me and putting a hand on my shoulder.

"Better than I did."

"Thought she might," Wild replied.

"You're not going to ask?"

“Ask what, brother?”

“If Jemma’s the one for me? Or comment on her age?”

“Cowboy, if Jemma weren’t the one, you wouldn’t have opened your mouth,” Wild stated.

That was true.

“And Jemma’s age?”

“Am I easy that she’s thirteen years older than you? No. Ain’t gonna lie. It’s on my mind. But then the woman I feel pulled to is over a decade older than me,” Wild replied.

“Did that crap we did fuck us up for normal relationships?” I asked pleadingly.

Wild spun with an intensity that almost made me step back. A hand slammed up, and he cupped the back of my neck and hauled me in close.

“We’re not messed up, understand me? You and I, baby bro, survived shit many wouldn’t have. It left scars and emotional damage. But we ain’t fucked in the head, Cowboy. Maybe we’re needy and require more love than usual, but only because we’ve been denied it. That’s natural. You never say those words again, Cowboy. You ain’t fucked up!”

“Okay!”

“Think revenge against those bitches isn’t on my mind constantly? The cunts haunt me. What they did to us, they’ll get their comeuppance.” Wild growled and moved away.

There it was, Wild’s guilt. Wild had tried his best to stop me from doing what he did, being what he was, but five grand was too much to ignore. Mrs Jeannot caught us hook, line, and sinker.

“Sooner rather than later. Phoe overheard,” I admitted, blushing deep red in shame.

“Makes sense why there’s an old ladies’ meeting tonight, and it’s the crazy ones!” Wild replied with a strangled laugh.

“Didn’t know that,” I muttered, wondering what the fuck I’d started. “Think Phoe told Drake?”

“No, not Phoe. As much as she loves Drake, Phoe will hold her own against him. Did she promise not to tell anyone?” Wild asked.

“Yeah.”

“There’s the answer. Phoe won’t. Not even the crazy bitches she’s called to a meeting. She’ll tell them something has happened, but not precisely what.”

“Phoe’s on the warpath,” I mused, and the images that popped into my head almost made me laugh. I’d imagined Phoe in combats and an army tee. Her hair was in a ponytail, and she had a Rambo headband and was armed. While extremely unlikely, it was the image of Phoe’s mama bear that I had. And I’d no doubt should Phoe get a name, she’d make someone pay through the teeth.

Wild snickered before sobering. “Don’t let what they did haunt you, Cowboy. Move on, live your life. You got sixty years ahead of you. Don’t let the first twenty suck your future away.”

Shit, now and then, Wild came out with something so profound he took my breath away.

“Jemma’s got scars, too.”

“And Jemma has fifty years remaining. You both need to heal.”

“Ain’t the only one, Wild!” I exclaimed.

He nodded. “I know.”

“You got your eye on someone,” I stated, not asking. Wild had been acting cagey.

“Yeah, but like you, baby bro, I’m full of doubts,” Wild admitted.

“Anyone who judges you can go fuck themselves. What you did was to save me. If they can’t understand that, they ain’t worth your time or effort. Any woman who looks down on you, walk away, Wild, and fast.”

“Yes,” Wild drawled, his gaze distant. “Come on, let’s ride.”

Resigned, I followed Wild to the Harleys and climbed on.

Wild nodded before pulling out first, and I took his back, just like he had mine.

A day later.

Anxiously, I was on tenterhooks wondering if Jemma would come in for her appointment. We'd texted over the last few days but agreed we needed to close some open wounds before meeting again. Open wounds might grate against each other, but we'd been texting non-stop. I discovered Jemma had an odd sense of humour and loved it. She laughed at the same shit I did.

We'd talked about programmes we were watching and found out we both love Stargate, Kindred Spirits, and Paranormal Lockdown, amongst many others. We liked country, old rock music, and even the 60s, although we were both too young for the era. And we had similar tastes in food and movies. Talk about compatibility. It was damn scary.

Now I was clock-watching, waiting for Jemma to come in. Every time someone passed the front of the shop, my gaze followed them. Axel wasn't here today, but Chatter, Slate, Smokey, Wild, Kyra, and London were. We'd not found another piercer we liked, so London did three days in each parlour.

I'd been to the opening in Spearfish, but my scheduled shifts hadn't begun yet. But it was booked solid, and excited customers were pouring in. The reports from Hellfire said the shop was having a knock-on effect on Rio's. And I couldn't have cared less. Damn, I hope they drove Rio out of business.

The door opened, and there she was, dressed in white jeans, a blue off-the-shoulder fringed top, and her hair tied back neatly. Jemma's dainty little feet had strappy sandals, and I couldn't help the shameless grin that crossed my lips.

Jemma approached Wild, who was on reception, and her gaze unerringly found mine. A shy smile was returned, and Wild let her through the barrier with a roll of his eyes.

“Hi,” I said, drawing the screens around us.

“Hey,” Jemma replied, holding my gaze before looking down at her feet.

“Loving the jeans, babe,” I whispered as I stepped closer.

Jemma jumped as I winked, and she smoothed her hands down her thighs. Idly, I noticed her nails were bitten and decided that must be a nervous trait. It didn't turn me off at all.

“Straddle the seat like last time and undo your jeans. Honey, I just need to roll them down a little, and being white, I'll tuck a towel in. I will touch you slightly, but not in a sexual or threatening way,” I murmured.

Jemma nodded and hopped in the seat. She fumbled with her jeans before getting them undone. Deftly, I hooked her top over her bra strap as I checked for further damage to the outlines and colouring I'd done.

Crap, there was more. I whistled for Wild.

“Jemma, I want Wild to take photos of this as proof of Claire not giving proper care notice. Is that okay?” I asked. Jemma stiffened, then relaxed as I rested a palm on her shoulder.

“Just Wild.”

I knew she was thinking about the word ‘slave’ still visible on her back. I squeezed her hand in reassurance as Wild knocked and entered when I told him to. Wild stepped around and looked before exchanging a shocked glance with me.

“Take the photo and password lock it, bro,” I said as I washed and sterilised my hands. Briskly, I pulled on gloves as Wild did as he was told.

As Wild left, he bent his head to Jemma and whispered, ‘Brave’ into her ear. Jemma suddenly reached out and caught his hand. They exchanged a stare, and Jemma offered a light squeeze, which Wild returned before leaving.

“There's some damage to the areas I did. I need to go back over them. But if they feel tender, speak up immediately, babe, okay? The last thing I want is to cause you harm or pain.”

“Cowboy, I tend to heal pretty quickly, so hopefully, it will be fine,” Jemma said, laying her head down on her hands and clutching the chair.

Damn, like that, Jemma was stunning. My cock reacted, and I gave it a discreet poke to get down. Yup, that fucker was ignoring me because my beautiful girl was in front of me looking like an angel. Jemma’s gaze dropped and then rose as her cheeks reddened as she spotted it.

“Ignore him. The little prick has a mind of his own around you,” I muttered as I cleaned her back. I checked for any lingering scabs, and finally, content that Jemma was good to tattoo, I began. Luckily, the rework only took an hour, which left me to get the pool and waterfall finished. After two hours, Jemma squirmed, and I turned my gun off.

“Need a break? Food, drink?”

“Please, a coffee would be great,” Jemma replied.

“You eaten, babe?”

Jemma shook her head.

“I’ll go!” Wild shouted. Nosey bastard! “Can someone watch the desk?”

“You’re covered. We all want lunch. Hit Penny up. She’ll have an order ready!” Slate yelled from the back.

“If you don’t stop moving, I’ll be piercing your balls, Slate!” Blythe snapped, and Jemma froze.

A chuckle escaped me, which echoed around the shop.

“For fuck’s sake, Slate, I’ll man the desk. Stay still and get your dick pierced,” Kyra called.

“Stop grabbing my dick like that, Blythe! It has feelings!” Slate yelled, and I laughed.

“Slate’s having his cock pierced?” Jemma asked, unsure whether to be horrified or amused.

“Yeah, Slate’s been saying he’d get it done for two weeks but somehow kept missing Blythe. She’s got Slate pinned down, and he ain’t escaping,” I replied, chuckling.

“That’s a fuckin’ sensitive piece of my body you got there! Stop manhandling... yeeeeeeouch bitch! What the fuck was that?” Slate shouted as we broke up laughing. “Where was my damn warning?” Slate demanded, sounding like a cat on a hot tin roof.

I wiped tears from my eyes as two people high-fived.

“Who filmed it?” I yelled.

Jemma peeked up through her giggles and made wide eyes.

“Got the bastard, and Slate came off his chair when Blythe stabbed him!” Smokey hollered.

Phones pinged in the shop.

“You little shit, prospect. I’m gonna kick your ass!” Slate threatened.

“Stop whining. Now quit moving because if I stab your balls, you’ll know about it,” Blythe warned.

“Don’t you threaten... holy shit, where the hell are you putting that?” Slate sounded panicked. Smokey was squealing with laughter.

“It’s a bar. It goes through there,” Blythe responded calmly.

“The fuck it does!” Slate retorted. “Stop grabbing my cock like that!”

“Slate, baby...” Blythe purred.

“Yeah, babes?” Slate replied and screeched like a scalded cat again.

“All done. Now sit there and read your aftercare and put your tackle away. It ain’t nothing special. I’ve seen hundreds,” Blythe chirped, and Slate’s wounded growl echoed through the parlour.

“Woman, my dick is special!” Slate announced.

“So glad to hear. Did I wanna know that?” Chance questioned as he entered the shop.

“Hey, Prez!” Smokey called.

“Prospect. Has Blythe finished torturing Slate?” Chance asked idly.

“Yeah!” Blythe answered.

“My cock’s swelling, and should it look like that?” Slate yelped.

“Go dunk it in a bowl of ice water. Jeez, you just had the tip pierced; what do you think it’s gonna do, fool?” Blythe said.

“Cowboy, get over here and check my cock. Blythe tortured it,” Slate bellowed.

“Why the fuck do I have to?” I shouted back.

“Because you are a prospect!”

“Which means I know shit! There’s an all-knowing president in the shop!” I retorted.

“Cowboy, good job you’re behind screens because I can’t throttle your scrawny neck,” Chance said loudly.

“Yup, I’m out of inspecting dick duty today. I got me a lady here!” I replied, and Chance snorted.

“Blythe, my cock’s swelling up and not like it should be!” Slate complained.

“This is a bowl of ice water. Shove your damn cock in that, and shut the fuck up. Jesus!” Blythe growled.

A yelp sounded as I guessed Slate dropped his dick in the water. A tinkle of music hit my ears, and I glanced down and saw Jemma crying with laughter as tears streamed down her face.

“Gets his head pierced and wonders why there’s swelling. Imbecile!” Blythe said as she walked closer. “Chance, you here for your appointment?”

“Yes, I’ve got a meeting with Drake in a bit, but wash your hands first,” Chance teased.

“Dare you to repeat that again!” Blythe shot at Chance. Chance wisely remained quiet. “Oh yeah, big man, I didn’t think so! Slate, get the fuck out of my cubicle!” Blythe called.

“What ya doing?” Chance bellowed. “My eyes!”

“Tell me Slate didn’t!” I spluttered, laughing.

“Asshole fuckin’ did. Waltzed across the shop with his dick out and in a bowl!” Chance sounded so indignant the entire shop, staff, and customers exploded.

“What the hell’s happening?” Wild demanded as he walked back in.

“Don’t ask, but check your phone!” Smokey told him.

“Everyone’s crazy!” Jemma said, still giggling.

“Yeah,” I responded as Wild knocked and gave me a couple of bags. I handed one to Jemma, stripped off my gloves, and bit into a hot chicken and stuffing sandwich.

Jemma opened hers and saw the same.

“I’m starving,” Jemma mumbled around a bite.

“Wild didn’t ask what you liked. Sorry, babe,”

“This is perfect. How does the tattoo look?”

“It’s great. The lines are clean. I’ve had to go over some because of Claire’s neglect, but you heal pretty well. Do you want to stop for today or continue?” I inquired as I checked her back.

“Let’s give it another hour and see how I manage,” Jemma said as shit settled outside.



Two hours later, I stopped. Jemma was squirming, and I noticed she was uncomfortable. Jemma needed perhaps one extra hour for the fine detail. But for now, enough was enough. She hadn’t complained, but I could tell it was hurting. Gently I wiped her back down, cleaned it, and took pride in noting ‘Slave’ was now hidden. Anger rose again, and I swallowed hard. The sheer disrespect and evilness at carving that word into Jemma. For one black person to do it to another was shocking and disgraceful. It completely showed how little

Daryl had actually cared for Jemma to insult her in such a terrible way.

I shoved my anger aside and explained the aftercare instructions as I cleaned and wrapped her back. Jemma listened carefully and nodded.

“Fancy dinner tonight?” I asked as I unrolled her top and covered her up. Jemma wriggled and zipped her jeans up, wincing as they touched the tattoo.

“Cowboy, I’d love to, but I don’t have childcare,” Jemma answered, looking me in the eye before ducking her head.

“So, we go somewhere child friendly,” I said, and Jemma’s head snapped straight up.

“You want to include the kids?”

“Well, yeah. They’re a part of you, and you’re a package deal, babe. What? You think I’m gonna cut the children out?”

Concerned, I stepped forward, happy to note that Jemma didn’t flinch away, and I cupped her face.

“Jemma, I want all of you. That includes the children. This ain’t a quick or sneaky fuck.” My fingers curved around her face, and Jemma gazed into my eyes. “I wanna build a future, remember? Two wounded souls together, you and I, and we’ll make our own type of beauty.”

Jemma’s face lit into a radiant smile. I heard the doorbell go, and then Phoe called a greeting.

“Ready?” I asked Jemma, and she nodded.

God, this woman slayed me. Special as fuck, and no idea how she owned me. I doubted Jemma knew of the depth of feelings I had for her already. Watching her for months stirred emotions I didn’t think I possessed. As I pushed the screens back, I could hear Phoe chatting with an old lady, and when they cleared, I saw she was with Marsha. Both women were looking through my catalogue and pointing out tattoos they liked.

“Another one, ladies?” I chuckled. Since the parlour had opened, Phoe and Marsha seemed determined to outdo each

other. It was quite funny.

“There was one of yours I saw the other day. It took my fancy, and if I’m getting a tattoo, Marsha also wants one!” Phoe replied as Marsha sent her a menacing stare.

“Oh, nothing to do with the fact I mentioned the koi carp I liked,” Marsha retorted immediately. Phoe stuck her tongue out and faced Jemma.

“What did you have done? Can we see?”

Jemma looked unsure but nodded, turned her back, and lifted her top. Her eyes held mine as she braced for some recognition of her former tattoo. Mine had confidence as Jemma stiffened and then relaxed as Phoe and Marsha exclaimed.

“That’s hot!”

“Holy crap, that is a piece of art!” Phoe swiftly followed Marsha’s exclamation.

“You’ve got some talent,” Marsha stated with a grin.

The doorbell chimed loudly as somebody entered the shop, but I didn’t look to see who.

“Damn Cowboy, and to think you were hiding this talent all along! I could slap you!” Phoe teased with a huge smile.

“Hear he likes that,” a woman announced.

I froze. I couldn’t move. Fear ran through me, swiftly followed by hate and revulsion. Everything slowed as I twisted my head and came face to face with the bitch. Behind Mrs Jeannot stood Claire, who was smirking. My body tensed, and dimly, I knew Jemma had sensed it. Phoe and Marsha carried on teasing one another and complimenting my art.

“Get out!” the words exploded harshly, and silence fell as everyone turned to stare.

“Cowboy?” Wild called.

No, I couldn’t let that witch know Wild was present. Quickly, I moved to block Wild’s view, but two hands pushed me aside. The world was collapsing around me as Jemma,

Phoe, and Marsha sent me puzzled looks. I heard Wild's drawn-in breath, and then his body shoved in front of mine.

"Get the fuck out!" Wild snarled, and his hate and temper hit the shop with a slap. Claire paled slightly, but the woman, Mrs Jeannot, smiled.

"That's no way to treat a lady," she scolded.

"I don't see one, just a cunt," Wild retorted, the anger in his voice rising.

Claire gasped, and Mrs Jeannot's gaze narrowed.

"The manners I instilled quickly faded," she said snottily.

"Every single fuckin' thing you taught us faded," Wild snapped as I tried to find my voice.

Jemma tried to figure out what was happening. Meanwhile, Phoe watched the situation with a sudden light in her eyes. Phoe whispered something to Marsha, who moved behind Phoe and blocked the door.

"Get the fuck out!" the words tore from me with all the agony of a wounded animal, and the dawning awareness in Phoe's eyes became certain.

"Boys, it's time to return," Mrs Jeannot said. "And don't bother arguing. You know what I have."

Wild and I reeled. It was something she'd held over our heads. Pictures of us Mrs Jeannot threatened to release.

"We'll never come back. Bitch, you can't control us now. We're no longer hungry, scared, and desperate kids." Wild growled.

Marsha was jabbing at her phone, but I couldn't care why.

Mrs Jeannot's eyes narrowed.

"You'll do as you're told. My friends miss your... enthusiasm," Mrs Jeannot demanded with lust.

Jemma stepped forward and grasped my arm. I yanked Jemma into my side and tucked her face into my chest.

"You'll never control us again," Wild retorted.

“You will come with me or else,” Mrs Jeannot said, her eyes watching Jemma. The cunt was adding two and two up and totally making four. “Does she know? Would she like to see it? You’ve had your rebellion. It’s time to go home.”

“You leave Jemma out of this shit!” I exploded.

“Is Jemma the new me? Do you know how Zac got his training? I hope Zac satisfies you. I enjoyed teaching him. Jonas, Zac, enough of a scene. Let’s go to my car and discuss what will happen!” Mrs Jeannot ordered.

“Don’t fuckin’ think so!” Chance growled, appearing from nowhere.

“This doesn’t concern you, so please keep your nose out of this.” Mrs Jeannot regarded Chance as shit on her shoe.

“Does concern me, though,” Slate said. Slate looked confused about what was happening, but we were still his brothers. “They are Rage prospects, which means, bitch, under my protection. So you got a problem with my boys; you have one with me.”

My knees almost buckled at Slate’s words. Knowing you were a part of something was different when it rose to defend you.

“Zac, Jonas, leave now before I tell everyone the truth about you!” Mrs Jeannot snarled. The door opened and shut, but I couldn’t take my eyes off the bitch threatening to destroy everything I held dear. But I vaguely noted three people had entered.

“Go ahead!” Phoe snarled and stepped forward. “Let’s hear of the abuse you heaped on two innocent boys!”

Fuck, Phoe was about to spill what she had overheard despite her promise to me. My body drained of strength, and shame and humiliation were about to show. Become public knowledge. Wild and I would need to run.

“What lies have they been saying?” Mrs Jeannot snarled.

“None. They’ve not said a word, but you bitch have said a lot. Come in here, onto Rage, and throw your weight around

like your shit doesn't stink? Whoever you are, you are nothing on Rage. Just a piece of trash that waltzed in here and made it clear she sees two beautiful young men as property she can abuse and threaten. Now, cunt, you and I are gonna have a chat, and whether you're still breathing afterwards, well, it depends on what you tell me!" Phoe growled, and I froze.

Holy shit. Phoe was throwing down!

Chapter Six.

Cowboy

Phoe stepped forward and got into Mrs Jeannot's face. It proved how dumb Mrs Jeannot was when she squared up to Phoe and faced her down.

"What do you think you're going to do? You're just some biker whore!"

Phoe ignored Mrs Jeannot as she searched the people behind me.

"Smokey, come here," Phoe ordered.

He walked over and bent his head as Phoe whispered in his ear. Smokey nodded and left.

"Claire, it's time to leave," Mrs Jeannot announced, realising things were not going to her liking.

"Marsha," Phoe commanded. I heard Phoe whisper. "Get me Ellen and Sin."

"Okay."

"We're leaving!" Mrs Jeannot said stridently. "Come!"

Claire stood up, and Phoe, Autumn and Carly stepped up and blocked her. Lindsey remained in front of the door after letting Marsha out. Autumn, Carly, and Lindsey must have been who Marsha texted; they were the three people I'd noticed enter.

"What are you doing?" Mrs Jeannot cried.

Phoe looked around and saw customers. Any threat of violence would have witnesses.

"My name, bitch, is Phoenix Michaelson. I run the Trusts, as in the Phoenix Trusts, etc. Now we're gonna have a nice little chat about what you just threatened my boys with. Then you'll understand exactly who you are messing with and leave!" Phoe replied, crowding her.

“No, I don’t think so,” Mrs Jeannot said, looking down her nose at Phoe.

“Think again,” Autumn stated, and moved slightly. A knife was in her hand, jabbed into Claire’s skin, and Claire had gone white.

“Before you shriek and scream, know this: any witnesses I can either bribe or make disappear. Create a scene, and that little cunt dies before you,” Phoe whispered, leaning forward.

“You’ll pay for this,” Mrs Jeannot promised.

“Huh, I very much doubt it. There’s a break room over there, bitch. Shall we head there for our chat?” Phoe asked nicely, but her eyes spoke of murder. Mrs Jeannot spun on her heel, and the others followed.

“Jemma, Wild, and Cowboy. I suggest you either remove yourselves to the clubhouse or pop down to the Reading Nook,” Phoe suggested. “Or stroll over to Design’s By Lindsey and visit Manny and Gunner.”

We nodded, understanding Phoe wanted us out of the way. As we went to leave, Chance grabbed Phoe’s arm and pulled her close.

“What the fuck is this shit?” Chance murmured.

“This is karma. And it’s old lady and Rage business, so you can’t command me to tell you!” Phoe retorted mildly and grinned as Chance aimed a smack at her ass.

“Damn woman will be the death of me,” he muttered, turning to Wild and me. “I can guess. Let me say this, if you need Hellfire to ride, you call and we’ll be there.”

Wild nodded stiffly at Chance and reached out to grab my arm.

“Let’s go!” I followed Wild from the parlour, still shocked and stunned.

Shit, I couldn’t believe the audacity that Mrs Jeannot came into the shop to demand our return and make blatant threats. But that was her. Her wealth, power, and position in society had given her that confidence.

Only now, Phoe was about to teach her a lesson.

Phoe

I was shaking in anger as we closed the door behind us. The men wouldn't interfere but would hurry their customers through. I turned to the bitches before me, and while I longed to tear them apart, I controlled myself for now. Angry beyond measure, I rummaged in my bag and brought out a tampon holder. The girls frowned as I flipped it open and pulled out syringes. It held four, but two was all I needed.

"Holy crap, somebody's been around Artemis too long!" Carly exclaimed and yanked Mrs Jeannot's head back by her hair. Without a word, I stabbed the cunt in the neck and emptied the syringe.

"You can't do this! My chauffeur will realise we're missing!" Mrs Jeannot cried.

I cocked my head.

"Is he in on it, too?"

"Bitch, I'm not telling you anything, except if I don't leave here alive, he'll know what's happened!" Mrs Jeannot spat.

I repeated my actions with Claire and stepped back as both women stared with pure hate before their eyes closed and they slumped to the floor. None of us bothered to catch them.

I texted Artemis, telling her the chauffeur was a part of this mess, and received an affirmative.

"No man or cop, unless female, would search in a tampon holder," I stated as I sat.

"Wanna tell us what's going on?" Carly asked.

"Not without permission," I said, pulling out my phone and texting Cowboy. 'Need to tell Marsha, Carly, Lindsey, Autumn, Artemis, and Casey. Do I have your permission?' I relaxed back and waited.

A knock gently banged on the door, and Ellen and Sin entered. They looked at the two drugged women and then at me, and Sin raised an eyebrow.

“What’s going on?”

Just as I went to answer, my phone pinged. I sent a swift reply and faced Ellen and Sin.

“You don’t have to get your hands dirty. But you look similar to those women. I need you to dress in their clothes and allow us to escort you from the shop. Keep your heads down and maybe even cover your faces as if you’re crying. You will get into a car. Artemis is securing it right now. She’ll circle the block, you get out and return through the back alley. Nobody or any cameras will see you. Then change into your clothing, leave, and return to work,” I said.

“Phoe, this is something to do with my boys, isn’t it?” Ellen angrily demanded.

When I nodded, I was shocked as Ellen kicked both women in the breast and head.

“Make them pay!” Ellen hissed.

She began stripping off her clothes, and Sin stared before doing the same.

“They hurt those boys, Phoe. You make them scream,” Sin said quietly.

Um, I liked this vindictive Sin. She’d been quiet until Amelia was kidnapped, and then her claws had come out. And I did like the fact Sin kept them out!

We undressed the two bitches, and Sin and Ellen waited for Artemis to message back. Minutes ticked past before I got a text. Nodding at the others, we surrounded Ellen and Sin and escorted them from the break room. Chance and Slate sent them both a sharp look before Slate turned away, and Chance merely watched. The three customers were still present, so everybody could see us as we said cruel and nasty things and hurried Ellen and Sin from the parlour. Outside was a Bentley with, I sniggered, Angel as a chauffeur.

“Where’s the real one?” I whispered as Ellen and Sin were pushed inside, and Artemis kicked the car.

“Shoved down in the passenger well. Artemis said to take him to Rage’s wet room. I’ll drop him there before making this motor disappear,” Angel murmured before getting in and driving away.

As per our roles, we entered the shop again, cackling like witches about how we’d made those prissy bitches piss themselves. As I walked into the break room, I heard the pipes roar and peered out the window. A slender figure on a Harley Lowrider shot past, and I snorted as Casey headed out to the wet room. Good girl!

I texted Mac, telling him the clubhouse cameras needed footage of those present in the break room. Mac did not bother asking why but sent an okay. He’d once told me he’d filmed us all drinking and talking, and if we ever wanted an alibi, he’d be able to provide one. I didn’t understand how, as it was digital cameras we used. Still, Mac muttered something about playing it on a screen and the camera filming it. Just as long as we had a solid cover story that covered our asses.

Artemis entered, looking smug, and toed the two bodies on the floor.

“Concerns Rage?” Artemis asked.

“No, concerns us.” I glanced down at my phone and saw Cowboy had sent a reply of ‘Whatever is needed’. My heart broke for him. The poor lad was ready to run, and I knew it. But I’d track Cowboy down later. Cowboy and Wild had to know they were loved.

“Got a van outside?” I questioned.

Artemis nodded.

“Yeah, Juno Groups.”

The break room door opened, and Ellen and Sin snuck in. They quickly changed back into their clothing and waited for their orders.

“Go to work, ladies. Neither of you is up for what’s next, and that’s okay. Let the crazy bitches take care of it!” I said warmly.

Sin laughed and hugged us while Ellen hovered.

“If those cunts hurt my boys, Phoe, I got a right,” Ellen finally spoke.

“Oh, honey, you certainly do. But it ain’t in you to torture and maim, which is not bad. Those here, we own that shit. It would tear you up. Just know, we’re gonna get payback, and these two bitches will never be seen again,” I assured her.

Ellen searched my eyes before leaning into my space.

“Phoe, you’d be surprised at what I am capable of where my kids are concerned. But I’ll bow to you. Make sure they scream!”

“You have our word!” I promised.

Ellen and Sin left, and everyone looked at me.

“Let’s get them in the van, ladies, and then I’m going to tell you a story none of you will like.” I growled and kicked Mrs Jeannot hard.

Luckily, the cubicles where the guys worked couldn’t see the break room. So us dragging the bodies out was pretty easy. When the girls left, I remained for five minutes with Marsha, who’d returned, and then we left too. As soon as we were out of sight, we ducked around the back and climbed into the waiting van. Artemis was in the driving seat with Lindsey in the passenger, and we peeled out.

As Artemis drove, I explained what Mrs Jeannot had done to Wild and Cowboy. At first, the girls were sickened, then they were pissed, and I knew Casey was listening in as Marsha had called her. Cursing broke out as we thought of our boys, and then downright hate settled into my girls. I witnessed it land and take root, and then they glanced at the unconscious bitches. Oh yeah, they would pay for raping, exploiting, and abusing young teens who needed help.

We arrived at the wet room and dragged the two whores out without even caring about the cuts and bruises they’d get from our rough handling. When we entered, we saw Angel stringing up the chauffeur, but no sign of Casey. I frowned and wondered if she was backing out, but I had other concerns.

Angel deftly strung up the women and then, with a cheeky wink, left.

“Girls, I want every drop of information we can get out of them. Lists of who’s involved in their circle, where the attacks happened, and where photos are hidden. Everything. Including any other innocents they may have taken advantage of,” I said.

My girls nodded as they began sorting the items Rage men kept here.

Autumn, like me, liked to punch. Lindsey loved guns, Artemis and Carly liked a knife, and Marsha preferred hot items. Casey loved her bat, as Mac could testify. However, it was strange we were all together. We never really arranged payback as a group. Usually, we dealt with problems in ones or twos.

“Wake them up,” I said to Artemis, who grinned and threw three buckets of water over them.

Mrs Jeannot woke first, and her eyes widened as she gazed around, and then a screech left her when she realised she was clad in only underwear.

“See bitch, this is where I have a massive fucking issue. You strolled into a tattoo shop owned by the MC my husband is president of and thought you had power. Stupidly, you assumed you had something over us because you wore pearls, a twinset in designer labels. Bitch, I could own you and your husband five times over. You have what? Millions, I own billions.

“You are scum. And sometimes, we ladies get dirty and remove the trash. But before we do, you’re going to tell us everything,” I said and, without another word, began beating the bitch.

After a few minutes, I stepped back and wiped the sweat from my head.

Mrs Jeannot was already begging and praying for mercy and insisting she’d give us anything we wanted. Claire and the chauffeur had woken and looked panicked. Wordlessly, I

nodded at Artemis, who drew her knife and approached him. His eyes widened in fear.

“Were you aware of what was happening to those innocent boys?” Artemis demanded.

He swallowed hard and shook his head.

Artemis struck like a viper, and a slash appeared across his chest. His shirt turned red as Artemis slashed a few more times. He started babbling, insisting he didn’t know, but we could hear the lie in his voice. In the middle of it, Casey strode in, carrying two bags and a box. There was an evil gleam in Casey’s eyes that made me shudder.

“So we got child rapists amongst us?” Casey drawled, and my eyes widened as she pulled items from the bag. There was a huge strap on, twelve inches at least, and so thick my eyes watered. There was a whip, cat-o’-nine-tails, clamps, weights, and a few other things. But the one that made me grin was the robotic dildo in the box. It was what you set up on a table, and it fucked you at different speeds.

“What are you doing?” Claire asked, horrified.

“Strip them!” I ordered Artemis, and she stripped all three fully naked. I circled them with a whip in hand.

“Oh, who do I start with?” I wondered idly.

I lashed out with the whip and caught Claire across her ass.

Her scream ricocheted around the room.

“Leave Claire alone!” Mrs Jeannot screamed.

“Why? Who is she to you?” I demanded.

“My daughter! Let her go!”

A cruel smile crossed my lips.

“How did your daughter end up working in the same place as Cowboy and Wild?” I asked and lashed out again.

“I saw them!” Claire sobbed.

Striking twice more, I broke the skin. Claire was openly wailing by now, and Artemis grabbed her by the face.

“You knew who Cowboy and Wild were? How?” she demanded.

“Because Cowboy fucked me too!” Claire cried.

In disgust, I glared at Mrs Jeannot.

“How did Cowboy not recognise you?” Lindsey questioned.

“Because I wore a masquerade mask. I thought it was mysterious and sexy!” Claire admitted through her tears.

“You raped a fifteen-year-old boy and thought a mask made you sexy? Raped a kid and thought he’d appreciate it? You sick fuckin’ bitch!” Carly asked in anger.

Marsha stepped forward with a brand and pressed it into the soft flesh of Claire’s belly.

“Did you anally rape Cowboy?” Marsha hissed as she removed the iron when the smell of burning skin hit us.

“Leave my daughter alone!” Mrs Jeannot cried as tears and snot ran down her face.

“One second,” Casey said, stepping up and shoving a ball gag in her mouth. Once done, Casey turned with a smirk. “Carry on!”

“My girl asked you a question!” I stated softly.

Carly stepped up.

“That could have been any of our children,” Carly spat, drawing a thin line across Claire’s breasts. The sharpness of the blade split her skin instantly.

“Did you anally rape Cowboy and Wild?” I yelled.

“Just Cowboy!” Claire screamed as Marsha hit her with another hot iron on her feet.

“If you’ve got a weak stomach, leave. Because what this cunt did to Wild and Cowboy is coming home!” Artemis warned.

No one moved or left. Artemis set up the robotic dildo on the floor, noted the stand’s height, and lowered Claire from her chains.

“You watch this. You put Cowboy and Wild through so much suffering. Now you’re going to watch your daughter suffer! Let’s start with how she raped Cowboy!” Artemis whispered chillingly.

Artemis had Claire positioned exactly where she wanted her in a few movements.

“Last chance, ladies,” Artemis warned.

When no one left, she hit the button to start the dildo. Claire’s screams and sobs tore through the wet room as Mrs Jeannot twisted and screeched behind her ball gag. Casey shoved another gag into Claire’s mouth, and while she was tied and pinned down, we turned our attention to the chauffeur.

He looked downright terrified.

“Admit your part in this, and I might go easy!” Artemis demanded.

“Look, I drove the boys to the places Mrs Jeannot told me to and then brought them back!” he cried.

“You knew what was happening to them!” Autumn said.

“Yes, but Mrs Jeannot paid me well!”

“Motherfucker, you sold children because you got paid well!” Marsha hissed.

“Cunt!” Lindsey spat and shot him through his kneecap.

He screamed, and Casey rolled her eyes and waved a third ball gag around. She shoved it in his mouth, and Lindsey shot out his second. Casey stalked behind him with the cat-o’-nine-tails and whipped his back into a bloody mess. He passed out after a few minutes, but Casey didn’t lighten until she felt like it. By the time Casey felt better, his back was mincemeat.

“Get the strap on and wake him the fuck up,” Casey growled. Artemis and Casey exchanged a look with Lindsey, and I sat as they lowered the man over a bench with his ass in the air. Artemis removed the electric dildo from Claire and forced her to wear the strap on. Claire was shaking and a mess, but I couldn’t find it to care.

People similar to these motherfuckers had raped my Tye and Carmine. My boys never spoke about it, but I knew it had happened. This wasn't just for Wild and Cowboy but also for my sons. This was a cathartic release for me.

"No, I can't!" Claire muttered as she held onto the chauffeur's ass.

"You do it or go back with that!" Artemis snarled, ignoring the blood running down Claire's legs.

The chauffeur was awake again, as Artemis injected him with adrenaline, making pathetic noises. But his chains were holding him tightly to the floor.

"Fuck him, bitch, or we'll tear you up!" Carly sneered.

Claire looked sick, but she stood behind him before looking around.

"I need lube," Claire said, rubbing tears and snot all over her face.

"Did Cowboy and Wild always get lube?" Autumn demanded.

"No, but they were fucked with usual-size dildos!" Claire cried.

The whip lashed across her back, and Claire shrieked. Artemis positioned the dildo at the chauffeur's entrance, and Lindsey shoved Claire hard. She crashed inside him like a wrecking ball. They both screamed while Lindsey held a gun to Claire's head.

"Heard of Russian Roulette?" Lindsey asked calmly and pulled the trigger. Claire began moving, wailing as she did so.

I spun to Mrs Jeannot, who was a sobbing emotional mess by now.

"You're going to tell me everything I want to know. And God help you should you not."

Casey removed the ball gag and stepped away.

"Fuck you!" Mrs Jeannot cried.

Lindsey withdrew another weapon and shot Claire in the foot. Claire collapsed, ripping the dildo from the chauffeur only to be dragged back up.

“Stop and I’ll insert this into your cunt and then play Russian Roulette!” Lindsey hissed, waving the other gun about.

Mrs Jeannot began babbling, giving me the name of the thirty assholes who’d abused the boys. Marsha jotted them down, their addresses, which brother they liked, and what they had done to the boys. Finally, Mrs Jeannot gave us the names of eighteen other victims. I was nearly sick to my stomach. The bitch even admitted how she’d stolen their earnings back, too. So the poor bastards were left without anything and completely under her control.

Once I had everything I needed, I unleashed my inner demon. Everyone believed it was the brothers to be frightened of. Nobody ever walked away from a seriously pissed-off old lady. Once my girls and I had finished, well, it wasn’t pretty.

Jemma

Wild swung up on his bike as Cowboy followed his motions. I hesitated, unsure what to do, when Cowboy offered his hand.

“Trust me,” he whispered. I climbed up and placed the helmet on my head that he gave me. Wild said something, and Cowboy offered a thumbs up and then rode behind Wild. I didn’t know where we were going, but we were heading out somewhere. They rode into the hills, and I lost track of where we were.

Finally, we pulled up outside a ruined bar. Workers were swarming the ground, and it appeared to have been through a war zone.

A huge guy headed towards us, as big as Axel but younger. Beside him was a blonde woman bouncing as she jogged to keep up with his strides, and she was jabbering in his ear. The

man stopped, turned, pointed a finger, and walked towards us. The woman kept coming, too, still talking.

“Alice! For the last time, stop fretting and trying to pay for shit! Will you calm your passion or find Diesel to fuck your brains out?” the big man finally bellowed.

Alice turned and slapped his arm before stomping off.

“Jesus, she better be going to find Diesel!” the guy muttered before turning to us. He took a long glance at Wild and Cowboy before nodding.

“This way,” he ordered as we climbed off the bikes.

Cowboy linked his hand in mine, and we followed the walking giant. He led us to a trailer out back and let us in.

“Whatever’s happening, have a drink,” the guy ordered.

“Thanks, Magic. This is Jemma, Klutz’s sister-in-law, and she’s mine,” Cowboy mentioned. I glanced at Cowboy and saw the pride on his face.

Magic looked at me and smiled.

“Welcome to the crazy family!” Magic announced with a nod.

“Thank you,” I replied, feeling comfortable with this big man.

“Magic runs a biker bar out here. Unfortunately, he had trouble and blew the fucker up taking out a psycho cult!” Wild explained.

“That wasn’t my fault!” Alice shrieked from outside. “Magic told no one he had landmines! Or rocket launchers!”

“Alice! Stop fuckin’ earwiggling!” Magic bellowed.

“Oh my word, that cult that was recently brought down with all those bodies?” I gasped.

“Yup, and this fucker took fifty of their members on!” Wild chuckled.

Cowboy laughed with him, and I was arrested by the beauty on his face.

“You’re crazy!” I informed Magic.

“Yeah, well, motherfuckers threatened my girl. Nobody threatens or endangers my girl!” Magic boomed.

“Love you too, big man!” Alice shouted from outside.

Magic lumbered over to the trailer door and stuck his head out. “Diesel!” he roared.

I vaguely recognised that name.

“What?” a guy bellowed back.

“Will you take Alice and distract her?” Magic retorted.

“If you’re telling me to go fuck my woman, that’s an order I’ll obey!” Diesel shouted, and Magic flinched.

“Alice is my baby girl!”

“Oh, she is my baby, alright!” Diesel replied with a laugh. There was a squeal and a dirty chuckle, and Magic’s eyes narrowed.

“I’m having second thoughts now!” he muttered, pulling his head back inside. Magic made coffee and handed us each before putting cream and sugar on the table. Then he folded his meaty arms and studied Wild, Cowboy, and me.

“Well, it ain’t the girl who’s in trouble. Although you’ve suffered some sweetness, I can see it. Before you two boys run, remember something. You were accepted by Rage and are Rage. If you’re gonna disappear, you owe Rage a reason. Otherwise, they and the allies will hunt you down,” Magic stated.

“Might not have a choice,” Wild muttered.

Magic levelled a gaze at him.

“You always got a choice, son. It’s what you do with it that matters. And you both owe Rage an explanation. But whatever is causing your drama, you ain’t cowards. My suggestion is to let Drake know you are okay. Hole up for a few days and then tell him you’re coming in. Lick your wounds, let the scabs heal, and then let Drake pick them raw again before starting

the real healing process. Plus, you owe Axel more than to disappear. Ellen would skin you both alive,” Magic warned.

“Don’t wanna leave them,” Cowboy muttered.

I reached out and touched his hand.

“Stay with the kids and me. Both of you. And then we’ll deal with what happened,” I suggested.

“Listen to your girl because whatever is hunting you, you ain’t gonna be stronger by not having the brothers at your side. Face it together; whatever you assume is shaming probably isn’t. Drink your coffee and fuck off. And before you decide, think of the love you’ve been handed and the parents you have gained. Because Axel and Ellen think you’re both theirs!” Magic said.

“Don’t we know it!” Wild replied ruefully, but I felt a little heaviness lift off their shoulders.

This was something they needed to hear. Knowing what I did, they thought everyone at Rage might judge them. Wild and Cowboy had to understand, as I did, that nobody would. Magic drove that lesson home. Such a nice man. I beamed at him without realising it, and Magic’s face softened.

“Little Boudica, aren’t you!” Magic boomed softly and touched my cheek before lumbering outside.

“Diesel, ya fucker, get your hands off my girl!” Magic bellowed, and Wild and Cowboy both laughed.

Chapter Seven.

Jemma

I was a little nervous about having Wild and Cowboy in my house, but they ensured they made things comfortable. Wild immediately searched the fridge, seeing what I had to cook with. Cowboy settled on the floor and began helping Kendrick with one of his wooden puzzles. Meanwhile, Cowboy also shared his attention with Suzie, who had crept closer as she got used to his presence.

There was a message from Klutz begging me to tell him if I was with Cowboy and Wild, and I returned an affirmative. But I did ask Klutz to give them space. So like Klutz, to want to soothe a brother's hurt, especially those who'd stood by him during his time of need. Klutz returned that all he needed to know was they were safe. Now he would rest easy.

Wild was making something wonderful, judging by the smell from the kitchen. Since their brief chat with Magic, they both seemed easier on themselves. They feared judgement, and I completely understood why. I was afraid of being judged myself. While they appeared relaxed, I could sense the tension in them both. Bad memories had been dragged up from wherever they had buried them. The situation was also grating on my own hidden nightmares, and I hoped we, together, would be strong enough to make it through this mess.

Cowboy had sent Drake a text saying they needed a couple of days. Drake had ordered them to take all the time they needed. That was quite magnanimous of him, I decided, as Drake was two men down in the tattoo shop.

Phoe had also texted. I wasn't sure where she got my number, but she informed me the problem had been resolved. Phoe didn't say which problem, but I could guess.

The law-abiding part of me longed to rush to the police and spill my guts. But the half of me that was a mother and a... yeah, I'd say it... girlfriend rejoiced in knowing those evil women had been sorted. I didn't want to know how. I just wished to acknowledge they'd never bother Cowboy again.

“Dinner’s ready,” Wild said shyly from the doorway.

The smell from the kitchen was amazing, and I was shocked when I walked in. Wild had made garlic bread, with a pasta bake filled with chicken and various sausage meats, peppered German salami, etc. It was topped with a healthy dose of melted cheese and crunchy bacon bits.

“Wow!” I gasped.

“Wild likes to cook. He’s pretty good,” Cowboy said, holding a chair and seating Suzie. Kendrick scrambled up next to him as Cowboy winked and held out a seat for me. I laughed as I sat, and Cowboy shunted me forward.

Wild picked up a jug of water with fruit slices, and we began eating.

Drake

“Holy fuck, those bitches are messy!” Texas grumbled as he walked into the inner sanctum with Fish, Gunner and Rock on his heels. All four men were shaking their heads.

“Which bitches?” I asked, sitting back and putting my hands behind my head.

“Definitely Artemis and Carly, judging by the knife wounds. Lindsey was also present. There were gunshots to certain body parts that wouldn’t cause death. Casey, too, as a baseball bat had been used.”

We all winced at Texas’s words. Casey was notorious for her damn bat. Almost worse than Rina with her one. I cringed. Rina had hit me three times when we’d gone to rescue her. I was glad Adam had married her; she was now his to deal with. The last thing anyone wanted was Rina running loose with a bat in her hands. Then again, my mind shot to Mac and Casey with her bat and decided they were as bad as each other.

“Who else?” curiously, I asked.

“Marsha, heated iron play had been at work, and Autumn, because Phoe’s knuckles aren’t that fucked.”

“How bad?”

“Bad,” Gunner replied. “Next time we need someone to talk, we get the old ladies. Drake, I saw things today that will give me nightmares.”

Surely the women hadn't been that savage. Surprised, I turned to Fish, who nodded.

“Dude, don't ever piss those women off to that point of anger. Here,” Texas said and chucked me the phone.

I thought there was an issue with Texas's phone because all I saw was scarlet. Then I began to make the walls and shit out and realised the entire wet room was covered in blood. Christ! I flicked to the next and noticed the state of a woman's body and, keeping a straight face, moved on. The older woman had been the primary target of the old ladies' ire. It was hardly recognisable as female.

Another image showed a man, and I winced finally at his condition. The last image was an electric dildo, and it was covered in blood.

“Oh yeah, remind me never to piss the women off,” Texas announced and deleted the pictures.

“Where are the old ladies now?” I asked.

“Outside drinking in the rec room. Like they'd not just tortured and mutilated three assholes. Dude, I thought we were whacked, but they are something else,” Rock said, shaking his head.

“There were children involved. Only that would set Phoe off to this degree of anger,” I replied.

“Agreed,” Rock mused.

“That doesn't surprise me,” I said.

“Yeah.”

“The bodies are gone, and clean-up done?” I asked.

Texas and Fish sighed.

“Rock and Gunner removed them, and Calamity's hogs are being fed. The clean-up was fine. The women removed their clothing and shoved it into the incinerator bags. They have

been burnt. Last I saw, they were getting in a van wearing coveralls. But they're now dressed properly. The showers were as bloody as the wet room. But they cleaned the blood off of themselves before putting on the coveralls. And yes, Texas collected them from Reading Hall, and they've also been disposed of," Fish answered.

"So, they are in the clear?" I demanded.

"Until the next time one gets a murderous urge," Gunner replied with a snort.

"Okay," I said, and they left.

Slowly, I walked up the stairs to the rec room and stood in the shadows, watching Phoe. Nothing Phoe did would ever stop me from loving her. But even from here, I witnessed the murder burning in her gorgeous eyes. My wife wasn't finished. And the only thing possible was to support Phoe in her murderous endeavours. Hell or high water, Phoe was the love of my life.

Cowboy

Tired, I lay in bed in Jemma's guest room, tossing and turning. But I couldn't sleep. Images kept coming to mind. Ones I'd suppressed a long time ago. Now they rose to the fore in force, and I was being tortured repeatedly. Covering my eyes did not work, and I sat up, my breathing was all over the place, and while not having a panic attack, I recognised signs of one. There were phantom pains in my body, places I didn't want to consider, but they hurt so badly even though I had healed.

The door opened, and I flinched.

"Cowboy?" Jemma's sweet voice whispered.

"Babe?" I replied hoarsely.

"Cowboy, I can hear you. Can't you sleep?"

Fuck, I wasn't sure whether to tell Jemma my memories were torturing me or to deny it. The last thing I wanted was for Jemma to assume I was weak. She studied my face briefly, lit by moonlight, and entered my room. Jemma hovered around

the door for a few seconds. As she chewed her lips as she decided what to do. Slowly, Jemma crept towards me and sat on the edge of my bed. A rabbit ready to flee.

“Cowboy, I remember waking drenched in sweat and feeling phantom blows. Or hearing Daryl’s cackling laugh for weeks, months, after he died. Even now, I’ll be sound asleep, and Daryl’s awful cackle will appear from nowhere and make me wake up. Worse, I dreamed of being in total darkness, and then his face appeared suddenly in front of me. Again, I’d wake up screaming or crying. But I started learning to put Daryl in a box and leave him there.

“At first, it was like fighting a living entity. Daryl fought me in my dreams as I dragged him to the box. He hit me in them too, and I would wake Cowboy, feeling pain in the area he had punched me. Even though Daryl hadn’t, because he was dead, and it was a dream. The mind plays awful tricks. Terrible memories arise when your walls are down and you are vulnerable. Might you be experiencing some of that?” Jemma suggested sweetly.

“Can I hold you?” I asked.

If I made a sudden grab for her, Jemma would run. Jemma leaned into me, and I shifted closer, soaking in her warmth. Christ, I was so cold. Jemma’s heat bled into me, and I slowly began warming up.

“Would you like to talk about it?”

“Honestly, I’m frightened that if I tell you, you’ll think me less of a man. That you can do better than a kid who prostituted himself for food and shelter,” I whispered honestly.

Jemma burrowed into my body and allowed me to clasp her tightly.

“But you didn’t, Cowboy. You and Wild were taken advantage of by women who could and should have helped you. And as a child, you did what you needed to survive. Why are you so hard on yourself?” Jemma asked, and her question threw me.

“Because I was a paid whore. Mrs Jeannot gave me money and used my body,” I replied without thinking.

“And did you have a choice, Cowboy?” Jemma asked, and I went silent as I chewed that over.

“Yes, Wild and I could have run. But we had decent food, heat, and a good apartment.”

“And say you ran away, then what?”

Oh, clever girl.

“We’d have ended up on the streets, either doing the same for less money or working all the time. Or turned to crime.”

“So, not much of an option. Drug-riddled, hungry, mugging people, perhaps killing them, or whoring yourself out to who knows who or what diseases. Against a life of two or three times a week, comfort, being fed, and having basic amenities. Cowboy, that isn’t having options or a choice. I know which I’d choose!”

“Would you really?” Cowboy asked. I saw Jemma thinking, and then she said something that blew me away.

“So you blame Autumn and think she’s a whore?” I sat up in bed, startling Jemma as I gazed into her huge eyes.

“Why would you say that?” I murmured, stroking her back.

“Well, Autumn told me she was on her knees. Feeding the children carrots and beans. There was no food, heat or anything, as her ex had taken everything. Autumn said the day Gunner and Apache discovered her, she was preparing to sell her body to feed the kids. Autumn hadn’t eaten for four days, so she could stretch out what she could for them. So is Autumn bad?” Jemma asked.

“Of course not!”

“So why are you and Wild? You weren’t even adults to make that decision!” Jemma retorted.

“Because...” I trailed off because I didn’t have an answer. Jemma had hit me straight in my warped logic, and there was no reply.

“Cowboy, nobody likes to be a victim, but that is what you, Wild, and I are. Just we are more than a victim; we’re survivors. We took back control of our lives and forged ahead. So maybe that makes us leaders. Showing that a horrible past can be overcome, we are leading the way into the future.”

Fuck, I liked that.

“And that makes you and Wild heroes. Wild, because he sacrificed for you and you because you did the same for him. Allow the scared, hungry, bitter child to live, but also let him grow. Because you keeping him back deep inside you is also holding you back as an adult,” Jemma said.

“How did you get so wise?” I inquired, teasing Jemma as I kissed her head and rubbed a hand up and down her back.

“Therapy twice a week,” I replied, and Cowboy stiffened and then laughed.

“Is that a hint?”

“No, it is your choice. If you’ve got a grip on it, then fine. If you need help, it’s not weak to reach out,” Jemma suggested.

“That’s not weak,” Wild stated, making us both jump. “Knew Cowboy wouldn’t sleep, just like it came flooding back for me, shit did for him too. You’re not wrong, Jemma, in none of what you said.”

“How long have you been there?” I asked.

“Since Jemma entered. Bro, you really thought I would leave you alone when you were so raw? And no offence Jemma, you are lovely, but you were an older woman entering my brother’s bedroom. I wasn’t sure if it would trigger my bro. Seems Cowboy found his lady,” Wild said, and I heard the tiredness in his voice.

“Come in, Wild. I don’t find you threatening,” Jemma said softly.

I winced as I wasn’t sure how Wild would take that. To my surprise, Wild sat by my bed on the floor. He rested his head back and sighed loudly.

“Think you’re moving past this shit and that we created a new life. Escaped whatever else those women had planned for us. And then bang, you are in your safe zone, and the Queen Bitch strolls in with her daughter behind her,” Wild mused.

“You understand they’re dead, don’t you?” Jemma whispered.

Wild tilted his head to the side.

“What makes you say that?” he asked.

Wild and I both knew they were. But how did Jemma?

Jemma laughed a little bitterly before wriggling around and settling between my legs. “Because Phoe is not going to let anyone live who abused children. Did you not see it in Phoe’s eyes?”

“How do you feel about that?” I asked, stroking her hair. Wild could see Jemma’s face, but I couldn’t.

“Perhaps I should care, but I don’t. Three evil people left the world today, and I won’t mourn their loss. Wild, Cowboy, have you ever considered it wasn’t just you? From what you both told me, it ran too smoothly. Too many women were in the know. That’s not something that happens overnight, nor that easily. How did they trust one of their own wouldn’t be horrified and spill the beans? No, these bitches were doing it before you two came along,” Jemma surmised, and I sank into the pillows.

To be honest, I’d always felt there were more unknown victims. Two boys to thirty women didn’t make sense. But I’d not let myself believe it. That had been too horrific for a struggling, wounded teenager to consider. It was far easier for me and Wild to be their victim rather than knowing others had been forced into similar shit as us. Why? I don’t know. It just was.

Wild’s gaze met mine, and I knew he felt the same way. We both steadily ignored and rejected any idea there probably were other victims. Logically, there had to have been. What Jemma said was true; Mrs Jeannot was part of a well-oiled engine.

Wild shook his head.

“Should have gone to the police,” he stated, and I nodded.

“No! What do you believe would have happened, honestly? Wild, Cowboy, you’re old enough now to understand those women would have swept everything under the carpet. Don’t forget in many states, they can and do prosecute children for prostitution. And it doesn’t matter if they were coerced or trafficked! Honestly, you made the right moves for yourself. You escaped, found a home, earned protection, and created a new life. So when Mrs Jeannot came back around, and I believe she was always going to, you had people willing to stand for you,” Jemma challenged.

Damn it, once again, Jemma was correct. Wild looked at her with respect in his eyes.

“My brother chased you, and I understand that. But I did worry there was some of Mrs Jeannot in you. Can now see I was wrong. Jemma, I’d be blessed to call you sister,” Wild announced, his hand reaching up, and Wild waited to see if she’d take it.

Jemma did not hesitate, and she slid her fingers into his.

“Three wounded souls have a chance of healing each other as they walk the path together,” Jemma said softly.

Happily, I dropped a kiss on her head. How I’d got so lucky to find this connection, I didn’t understand. Jemma understood me. Hell, I knew she worried about the age gap, but who the fuck cared?

My soul had linked with hers, and we would be special. But only together could we achieve that. The wounds inflicted on us would always be present, but love would grow and heal them. Time wasn’t a healer, as the saying claimed. I think now that I saw something I’d never witnessed. Love. That was the healer, love, patience, caring, support, friends, and proper family. Without them, time could pass as it wished, but the damage wouldn’t heal. You needed the other stuff.

And the mending of deep, vicious scars would not be patched over or scabbed. They’d close from the inside, filling

gaping wounds with something else other than pain and despair. Like each happy memory of mine would chase away the dark ones. And when I had children with Jemma, those joyful noises they'd make would heal each tear I'd shed in shame. Their laughter and joy would erase the lonely child I was because my kids would have a constant, two parents and two uncles who loved them dearly.

And my bedrock had always been Wild. And he'd never judged, found me weak, or looked at me in disgust. I had a steady base on which to raise happy, balanced kids because Wild had done that for me. Jemma and I would worry more because we knew evil existed. We'd also break our backs to ensure our children never encountered it. Wild would, too, when he claimed his woman. Together we were stronger; until three became four, we'd manage as a single unit. Propping each other up when we needed it.



“Can you, Drake, and the inner circle meet us the day after tomorrow?” I asked Axel.

“Don't need to ask, son,” Axel said, and a warm feeling lit inside me for the first time. Axel's words were meant, not just a term used like dude, bro, boy. He meant we were his sons.

“And bring Ellen. We'd rather do this at once, if Drake doesn't mind.”

“Drake won't mind. You sure you want the inner circle?” Axel boomed softly.

“Yeah. Time to be honest,” I replied. There was always a slight chance they'd reject us. But something inside me told me shit was going to be okay. It was the old ladies who were loose cannons.

“We'll be there. I'll text you a time,” Axel said.

Just as he went to hang up, I said, “Thanks, Dad.”

There was a full-on silence, and Axel's breathing became heavy. And when he talked, I heard a wealth of emotion.

“You’re welcome, son.”

Drake

I stared at Axel as he said his sons wanted a meeting with the inner circle and Ellen. The one word that told me everything was sons. Axel had more than claimed Wild and Cowboy. He’d reached out with his heart and taken those boys as his own. Axel would never walk away, never.

“Not a problem. But we need to brace,” I said. It wasn’t a question but a statement.

“Yeah, we’re going to, and Ellen’s gonna need a fuck load of support,” Axel mentioned, looking old and tired suddenly.

I was shocked and silent when I looked at him. The worry about Cowboy and Wild had drained him. It was a sure bet that they didn’t understand how much Axel cared. And although quiet and downright surly, they’d blame themselves if they saw Axel like this.

“Cowboy called me Dad,” Axel murmured, holding my gaze.

Holy fuck! It was a second blow to my gut. Maybe they did realise Axel loved them like his own.

“Drake, you’re gonna need control tomorrow. Because the shit that happened to them happened after they were refused entry the first time. Ain’t nobody to blame for that, apart from Rio fuckin’ Valden and those that caused my boys harm.”

“Already guessed that, brother, yet they came back,” I replied.

“Yeah, because Wild saw something he wanted. Cowboy couldn’t care less where he ended up as long as it was with Wild!”

“Wild is the driving force. But Cowboy is the risk taker,” I agreed.

“Boy drove Ellen batty getting Cowboy to study, but he did it in the end. They’re mine, Drake. Don’t care what we hear tomorrow. They’ll always be my boys. If the inner circle chooses to kick them, I’ll walk with them.”

Fuck, that alone told me how much the boys meant to Axel. I leaned forward and held his gaze.

“Do not give a fuck what Cowboy and Wild did to survive. Axel, I don’t fuckin’ care. All I want is to ensure they’ve got their shit straight and have the help they need. They can’t turn to you as Chaplin, so they need another figure. I’m thinking Fish, as Texas is still in their bad books, although they treat him normally. But that crap with Rosie and Calamity is fresh in everyone’s mind. They want somebody who can give them wisdom and time and not feel threatened,” I replied.

“Then look to yourself. Think they ain’t aware of the rumours around Carmine and Tye? The boys will come to someone they know and won’t judge them because his own boys suffered,” Axel said gently.

My gut tightened. Carmine and Tye had never confided what they’d gone through. Of course, I had a rough idea, but they’d stayed mute the entire time. Out of respect, I’d never asked Phoe if she knew their past, but I had informed her that if she ever wanted to unload, I was there. It was as much as respecting Phoe’s role as their mother first and then as their confidant. If they thought Phoe had broken their confidentiality, our kids or not, we broke their trust.

I hoped to fuck Wild and Cowboy hadn’t suffered. But a sick feeling added to what Slate had reported today. I’d guessed things had gone bad when they left the Rage forecourt.

Ace was already blaming himself. He’d seen them that day and knew they were in trouble. As had I, and I’d let them walk because of my shit about them not being eighteen. If I’d grabbed Wild and Cowboy and taken them in, they might not have suffered what they did. Oh, fuck that. Who was I kidding? They wouldn’t have endured anything.

Another guilt to add to my long list. When I believed I had things running perfectly, everything was okay, something leapt up and kicked me hard in the balls. Axel was correct. For sure, I needed to lock myself down tomorrow. I didn’t even have to dig deep to know I would hear shit that would make me flip.

But Wild and Cowboy didn't deserve to witness my anger and self-loathing that I'd failed them. They just needed a safe atmosphere to confess whatever they wanted to and hold their heads up high.

"Ellen gonna be okay with this?" I asked.

Ellen was more fragile since she'd fallen down the stairs at school. Ellen's accident remained a mystery to this fuckin' day. Another item on my to-do list that I never seemed to resolve. But now, every position was filled, and I wasn't doubling up as Road Captain anymore. Possibly I'd have time to dig into shit. And that included Ghost. That brother was due a reckoning.

"Ellen is stronger than she looks," Axel muttered.

"You're not looking good."

"Why, thanks, Pres. Couldn't be anything to do with what we're gonna hear tomorrow?" Axel boomed snidely.

"Axel, you need me. I'm here."

"Same son, same."

Chapter Eight.

Jemma

Waking up and finding myself sprawled on Cowboy was a unique experience. We'd fallen asleep after we talked long into the night. It was even more unusual to discover Wild asleep, sitting on the floor with his head on the bed. This wasn't something I'd ever encountered before, and I was unsure how to proceed. Wild was stirring, and he looked up sleepily before his entire body stiffened. My eyes widened, and Wild took that in before he forced himself to relax.

"Sorry, I shouldn't be here," Wild muttered.

I tried to hold back the fear.

Wild groaned as he lifted his head and rubbed his neck.

"That's going to hurt all day,"

"Jemma, I apologise for my reaction. It threw me waking up and seeing... um...."

"An older woman watching you?" I suggested.

Wild turned a deep red before nodding. "No offence."

"None taken. Honestly, I'm alarmed at finding myself in a bedroom with two men," I admitted, and we exchanged wry looks.

"Well, I'm the only happy fucker here. Or I would be if my brother weren't in the same room as me while my woman's sprawled across me. I'd be even happier if it weren't six in the morning fuckers!" Cowboy drawled, and his arms tightened around me as he dropped a kiss on my head.

"Morning wood, bro?" Wild teased as he lurched to his feet with a groan. Ouch, I winced as he cracked his back and neck before sitting heavily on the bed.

"Okay, I hate to mention this, but Suzie and Kendrick wake up early, like now. If they walk in here, it will be hard to explain!" I said.

Cowboy grumbled but dropped another kiss on my head as I untangled myself from him. Until my pelvis met his, and I paused. Oh hell, was that really Cowboy's cock? Damn, it was freaking huge and straining against his boxers. Surprised, I held his gaze, and there was a smug smirk on his face. The damned man!

Awkwardly, I wriggled across, hissing as Wild raced out, no doubt intent on avoiding any awkward questions about why he'd slept here from the kids. The bed's springs jostled as I approached the door, and a heat met my back. My instant reaction was to cringe, and Cowboy stopped behind me, but I turned and forced myself to step forward. Cowboy's arms rose, and he drew me in close.

"Baby steps for both of us!" Cowboy reminded me, and I nodded against his chest. Being this near to Cowboy allowed me to feel how well-defined his muscles were, and they took me away. Wild was leaner and rangier than Cowboy, who had more muscle definition and was slightly smaller. But either way, he towered over me. And Cowboy was bulkier than Daryl, who'd been a gym rat. I wasn't threatened by his presence. In fact, my reactions were just conditioned to certain circumstances. In time, they would learn.

Happily, I patted Cowboy's chest, allowing my fingers to linger on the muscles before taking my fledgling courage and standing on tiptoes to give Cowboy a brief kiss. It might have turned into a heated smooch, but we overheard the patter of footsteps. Then Suzie quietly called for me. With regret in both our eyes, I stepped back and hurried out to my baby girl.

Cowboy

Wild and I exchanged glances before getting off our bikes and heading into the protected compound through the gates. Brothers greeted us, but nobody seemed any different. We'd spotted Ellen's Audi in the parking lot, so we knew Ellen was here.

"Whatever happens, it's you and I, remember?" Wild said, and I nodded. It was a promise, an oath we'd made to one

another when we were small children. Nothing would split us apart.

Worried, we squared our shoulders and headed into the clubhouse. It was relatively empty. Everyone was probably at work. Drake and Axel were waiting, and they greeted us with warm smiles before Drake tilted his head to the stairs that led to church below.

Feeling like impending doom was hovering over our heads, we followed them into the huge space that was now church. The original Rage table was proudly present at the top of the room. In front of it, the remaining brothers' chairs were placed in rows. As prospects, we didn't attend meetings offered; only full brothers did. But today, sitting at the table with a mug of coffee, was Ellen. The woman who'd taken the role of Mom in my life.

Ellen was twitching and watching us both nervously, and I rushed over to reassure her we were okay. She squeezed me tightly, one of the few female touches I could bear, and then hugged Wild.

"Mom," we both murmured, and Ellen's breathing hitched. The love in her eyes nearly undid me, and I knew that no matter what happened today, we wouldn't lose Ellen.

"Take a seat," Drake said, motioning to two chairs.

Resigned, I looked around and saw all the inner circle present, including Klutz. After coming clean, I planned to tell Klutz about Jemma and me. I could see Klutz was puzzled why he was here, but his body language was calm.

"Wanna talk about what's going on?" Drake inquired as he relaxed back in his chair.

Above Drake's head was a tattered Rage flag, the original his father had made. Beside that was the new one, displaying the patch Rage wore now. I wondered if that would still be the case when they learned the truth.

"Slate told you about the scene in the shop?" Wild said.

"We're aware," Drake replied.

“When we left here in 2016, we returned home. Rio was as foul as ever. Soon after our planned attempt to escape, Rio beat us both. Cowboy saved my life. He also rescued me from being raped by my own dad,” Wild spoke distantly.

Hisses erupted around the room, and Axel lumbered to his feet.

“Did Valden touch you?” he demanded, pointing the finger at Wild.

“No, Cowboy stopped him. But we were badly hurt and ran to a friend. Kyle’s father blackmailed Rio into letting us stay with them. He was a doctor and a decent guy. Everything was fine until Cowboy turned fifteen, and then Kyle and his dad died. We were on our own again. Every time I tried to find work, Rio ensured I lost the job soon after.

“Cowboy and I were facing street life, something I didn’t want for either of us when a woman picked me up and took me home. Mrs Jeannot. I fucked her brains out, and Mrs Jeannot paid me money. Honestly, I hadn’t planned to take it, but she insisted, and that was when she hooked me.

“Mrs Jeannot contacted me once or twice weekly and paid me to screw her. Soon enough, it branched out to her friends, and then she laid eyes on Cowboy,” Wild stopped, looking to me.

“Mrs Jeannot offered me five grand to fuck her. And I knew what Wild was doing and the shame he felt. I could help ease the burden. Every cent Wild got that did not go on bills or food, we saved in a bank to escape. Five thousand would add a lot to that. Needless to say, Mrs Jeannot didn’t want one night. Nor did her friends. Yeah, the candidates Rage took in were prostitutes.

“We hid the money until Wild needed a repair on his bike and found the account empty. Shocked, Wild challenged it and was told there was nothing there. The bank manager was a friend of Mrs Jeannot’s, and we went to her. Mrs Jeannot openly admitted she knew our plans to build a new life and said she wasn’t quite done with us. She wanted us to remain under her control and in her power. So, Mrs Jeannot stole the

money Wild and I had sold ourselves for,” I announced matter-of-factly.

“We ran that night, and you know what happened next. But we sold our bodies and souls for food, heat, and a roof over our heads. No, we didn’t enjoy it. And we hated being touched by women old enough to be our mothers and grandmothers. The shit they did to us has scarred us both mentally and emotionally.

“Cowboy and I ain’t proud of what we did, and you’ll never know the fight Cowboy and I had over him doing the same as me. But we survived, and Cowboy’s alive, never done drugs or booze, and we don’t have criminal records,” Wild said with pride hidden amongst the shame in his voice.

“So if you want our cuts, fine. We’ll go quietly. But know this, if I faced the same choice, we’d both do it again,” I interrupted.

Wild and I fell silent and peered around the table. Rock and Gunner were the first my gaze landed on. And they were fuming. At what? I couldn’t say.

Fish and Texas looked disgusted. Ace and Apache were impassive, but there was anger and hate on their faces. Manny held my gaze and offered a nod while Calamity was horrified. Ever since Calamity had received his special patch of Conscience, he’d sat with the inner circle. Somehow, I figured Drake had decided that made Calamity part of the inner circle. Axel was gripping the table so tightly I thought he might blow. And Ellen wiped tears from her eyes.

“Don’t know why you ain’t burning this down and putting a bullet through my skull,” Drake said.

“Huh?” I replied, shocked.

“Fuckin’ failed you big time.”

“No, I decided to prostitute myself to keep Cowboy safe. Shit just didn’t work out how I hoped,” Wild denied.

“Stop using that word!” Ellen shrieked, and everyone looked at her. “Wild, you did not prostitute yourselves! You were children that some wicked, evil bitches took advantage

of. They used your love for one another to rape and molest two boys! Dear God, neither of you did this by an adult-considered choice. You had no other option. Let's call it what it is! Child rape!"

"Baby!" Axel murmured, standing and rubbing Ellen's shoulders.

"And you, Drake? You gonna take on all the troubles in the world? Yeah, you failed to note they needed help. But you did not force those bitches to molest them! You can feel guilty that shit happened, but it was not your responsibility. It was Rio fucking Valden's to protect his sons, and he didn't! For fuck's sake, let's lay the blame where it belongs, on those women and Rio!" Ellen cried.

Axel hauled Ellen up off her feet and wrapped her in his arms.

"Ellen has a point. You didn't cause this, Drake," I said.

"Guilt ain't gonna go away, Cowboy. Makes sense as to why you hate being touched, both of you. Why you're so close, and why you wouldn't let any fucker in. Should have recognised the signs of abuse," Drake retorted.

"But you did. Wild and I know you warned everyone not to touch us when you noticed how uncomfortable we were. And you kept the whores away from us, too. And Phoe and the old ladies understood we hate to be touched. You did all that," I said.

Drake inclined his head, but I saw the guilt on his face.

"Why didn't you come to us?" Texas asked, looking disturbed.

"And admit we were pros... in a difficult situation? Before or after, because I returned yearly," Wild replied.

"Until you turned eighteen. Should have known something was wrong. Three fuckin' years under their thumb."

"Thought they'd been safe with Rio? They were abused for over eighteen months," Gunner added.

“Bet Rio kept up appearances they were safe at home while they stayed with the friend,” Texas said.

“Knowing Rio, he did,” Wild agreed.

“So you want our cuts or not?” I questioned, needing an answer.

“Cowboy, you think we’re gonna punish you for being victims?” Drake asked incredulously.

“Dunno,” I replied.

“Boy, you learned so much about Rage, and you still got shit to learn. Neither of you is going anywhere except to a therapist. Ain’t gonna let this fuck you up for life,” Fish exclaimed.

“Don’t need one. Jemma and Phoe recommended someone already,” I said.

“Then we’ll make sure you go,” Axel boomed.

Ellen came belting around the table. She hesitated before gathering us into her arms. We held on as tightly as she did, and after kissing us, she spun on Drake with all the fury of a wounded lioness.

“Tell me, Phoe and the girls made those cunts bleed,” Ellen snarled.

Drake exchanged looks with everyone as Wild and I listened avidly.

“The wet room was coated with blood,” Texas stated. It was his job to clean it with Fish.

“Soaked through Ellen,” Fish agreed.

Damn, Phoe had taken care of Mrs Jeannot and her fuckin’ warped piece of shit daughter.

“And if I hadn’t known they were bodies, I’d have thought I was hauling lumps of meat about,” Rock said.

“The girls made them suffer a world of pain,” Gunner added.

“Now we get those others who raped my boys!” Ellen snarled.

“Babe, that’s what I think Phoe has planned. Check with her, yeah?” Axel asked, walking forward.

“Okay!”

“My one regret is that Rage could have stopped this and didn’t. But I’ll break my back, making this up to you. You’re mine, and nothing’s gonna take that from you. You got my love, protection and honour in your hands,” Axel said softly. Axel lifted his arms but let us come to him.

For the first time, we willingly allowed a man to hug and touch us.

Emotional, I stepped away and eyed Klutz.

Klutz regarded me calmly.

“I’m claiming Jemma. She’s mine. As wounded as we both are, we recognise one another. Klutz, I want your approval,” I announced, but my voice broke on the last word.

Klutz studied me and then Wild.

“I’m disgusted that you assume you need permission to claim Jemma. Horrified, Cowboy, that you believe anything you said would turn me against you. You may not see it now, but you’re victims. Whatever shit that bitch drove into your head, calling you prostitutes to make it seem like what she did was okay... it wasn’t, and ain’t. Nothing here, brothers, has turned me against either of you. So wake the fuck up. You got family, and you’ll be my family no matter what,” Klutz replied calmly.

My heart had stopped when Klutz said ‘disgusted’. It took me a few seconds to catch up with what Klutz was saying, but a huge sigh of relief erupted when I did.

“And that just hurts more. That you expected rejection? No kid who was subjected to the abuse you have dealt with should ever fear that from any of Rage,” Klutz added.

“Nerves, brother,” I replied.

“Take the rest of the week off. Book that therapist and return Monday with your heads in the game. What just happened will have upset you both, admit it or not. Orders are to have a few days off, ride, lay about, take it easy, and we’ll be here,” Drake said.

“Okay,” I started to go, but Wild hung back.

“And we’re cool? No judgement?” Wild asked.

“None, son. Not from any of us, and the brothers won’t know unless you tell them,” Axel replied.

Wild and I swapped glances.

“We’d rather you tell them. And then leave shit alone. We don’t want to be questioned or pitied,” Wild said at my nod.

“Done,” Drake promised.

With one last glance at those proud men who’d given us a family, we left quietly.

Axel

Ellen was happily in with Phoe, chasing up Phoe’s progress on the other women. Ellen was in a bloodthirsty mood, and he’d no doubt she was now learning details that not even the brothers had. The old ladies had clammed up, and nobody was getting anything out of them. As frustrating as it might be, I could understand; the men didn’t tell them everything either.

Needing to be alone, I sat in my office and allowed my thoughts to roam. I’d raised two children. Willow and Keith. Keith had been a snot like his mother, and there was no saving him. Fuck knows, I tried. Willow was my pride and joy. Undercover FBI. Who’d have believed a kid from my loins would have the brain power? But Willow was kicking in doors and making arrests everywhere she turned.

Since Willow and Grey had returned to RC, they’d broken several big cases. The latest one was a complete shitstorm. Willow had worked with Hellfire to bring a cult down, and boy, had Willow gained recognition for it. Grey seemed to be her constant partner. They’d transferred from undercover together and were solid partners. Made me wonder if they

were something else too, but Willow never commented. However, where one was, the other wasn't far behind.

I had a second chance when fate dropped Cowboy and Wild into my lap. Two belligerent teens who thought they could run circles around Ellen and me. But they were good boys and soon learned to listen. Ellen's love tamed their tempers at home, while her rules gave them guidelines, and I thumped common sense into them when needed.

I was fuckin' lucky, so lucky. Couldn't get Keith straight, but I'd had a chance with Cowboy and Wild. They'd snatched it with two hands. And I'd been rewarded. I knew my boys had seen darkness, but I hadn't expected what they'd admitted today. If I found out any males were involved, I would go darker than Texas when Penny was threatened. They were my sons. That's all that counted. This old boy still had life in him. And my darkness was unparalleled, despite the brother's opinion of me. I wasn't just a blustery, foolish old man. I was a Rage MC founder, and that meant something.

Cowboy

Jemma squealed as I took a corner while Wild had Suzie and Kendrick behind us, looking disgruntled. Dunno why. Wild drove a classic mustang, but he had the children while I rode free. No sooner had we arrived at Jemma's than we decided to go on a trip for a few days. Wild rode back to grab some clothes, and I chivvied Jemma and the kids to pack while I booked a cabin in the woods.

It was warm enough to take the youngsters out fishing and kayaking, and I was looking forward to it. The cabin I rented had four bedrooms, one each for the kids and Wild and one for Jemma and me. I could bunk with Wild, but Jemma shyly agreed we'd share, and we both promised no pressure. Happily, I rode in front as Wild was behind, but for all his complaining, we could hear the music blasting from the mustang. That made me smile.

We finally parked up for dinner before carrying on to the cabin. I'd been assured there was a late-night shop at the site and a restaurant nearby. We followed the path shown to us by

the guy who booked us in at reception and discovered a lovely log cabin set feet away from the lake. The water sparkled in the setting sun as we all scurried inside to investigate. Wild disappeared, heading out to buy food and stuff while Jemma and I let the kids explore as we unpacked their cases.

When we had everything unpacked, Wild was back with groceries and takeout. We were all starving despite the big lunch we'd had. Suzie and Kendrick were wonderful children, but I felt for them because they were so restrained. Wild and I kept swapping looks with each other, and we planned to help them unwind.

I know from Jemma when it was just them, they relaxed their rigidity. The kids were calm, but around the MC and others, they fell into the tight little soldiers Daryl had created. Don't be seen or heard. It killed me that Suzie and Kendrick couldn't act like normal youngsters, and I resolved to make sure they learned to relax and have some fun the next few days. Shit, it even upset me how neat and tidy they ate. Pizza's meant to be picked up by fingers and chomped messily. No, Kendrick and Suzie used plates, knives and forks.

Jemma and I swapped glances, and something unspoken passed between us. To the kids' stunned gazes, Jemma shoved aside the plate and cutlery, snatched her pizza, and took a bite. She moaned slightly as the flavours burst into her mouth. Kendrick and Suzie watched, amazed, as their mother picked up a second slice before Kendrick slowly grabbed his pizza, keeping a wary eye on Wild and me. Kendrick bit and swallowed almost instantly.

"Dude, you take tiny bites like that, it won't get eaten!" Wild laughed softly and took an enormous bite of his own. Kendrick glanced at Jemma, who nodded and copied Wild.

Suzie sat stone still, watching and no doubt waiting for an explosion.

"Don't you like it, baby girl?" I questioned.

Suzie's cute button nose wrinkled.

"Cowboy, I'm not a baby," she mumbled.

“You’re my baby girl. It’s a term of endearment, a special name,” I explained.

Suzie clearly had to think about that.

“Why?”

“Because I’m dating your mom, and that means I’m gonna be a big part of your life. And one day, when we get married, I’ll be your stepdad,” I replied, hiding a snort as Jemma’s mouth dropped open in shock.

Silence fell as Wild rolled his eyes.

“Dude, you gotta learn to pick your moments!”

“What? I’m going to marry Jemma, adopt those kids, and put more in her belly!” I retorted.

Jemma made a strange noise, and we all looked at her.

“Do I have a say?” Jemma asked with a wheeze.

“Sure, you can pick when we get married, but I got to get you a ring first!” I said with a grin.

“Who the hell do you think you are speaking to, Cowboy? No man is the boss of me!” Jemma responded with a glint in her eye.

I saw the amusement as she hid it.

“Wanna bet, baby? This is your notice. You’re mine!” I teased, and Jemma made that noise again before breaking into gales of laughter. Suzie and Kendrick stared, amazed at their mom, before looking at me and Wild, who began laughing too. Neither child smiled, clearly unaware of the last few words we’d been teasing each other.

“We were playing,” Jemma explained when she finally stopped giggling.

“Well, not about getting married and having more children. But the rest of it, we were joking,” I elaborated.

Suzie wrinkled that little nose again, and Kendrick seemed struck dumb.

“Grown-ups play?” Kendrick asked innocently.

“Of course! Wait till I throw Cowboy and your mom in the lake tomorrow!” Wild said.

“Gotta catch me first, bro! Kendrick, lil dude, I’m super-fast like superman!” I cried.

Wild rolled his eyes.

“More like a super slug!”

“That’s fighting talk!” I shot back as Jemma laughed again.

“I don’t understand. Why are they laughing? Why aren’t they eating with a knife and fork?” Suzie demanded, upset because she was confused.

“Because, honey, sometimes we can relax the rules, and pizza really should be eaten with fingers,” Jemma explained the easiest one.

“But Daddy always said…” Suzie mumbled, and her face fell.

“Hey, Suzie Special, people do things in different ways. I eat pizza with my hands. How would you want to eat it?” I asked gently.

“Like you!”

“Then pick it up and take a big bite,” I encouraged.

“Will I get into trouble later?”

“Nope. And tomorrow, we’ll get super messy and make smores!” I coaxed.

Both kids frowned.

“We’re not allowed to get dirty,” Kendrick replied.

“Around me, you can. Muddy, covered in slime, drop food down your clothes, eat with your fingers, I don’t care. As long as you’re healthy and happy, that’s what counts!” I said.

“Daddy didn’t care about that! We had to use manners all the time!” Suzie burst out with tears in her eyes. Poor kid was really frightened she’d get into trouble.

“Suzie, darling, table manners have a time and place. If we were at a very expensive or nice restaurant, yes, use a knife

and fork. At home or in a pizza restaurant, use your fingers!” Wild replied.

Suzie studied us and then her mother. Jemma kept smiling, and finally, Suzie reached down, picked her pizza up, and took an almost defiant bite. Not making a big deal, we all started eating again.

Chapter Nine.

Jemma

Suzie's squeal echoed around the lake as Wild caught her and dropped back into the water. They briefly went under and sprang back up as Kendrick shot a water gun from Cowboy's shoulders. It had taken two days to get Suzie and Kendrick to act like normal children and not robots. If I hadn't fallen in love with Cowboy already, I would have today. And I loved Wild as much as possible as a brother.

"How cute!" a voice from behind said, and I noticed two young blondes standing in bikinis and a sarong watching.

"Most definitely!" the second added. They saw me and smiled, but it was a predatory smile, not a nice one.

"Hello," I exclaimed, acknowledging them.

"Hi, I am Amber, and this is Ariel. We're sisters," the first replied.

"I'm Jemma, and those are my children, Kendrick and Suzie," I replied, feeling uncomfortable. The women were eyeing Wild and Cowboy like they'd like to lick them.

"And who are those two hotties?" Ariel asked, almost drooling.

Cowboy spotted me as I shifted uncomfortably, launched Kendrick through the air towards Wild, and began wading towards me. It was a sight to behold. Wet shorts plastered to muscular thighs and his chest bare with Wild's art on show. Cowboy had confessed Wild had been the only one to tattoo him.

"Oh lord. I just came a little!" Amber tittered, and I sent her a dirty look.

Cowboy was within hearing distance now.

"That's my boyfriend," I said and saw Cowboy stumble before continuing.

Both girls turned incredulous looks at me.

“Get real, honey. He may be playing with your kids, but you’re too old!” Ariel sniggered. “Poor thing, ageing must be hell! He is clearly coming over for us!”

I stiffened under their laughter. How damn rude! Cowboy had also overheard them as he splashed out and sent them a stare that should have put them both six feet under. They didn’t notice, as they were too busy twittering at each other. Hurt must have shown on my expression because Cowboy got a look on his face that I’d seen in many of the Rage men.

“Hi! I’m Amber, and this is my sister Ariel!”

“Yo. Hey babe, everything okay? Can I have a towel?” Cowboy said, with a wicked smile, and shook wet hair over me.

“Cowboy!” I exclaimed and laughed.

“Sorry, but I said you’d get wet one way or another! Babe, you want us out of the lake yet? Getting hungry?” Cowboy asked with a concerned look.

“No, let them play. They’re clearly having fun with your brother!”

“That’s your brother?” Amber tittered, and as Cowboy and I glanced across, we could see the confusion on her face.

“Yeah,” Cowboy answered and turned away.

Amber and Ariel exchanged confused looks. They didn’t understand why Cowboy wasn’t paying them attention.

“Ariel and I were just off to get lunch,” Amber mentioned, trying again. She jutted her hip and breasts out. “Would you like to join us?”

“Nah, I’m okay with my girl and children,” Cowboy replied, and flopped down on the blanket.

“Where’s your woman? There’s nobody else here apart from this old woman and her kids. Pretty sure she won’t mind if you come. You’re so kind playing with the youngsters,” Ariel said with a high-pitched giggle.

“My girl’s right beside me, and it’s fuckin’ rude how you’re talking about her,” Cowboy chided.

“Oh, come on, she’s too old!” Amber replied, sounding outraged.

“She could be your mother!”

Cowboy was getting angrier as each word left their mouth. I reached to calm him, but Cowboy was firing on all systems.

“How dare you be so damn ignorant? My kids can hear you! You spoilt bitches! What’s wrong with you thinking it’s okay to come and trash somebody’s relationship? Christ, if anyone wants vapid, stupid, and rude, it’s standing right here. Fuck off back to where you came from,” Cowboy snarled, and I leaned back on my elbows.

The girl’s confidence had hurt, and their complete self-assurance that Cowboy would wander off with them knocked me for six. Anxiously, I wondered how often other people would challenge our relationship before shit got too much for us both. Cowboy didn’t seem amused at the insinuation that our relationship couldn’t be serious.

Strangers would automatically assume one of two things. Either I was paying Cowboy for his services or cradle-snatching a young man while I was bored. Between us, we should get through this, but would people referring to me as a cougar bring back memories for Cowboy? How would Cowboy cope when idiots slapped him on the back and said, ‘well-done son’ as if he had achieved something momentous?

This was when I feared Cowboy’s almost infamous temper amongst Rage would grow out of control and something bad would happen. While I understood Cowboy’s feelings, nothing had upset me badly yet. Honestly, I had been waiting for a situation like this and watching how Cowboy handled it. With the scene being carried out in front of me right now, I’d no doubt how strong Cowboy’s feelings were.

A smile crossed my face as Ariel and Amber ran away, looking over their shoulders and muttering things under their breath. Cowboy lay glaring as they disappeared, and the speed

at which they did mean Cowboy's words had stung badly. Cowboy flopped beside me, and a pair of adoring eyes stared up from an innocent expression.

"Oh no, you don't!" I said, beginning to laugh. Cowboy made a sad pout as Wild approached, carrying the children.

"Drama?" Wild asked as he peered at his brother, who was smirking.

"Bitches! Now, where's my Suzie Special? Because I'm hungry and need feeding!" Cowboy growled and tackled Suzie, who squealed in laughter.

Happily, I relaxed back as the kids smiled, and I began unpacking the picnic basket. Ruthlessly, I shoved aside the cruel words of those girls and concentrated on having a happy day. Something I'd rarely had but was becoming more common around Cowboy.



I was stepping out of the shower in nothing but a towel when Cowboy entered, and his jaw dropped. The towel was tiny and barely covered anything, and I blushed. Cowboy's eyes roamed my body, and his cock stiffened in anticipation. His foot shot out, and he kicked the door closed before he stepped forward.

"Want to touch you."

"Okay," I whispered, holding his gaze.

Cowboy slowly reached out and trailed sensitive fingers down my arms and back again. Gentle, featherlight touches made me shiver as he traced one hand across my collarbone and throat while the other held the back of my neck.

"Gonna kiss you, Jemma," Cowboy muttered as his head bent and his mouth touched mine. The kiss was hesitant, searching, and soft. Cowboy checked before hauling me against him and kissing me again. This one had more heat. As his lips made love to mine, a hand roamed my butt. A squeeze on my ass, one of my best features, let me know Cowboy

appreciated it. As slowly as Cowboy was exploring my body, I began investigating his.

Our kisses were heating, and we were both breathing heavily. Cowboy's hands explored, but not going anywhere that could make me panic. Meanwhile, I explored his chest and stomach before I trailed fingers up his back, feeling each corded muscle. Christ, Cowboy's body was a sculpture, perfect as a Greek marble statue. Lost in worshipping him, I cupped an ass cheek and squeezed, and Cowboy froze before leaping away.

For a split second, I witnessed panic in Cowboy's eyes as he ensured his ass was protected. I stood there, hands in the air, waiting calmly as Cowboy focused on me and shame crossed his face.

"Don't! No Cowboy! Shit, I forgot, and you reacted. That's cool. That's fine. No judgement. I'll probably do the same when you touch me below. Don't freeze me out! Honestly, I understand!" I babbled. "I want to come to you, offer a hug, comfort you, but I'll wait until you can bear my touch!"

Cowboy's tense body slowly relaxed as my nervous babble got through. This wasn't one of those abusive bitches, but the woman he loved. I saw Cowboy fighting against shame and took a step I never thought possible. Bravely, I dropped the towel and let Cowboy see me entirely. Wide hips, stretch marks, boobs that weren't as pert as they used to be. Wobbles on my thighs and my pooch.

"This is me. This body, which birthed two children, is all I have to offer. Cowboy, I'm not perfect. Nobody will ever wish to sculpt me out of marble, but this is yours. And when I react badly to something you do, know that I love you and want your understanding, as you need mine. There's nothing between us except ghosts, and they can be beaten," I said.

Anxiously, my hands twitched, moving to cover myself as Cowboy stood there staring.

"Don't you dare Jemma!" Cowboy stated, stepping forward. "So fuckin' brave, baring yourself like that. All I want to do is worship you, but I'm panicked," Cowboy admitted.

“So, what can we do?”

There had to be something to help this beautiful, sensitive, and wonderful guy.

“As you’re naked and vulnerable, I’m not threatened. Jemma, your actions got through the panic and calmed it. With you like that, maybe try touching my ass?” Cowboy offered shyly.

“Tell me when to stop,” I murmured, stepping forward. Cowboy moved, and we met with a space between us. Something caught my eye, and I latched onto an idea.

“Look!” I said, pointing. There was a full-length mirror. I reached out, grabbed Cowboy’s hand, and dragged him over to it.

“If I step close, you lose sight of my vulnerability, and if I go behind you, the same happens. But here we can stand side to side, and I could touch you, and you can see me!”

Cowboy lit up in pleasure. Yes! I’d done something right.

Slowly, my hand reached out, firmly placing it against a butt cheek. Cowboy stiffened, but nowhere near as much as before. For several long minutes, we stood there like that until Cowboy looked puzzled. That was when I moved slightly to cup the roundness of his ass. Cowboy reacted as before, but his eyes were different. Alert, confused, but encouraging.

After a few minutes, I removed my hand and stepped into his side, hugging and burying my head into his chest. Cowboy’s arms rose and wrapped around me as we clung to each other.

“That was intense,” I whispered.

“Just a bit,” Cowboy snorted.

“You okay?”

“Confused. All you did, baby, was place a hand there, but there wasn’t pain. Shit, I don’t know what I expected, but by not groping or moving, I was safe. And I didn’t want to run or hurt you. Not that I ever wished to harm you, Jemma! I mean,

when they touched me, I wanted to hurt them! Not you!” Cowboy stuttered, and I began to laugh.

“Sheesh, I know what you mean!”

“Jesus, we’re a mess,” Cowboy said, but I heard his humour.

“Shall we get ready before the kids hogtie Wild and try cooking him?” I asked.

Cowboy nodded as I stepped away and headed to the closet to find something to wear. I felt like the ultimate sexy model as Cowboy’s eyes never left my body as I dressed. He seemed disappointed when I was fully clothed.

“And tonight, we’re gonna practise you touching my ass, and then I’m going to touch you!” Cowboy warned in a low tone, setting my lady bits screaming for attention.

Holy crap, that voice? Sex on legs!



I lay there with Cowboy lying beside me. We were naked and hungry for one another but wary too. Finally, my sense of humour kicked in, and I began laughing.

“Touch me!”

“Fuck, we’re so unsure of each other!” Cowboy chuckled as his hands cupped my face, and he kissed me.

Happily, I fell into the kiss, allowing Cowboy to show me what he liked. Until him, I’d never properly kissed a man. Daryl used to force his tongue into my mouth like an invading slug. Cowboy was subtle, teasing and daring, and he didn’t kiss. He made love to my mouth. My arms wrapped around his neck as Cowboy kissed me deeper, and I wriggled in pure joy.

Already I felt a tinge of uneasiness, knowing this would be a different experience than what I had become used to. Cautious hands, but no less than desirable, explored, giving me time to familiarise myself with them. Warily, my fingers roamed freely across Cowboy’s chest and stomach, but I kept

them away from his ass. This was amazing, and I didn't want to ruin it.

Cowboy's mouth followed the path blazed by his hands, and I felt need building up. I murmured his name, and Cowboy shifted fully to lie between my legs as he continued to love me. Now I know how those models feel when men stare agape and worship them. Cowboy was definitely making sure I understood I was desirable. He kissed the stretch marks, promising to add to them, which flooded me with desire. Cowboy's hand slipped lower, and then a touch had me bolting out of bed and shaking. Cowboy remained where he was as I stared.

"Er, my turn?" I giggled nervously, keeping my body to one side so Cowboy couldn't see me properly.

"So, inserting a finger sets you off. Not sure how to get around that, especially as my cock will follow!" Cowboy drawled in amusement. The fact he wasn't ranting or blaming relaxed me.

"Wonder if my tongue would have the same reaction?" Cowboy asked, and I blushed a deep red.

"Don't know."

"Baby, dickhead never went down on you?"

I snorted. "Of course not!"

"So, a finger sets you off. Let's try my tongue!" Cowboy said wickedly.

A laugh escaped, taking my tension away.

"You're unbelievable!" I wheezed as Cowboy wriggled his fingers, and I walked over. I lay down, and Cowboy hopped off the bed and crouched between my legs.

"What are you doing?" I demanded, surprised.

"Guess asshole never got on his knees for you either!" Cowboy said with a wink, and before I could reply, kissed my thighs. All the feelings that had fled when he'd slid a finger inside came racing back and stood up, cheering, throwing pom poms in the air.

Cowboy drove me wild, with featherlight touches to my inner thighs, causing them to tremble with delicate butterfly kisses. His hands held my legs open as his tongue trailed lazy circles on hot, sensitive flesh. A few times, I stiffened, and Cowboy paused as he neared my pussy, but I urged him onwards. I fluttered as Cowboy's mouth moved closer to my core, breath hot, raising goosebumps and drenching me in desire.

Cowboy gently opened me up as I froze at my exposed inner core. Panic hit, and I swallowed a scream. He released me immediately and began dropping kisses around my pussy and heated thighs. Gentle fingers stroked my skin, and I relaxed once more. This time Cowboy was clever, and he buried his face between my folds before using a finger to open me up. Before I reacted, Cowboy was licking and sucking my nub.

A low cry escaped as my hips thrust upwards, and Cowboy took this as encouragement. He used two fingers to open me wider. There was hesitation, but the sensations Cowboy was stirring were overriding any lingering fear, and I barrelled over a cliff and gave into my body's demands. Cowboy sank a hand under my ass, avoiding sexual organs, and lifted me to his mouth.

"Jesus, babe, never tasted anything as sweet!" Cowboy murmured as he devoured me alive.

A thumb slid down, found my nub, and began playing as his tongue entered me, and I cried out, grabbing his hair. Cowboy didn't stop fucking me with his tongue, torturing me with his thumb as each wave flooded me with desire. My legs tried clamping together, and Cowboy took this as a sign, removed his thumb, swooped on my nub, and nipped me. With a strangled cry, I released, and the sudden overwhelming passion spilt.

I crashed against the bed, unaware I'd been on my elbows, as Cowboy didn't pause but wrung every drop of my orgasm possible. My eyes almost rolled in my head, and I lay there wondering what the fuck had happened. This is what I'd

missed out on? Cowboy kissed my pussy before climbing to his feet and murmuring he'd be back.

I was still dazed and lost in the orgasm's wonder when Cowboy returned and washed me down before dropping the cloth on the table. Gentle fingers cupped my face, and Cowboy smiled as he saw my languorous eyes.

"That, baby, is a look I love!" Cowboy murmured and settled in for a snuggle. His cock poked me in the hip, and I felt guilty.

"What about you?"

"I'm good. He'll calm down in a bit," Cowboy replied, and twitched.

Damn, I knew he was uncomfortable.

"I could suck you?"

Cowboy's eyes went huge.

"Yeah?"

"Could try. At least it's my choice this time."

Cowboy scowled, and I realised that was the wrong thing to mention.

"Keep your hands on my chest, babe. Can't bear hands wandering to my ass when being sucked," Cowboy whispered with a hint of shame. Silently, I rolled over and shuffled down the bed. Not going near Cowboy's ass was the main thing. I slid my fingers over the tight thighs, copying his actions. I'd never made love to anybody. This was new and exciting. Cowboy was relaxed but alert. He was ready to shut down if needed.

I was empowered as muscles twitched where I traced them, and then skin raised in goosebumps as I kissed those muscles, making my way up strong legs. Cowboy twitched several times, and his cock strained towards me. Daryl had forced blowjobs, and I'd never enjoyed them, but this filled me with a strange sense of excitement and power.

This driven, powerful, muscled man with his core of sensitivity and air of vulnerability was trusting me with himself. Cowboy trusted me not to harm him. Greedily, I cupped his nuts and licked the tight little globes before making tiny sucking motions. Cowboy's hips shot off the bed like mine had, and I kept my hands in sight, one on his stomach and the other on his balls, holding them to my mouth. Cowboy kept his legs together as much as possible while my hand remained a threat. Carefully, I worked my way up his dick, and as my fingers moved higher, Cowboy's legs opened.

I nestled between them, hovering over his cock and wondering how to do this. Cowboy's eyes watched carefully as I ran my tongue up his length. He shuddered, and I realised he liked that. Repeating the action, I did it again before licking the tip cautiously. Daryl's had always made me feel sick, and I swore silently that if Cowboys did too, he'd never know. But it smelt of him, spice and musk. Cowboy shot off the bed, and I cowered back, covering my face.

"Holy crap! Babe, no! That was so good!" Cowboy exclaimed, as a hand touched mine carefully. I peeked out and saw Cowboy wasn't angry but worried and aroused.

"That was okay?"

"Yes! More than okay, but you're frightened now. We'll stop, and I'll try to temper my reactions, baby," Cowboy said, softly rubbing my arms.

"No, I wanna continue. The sudden movement startled me," I gasped and surged upwards to cup Cowboy's face.

His eyes searched mine, and I could see hesitation. Cowboy didn't want to push, and tears pricked my eyes.

"I want to, Cowboy."

A rueful smile crossed his lips.

"How can I say no?" Cowboy asked and claimed my mouth gently before laying down. His dick had softened slightly, and I frowned as Cowboy chuckled. He'd liked his balls being sucked and his length licked. Nestling back down, I massaged his nuts and saw his cock jerk. Yes! My tongue and lips

sucked again, and his balls tightened almost painfully. Cowboy's hands clutched the bedsheets as I rose above him and again took the tip.

Damn, I'd never known something so hard could feel so velvety. Cowboy was bigger than Daryl, and I doubted I could take him fully. Opening my mouth wide, I took Cowboy as deep as possible, which was only a little under halfway. Cowboy was so big and thick; he filled my mouth as he thrust gently. I tightened my lips as I withdrew, and he made a small pop. Happily, I sucked him back up, beginning to bob my head up and down.

Cowboy was squirming, and his breathing was harsh as I gave him the best blow job I could. It was probably very amateurish, but who cared? His cock was rock hard again, and I was sucking him off like a lollipop! Fingers sank into my hair as I took Cowboy back into my mouth, using my tongue to tease.

"Baby, let me go. I'm going to cum!" Cowboy moaned, and I released him.

Seconds later, cum spilt over his stomach. I used my hands to encourage his orgasm, and more erupted. I was fascinated as he came, and once Cowboy had finished, I sucked him clean, not appalled by the taste like I thought I would be.

Cowboy grabbed the washcloth and wiped his belly before hauling me up his body. His cock nestled between my legs, and my eyes widened as it responded. I looked down at our bodies, and yep, there his dick was.

"Not taking you tonight, babe. But we're going to play like this often until we can both be touched with ease," Cowboy said, kissing my pouting lips.

"I could try."

"One wrong move, and we could damage this beautiful thing we've started, baby. As much as I long to sink my cock into you, I'll wait. I will wait because you're worth it. Don't care how long it takes us, we've got this, and when we're both comfortable, we'll take the next step."

“Most guys would rush towards intercourse,” I muttered, trying to decide if I was okay with waiting. Then I knew I had to be because it wasn’t just me with sexual hang-ups.

“Not most men, baby, and I only plan to fuck you for the rest of my life. So if I wait six months before putting my cock into you, so be it, babe. Ain’t gonna blow the next sixty years for quick gratification now. We’re building something special, Jemma, and I’ll keep telling you that until you understand properly. This is us together forever. I’ve claimed you. You are mine, and I’m yours. That’s all we need to know!”

“I love you, Cowboy,” I whispered as I rolled and snuggled into his side.

His arms wrapped around me.

“You’ll never realise how much I love you, Jemma. You’re the light in the darkness, the sun in the sky, the beauty in my world. And I’ll be the best dad those kids could ever want. I swear, we’ll get them back to normalcy, where they can run and scream and not worry about punitive punishments. I’m going to fill your world with happiness and laughter, and you won’t hide behind anyone again. You’ll stand tall and know your man only has eyes for you,” Cowboy promised.

“I’ll be the best old lady you could ever want,” I replied. And I would. Whatever Cowboy needed, I’d provide. Because it didn’t matter how young he was, Cowboy was old in years and wisdom. He’d already lived a lifetime. Now it was us against the world, creating our own path, and the age gap didn’t matter. Our souls had connected, and it was love, not lust. We were meant to be.

Chapter Ten.

Four weeks later.

Jemma

Phoenix was up to something. She'd arranged for every old lady to be in church tonight, and the men had the kids, which sounded like all hell had broken loose upstairs despite our soundproofing. Even with the door shut, the riot from above us was unbelievable. I smiled because I knew Suzie and Kendrick would create their own version of chaos. Cowboy and Wild would be whacked when we left. It had taken them one week to break through Daryl's conditioning and a further one to discover my children could be hellions.

Klutz kept laughing as they complained about what mischief Suzie and Kendrick had gotten into. And then Klutz claimed he was the cool uncle and would leave Wild and Cowboy to clear up the kids' messes. Klutz had been amazing with us. He understood what had happened, and his and Aurora's support was invaluable. The five of us, with Fanatic and Calamity, had become close. With Calamity came Rosie, and it was mind-blowing how secure and loved I was by them all.

Gleefully, I sniggered as I remembered the looks on the brother's faces tonight when the kids had turned up with their pets. Those with dogs, cats, donkeys, birds, and whatever else could travel had brought them en masse, and I thought Drake would pass out. Phoenix had whistled, and every old lady and older princess had disappeared down below.

"Penance!" Phoe had yelled at Drake when he began bellowing for her.

Drake had promptly shot all his brothers a dirty stare before going green as Tony's bulldog farted. The room emptied of women pretty damn quickly after that. The freaking dog was lethal! Phoe said that Tony slept with it. Lord knows how. I'd escaped with kitties, so I'd been lucky. Although Cowboy had

ended up with a canine, so had Wild. They'd both adopted two beautiful labs. Phoe turned to us as we entered the women's church that the Rage brothers had built, and we took our seats. A wicked smile crossed Phoe's face.

"Not going to mess around. I am turning the news on in a few minutes, and I've been alerted that a very special report is happening. Everyone knows Wild and Cowboy were victims of abuse. They don't want the details known, and that's fine. But the bitches who abused them have reaped the consequences," Phoe announced and clicked on the TV.

We all sat forward as the screen lit up.

"And as we were saying, Andrew, eighteen women have been arrested for running a child exploitation ring. The main ringleader, Mrs Karoline Jeannot, is missing with her daughter Claire. They are believed to have fled the country. The FBI was alerted five weeks ago when three former victims came forward and offered statements. They were then able to track down more, leading to a known eighteen victims who were picked up off the streets, in a highly vulnerable state and groomed and abused. Once deemed too old or the ring tired of them, they were forced to return to homelessness. Sadly, two died on the streets without care or consideration.

"The FBI was investigating a group of thirty women, twelve of whom are now dead. Some suspects in custody are suspected of murdering those they called the weakest links. Twelve individuals were found beaten, stabbed, and tortured before being left to die. The FBI has confirmed the crime scenes were heavy on DNA evidence, pointing to five women accused of murder. They are major power players, but their names are being withheld for now. The rest are prosecuted for child exploitation, endangerment of a minor, trafficking, and abusing a vulnerable child.

"Special Agent Willow Ware, who leads the investigation, says more charges will be pending. Out of eighteen victims, the sixteen alive to testify have given detailed statements, Agent Ware has confirmed. She has also said that the renowned Eternal Trust is now in contact with the survivors and offering much-needed support. Stay with us for this

breaking story as we await the names of the women murdered and those arrested.”

Phoe looked smug as she muted the tv. The look she sent us all was victorious and vicious. I made a mental note not to cross her, ever!

“So for our information only. Artemis, immediately after learning our boys’ history, began tracking victims. Within forty-eight hours, we’d found four. We approached them from the position of the ET and got them apartments and whatever else they needed. As Artemis and I had the women’s names involved, we moved instantly. Several are big hitters with more power than most men. From the statements taken from the boys, we discovered twelve who were exceptionally cruel.

“They perished knowing how their victims felt. Artemis and I made sure of that. Those bitches suffered horrendously and died hard. I wish we could have dragged it out, but I guessed Willow would move as soon as she had the statements and names. Over the following weeks, we tracked every single boy those bitches abused. Mrs Jeannot kept track of them, so we knew who they were. Apart from the sixteen who’ve come forward, there were Wild and Cowboy and two who passed. Twenty boys in total.

“Mrs Jeannot logged everything, so it was a slam dunk when Willow raided her house. There were times, dates, and payments dating back ten years. The twelve who died, not including Mrs Jeannot and Claire, were the vilest of the bunch. So we took care of them because the law wouldn’t. Clues were dropped, leading to the five most powerful women, ensuring they go down for our and their own crimes. The rest will get jail time and our victims’ justice,” Phoe said calmly.

I twisted my head and saw Willow sitting there, listening. Willow did not seem bothered by Phoe’s confession. Let alone Phoe’s admission of tampering with evidence. I didn’t know many women here, but Aurora sat beside me.

“Phoe just admitted that in front of Willow? And Willow’s FBI?” I murmured.

“Willow’s a good agent. But she’s also a Rage Princess. Sometimes, with her job, Willow has to make hard choices. Those bitches deserved what they got, and Willow knows the court system would go light on them for it. Some might even have gotten away with their crimes using their power to buy their freedom. Now they won’t. Artemis is still digging into their lives and feeding Willow info, which she’s utilising to charge them with extra crimes. Willow’s got one on tax evasion and another on a hit and run in a different state,” Lindsey said from behind.

Shit, I blushed as heads turned to us.

Phoe sent a gentle smile towards me.

“Number one, never be afraid to ask a question. Two, welcome to the old ladies. And three, you can trust everyone here, Jemma, with your life. If you ever need somebody at your side, anybody here will stand by you,” Phoe said.

“Sorry,” I mumbled and ducked my head. Crap, I’d put my foot in it.

“Jemma,” Willow called.

Embarrassed, I sent her a sideways glance but kept my head down. I’d shamed Cowboy, I knew it.

“Please, look up,” Phoe exclaimed, and Aurora slipped her hand into mine as I struggled. Tears pricked my eyes, and I batted them back before someone crouched before me.

“Honey, we understand this life is new and confusing. And I totally get how you were treated. That’s gotta fill you with doubts when you have questions. But Klutz loves you, as does Aurora, and Cowboy claimed you. That means you’re ours, warts and all. You do not understand something. Ask. Willow hasn’t taken it as a slur on her credibility, and she’d explain if you let her,” Phoe said gently, and I looked up and stared into kind eyes.

“I apologise,” I muttered again.

Phoe reached out and took my hands from Aurora before squeezing them.

“Never say sorry for being yourself. Christ, Artemis would never stop apologising, or Lindsey and Autumn. And we mean it. Welcome to our family. We are so proud of you and how far you’ve come. And we love having you around, and honestly, Jemma, we’d like to see more of you. But that will happen when wounds heal, bonds tighten, and trust is absolute. But we’re happy to wait and let you reach out in your own time,” Phoe continued.

“It took me a while, Jemma. And you must know my story. Everyone in the damn world knows it!” Mina teased, approaching.

I giggled. Mina wasn’t lying. A famous actress stalked and terrorised by her sister, which resulted in the death of three people Mina had loved dearly. And losing her own child.

“Trust will come, Jemma. It just takes time, and we’ve plenty of that. And no, I’m not a dirty fed. I’d have done everything to bring those women to justice. But knowing who they are, the power their families could marshal, and the influence their husbands had might have just got their mess swept under the carpet.

“Those who died as murder victims means that their stories will be told. There can be no cover-up. I’d have loved to slap handcuffs on them and drag them out in front of the media. But the minute several names were mentioned, it came down from above all arrests were to be discreet. So if I brought those twelve in, they’d have been released within hours and escaped justice.

“Now my sense of fairness is perfectly happy. Their crimes will be known, those involved won’t walk, and the victims can move on. Just like Cowboy and Wild. I won’t lose any sleep over a bitch who wants to fuck an eleven-year-old boy up his virgin ass with a twelve-inch dildo, babe. Not a fucking single minute. And once the criminal courts are done, Phoe will support the victims in civil court, suing the fucks for every cent they can get.

“Jemma, if that makes me a dirty agent, so be it. But I can live with those decisions. And I don’t care who here knows

that. I'm a Rage princess. I know lines blur, and for me, sometimes, it's hard to toe either line. But grey exists and always will. A fed needs to look beyond black and white, see the bigger picture, and realise justice won't be served."

"What about your partner?" I asked. Around me, everyone sat up straight and stared at Willow. Now, what had I said?

Interested and curious looks were aimed at Willow, who gazed back calmly.

"Yeah, what about Grey?" Ellen demanded.

"Grey is happy to follow my lead. He also understands there are three types of justice. Real, rich, and our type. Grey is perfectly safe," Willow replied.

Scowls met Willow's comments, and I tried not to laugh as Axel's beautiful daughter sat serenely in church.

"No, what about you and Grey? Can't believe she's making us spell it out!" Silvie complained.

"We are great, thank you!" Willow grinned, and I saw the teasing light in her eyes.

"How good?" Marsha demanded.

"Aunt Marsha, after years of working together as partners, I would say we're pretty tight," Willow replied.

"Gah, the FBI teaches their agents how to avoid inquisitions!" Lindsey exclaimed, throwing her hands in the air in disgust.

"Give it up, ladies. Willow will not tell us anything." Aurora laughed.

"I bet Grey's giving it to her, though," Ali-kat said from behind me.

"Grey's someone I would love to mess up if I was not with Gunner." Autumn nodded.

"*Oui!* Those tight buns of Grey's. *Sacré bleu!*" Vivie smirked and winked at Willow.

“Well, if I wasn’t with Rock, I’d show Grey what he could do with his gun!” Carly chirped.

“Carly!” Sin exclaimed.

“Oh, like you weren’t thinking it!” Carly retorted.

Sin grinned, and Willow rolled her eyes.

“Anyone else? Penny? Serenity? Casey?” Willow asked, looking around, amused.

“Nah, you are not going to talk, so why bother? You’ll let us know when you’re ready.” Penny sighed and nudged Marsha. Marsha glowered.

“Don’t like you having secrets, baby girl. I changed your nappies!” Marsha muttered, and Willow began laughing.

I joined in, giggling at the disgruntled looks the old ladies shot at her.

Cowboy

It was Jemma’s first time in an old ladies’ meeting. And like ours, no male knew what went on during their meeting. It was funny because guys like Rock and Gunner wanted to know what happened but wouldn’t discuss our church. The old ladies often murmured the words’ double standards, which shut most of the grumblers up.

A couple of hours passed before the women returned. By then, the clubhouse resembled a war zone, and every male looked fucked. The children had ruled the roost, with Eddie leading the younger princesses while Nova watched and Dante causing trouble with the legacies. The older kids got into their own shit, which had us running back and forth. We’d regained some semblance of normalcy when Drake caved and ordered a truckload of pizzas. Once the horde had been fed, we cautiously relaxed as youngsters fell into a food coma. Which ended the moment Dante tried to steal Eddie’s drink.

To my bemusement, the room split into males versus females, and all hell broke loose. I began filming when the adults waded in, picking kids up and removing them to the sidelines before struggling back in. Of course, those placed at

the side didn't remain there. When the parent's back was turned, they dashed to the battle lines. And even worse, I hated to say it, the girls were winning, hands down. Drake stormed past me with Tony under one arm and Garrett under another. Meanwhile, Eddie was whooping and catcalling from under Gunner's arm as he dragged her and Aria out.

That didn't deter Davy, Bonnie, and Lilah from issuing war cries, attacking Gunner's ankles, and sitting on his feet to stop him from moving. Gunner sent a beleaguered glance at Fish, who was warily eyeing the little fucker known as Keme Blackelk, while the kid had a catapult in hand.

Christ, Artemis hadn't given birth to a son. She'd cloned a male version of herself, I decided as Keme shrugged and shot Fish straight in the nuts.

Fish fell to the ground, and the babies swarmed him, led by Halona, Apache's girl. Her pigtails were askew, and her dress was tucked into her panties. Behind her came Zak, Lowrider's son, and Bastian, Rock's boy. Rock swooped, grabbed Bastian by his collar, and then crashed next to Fish as Tony's bulldog barrelled into him.

I began laughing as Calamity, horrified beyond belief, stood on a table and bellowed instructions at the brothers, who shouted insults back. Nova, Falcon, Jared, and Aaron had completely given up on any sense of control and were now arming the little fuckers as they ran riot. Noting Calamity's safety, I copied him and climbed up as suddenly dogs, cats, and two donkeys appeared.

"Fuck!" Drake roared as he spotted Scout running past him. "You little bastard!" Drake bellowed at his son.

Scout grinned and crawled under my table, taking potshots at anyone who moved. Where he'd found a Nerf gun, I did not know and didn't care, as long as the little shit didn't aim it at me. I began laughing as I saw Kendrick on the back of Wild, trying to pull him down into a scrum of kids. Rock's Blake and Harrison, Drake's Dante and Lowrider's EJ were there too. Drake waded in and grabbed Dante by the scruff of his neck.

Texas yelped as Maverick took his ankles out with a chain and toppled the big man. Mav legged it before Fish, his dad, could grab him. Jesus, Mav was a little fucker, nothing like Marsha and Fish. Mav let out a war cry and tackled Drake from behind, hitting Drake's knees at the right angle to take Drake down. Drake released his grip on Dante for a second time, and both boys scrambled over Drake's back, Dante kicking his father in his head. I was crying with laughter at the sheer chaos.

Eddie climbed on a table and raised her fists, yelling a war cry as Hunter tried to grab her. She avoided his hands, her pigtails on end, her tee tied into a knot, and her jeans rolled up. She spotted Tony sneaking past and launched herself off the table, taking her twin down and getting him in a headlock. Tony shrieked for Drake as Timmy, Scout, Garrett, and Jake surrounded their father with nerf guns.

“Enough!” Phoe screeched, and a sudden silence fell.

Everybody paused, twisted, and saw the old ladies lined up. I quickly took snaps. Everyone had frozen in mid-pose, and there were many hysterical shots to be captured.

“Anyone between the ages of two and six pick cushions up. Ages six to ten start picking up the weapons and putting them away. Ten to thirteen, you got the pets! Thirteen to fifteen sort the furniture out. Fifteen to eighteen, pick the rubbish up and clear the food remainders. Over eighteen's, collect anybody under two and change and settle them down. Lex, Wild, and Harley grab a triplet and feed them. Now move!” Phoe bellowed.

I kept filming as everyone scurried into action, including the brothers.

Drake sent Phoe a relieved gaze, and she pointed at a pile of dog shit.

“You, Ace, and Apache are on doo-doo duty! How could you lose control of them like that?” Phoe demanded.

Drake opened his mouth to argue and shook his head.

“They are uncontrollable!” Ace argued.

“Really? Funny how they’re all behaving now!” Phoe retorted. She spotted me filming, and her eyes narrowed as I shoved my phone into my pocket.

“Prospect, you got some thirsty old ladies!”

“Yes, ma’am!” I said, climbing down and laughing.

Brothers grumbled as the women sent them dire looks.

“These kids are animals!” Texas muttered to Ezra, who agreed and then blanched at a stare from his sister.

Lindsey smiled evilly, and both men disappeared quickly.

“Dear God!” Jemma exclaimed when she saw Kendrick and Suzie. Suzie had a bandana around her head, which I swore was Fish’s, and her clothes were crumpled. Even funnier was the camouflage paint on her cheeks. Eddie must have got her, I decided. Kendrick had lost his sweater, his top was torn, and he had what looked like pizza smeared across his face. Both kids were grinning as they obeyed Phoe’s orders.

Jemma laughed as she caught my gaze.

“They’ll be wild within weeks!” she exclaimed.

“Well, they will fit right in!” I replied as Eddie walked past, giving Phoe the ‘Eddie stare’. Phoe merely raised an eyebrow and turned away. I was trying not to laugh as Eddie’s hair looked like it had been electrocuted. It had been in cute, neat, curly pigtails earlier. When Davy, Amelia, and Aria strutted past with similar hairstyles, I realised the girls had fluffed up their hair to make them scary. It has worked, judging by the looks on the boy’s faces. Boys were grumbling as they did their duties, while the girls did them with the pride of winners.

“My God, what are we raising?” Autumn asked with a sly smirk.

“Who gives a shit, looking at that mess? No fucker’s gonna fuck with my girls!” Sin grinned.

“Even the brothers look frightened of them,” Vivie pointed out.

“They are going to be worse than the Hawthorne Females,” Penny said proudly.

Texas shot her a horrified stare, followed by Apache and Slate, who’d overheard. They immediately began bickering about who was on Princess duty when the girls were old enough to hit clubs.

“Excuse me!” Phoe said, and they glanced at her before rounding the kids up.

I took a quick glance at a large window that I’d been assured held bulletproof glass. There were already brothers in there, placing babies in cots. It was the nursery Drake had set up so the children could sleep in a soundproofed room, but the adults could keep an eye on them. Not something I guessed was often seen around a clubhouse.

“You look happy,” I said as I put a cola down in front of Jemma.

“I am... like I’m part of something.”

“You are, Jemma, part of us, the old ladies and Rage. Feels good, doesn’t it?” I asked her, and she nodded.

“It’s not something I ever expected to feel. Not with how cold those assholes were, and they were icy frigid. But now I think you and I can undo Daryl’s conditioning and give the kids a happy life,” she said, knowing there was hope in her eyes.

It was mirrored in my own.

“Feels fuckin’ amazing,” I agreed and came around the bar to drop a kiss on her lips.

The old ladies began catcalling and joking, but none of it was mean-spirited but meant in good fun.

Finally, peace had been restored out of chaos, and everything was much calmer. I took Jemma home. I owned a bunk at the clubhouse but not a family room. I’d have to put in for one, as we had a few larger rooms to spare. But Jemma’s cosy little house felt like home.

As she got out of her SUV, she looked around, confused. I swung off my bike and hurried over to her as she plastered herself against the car.

“Baby?” I inquired, glancing up and down the street.

“Someone’s watching me. I can sense it!”

“Get the children inside,” I said quietly.

There were unfriendly eyes on us, I sensed them too. Jemma hustled the kids up the path while I watched their back. I placed a call to Drake and let him know before calling Klutz. Klutz called and informed me Hawthorne was watching the feed, but nothing was showing. Nervous, I searched the entire house and ensured everything was locked and bolted.

I wasn’t surprised to hear bike pipes about half an hour later. Peering outside, Wild walked up the path, and I let him in. He said that Harley and Tye were monitoring the back and front. Jemma came in as Wild was explaining about the extra security. She looked grateful as she curled under my arm.

“Are you okay?” Wild asked gently.

“I’m good now you’re here. I was worried about Cowboy confronting someone alone,” Jemma replied.

“Yeah, he can be a hot-headed asshole sometimes. Don’t worry, Jemma, nobody will come after you or the kids while we’re here. Go to bed, I’ll sleep down here tonight, and the back and front are guarded,” Wild responded calmly.

I felt Jemma relax, and she nodded happily.

“I appreciate everything you have done for us,” Jemma said, and Wild frowned.

“It’s what we do for family, hun. When you gonna start letting that sink in?”

“Slowly! But I’m getting there,” she answered, smiling.

“Good, now go away. I need to relax, and you must sleep. You’ve both got work tomorrow!” Wild chided, and we grinned like naughty children.

Jemma

Waking the next morning, I was amazed at how everything had come together. Working at Designs by Lindsey had been challenging. Especially learning the ropes, but it was worthwhile. There was a ton of laughter and banter throughout the workshop. I still was shy around the women who worked there but was becoming more comfortable with Silvie, Lindsey, and Carly.

Silvie and I struggled at first. She loathed to hand over anything. Finally, I earned her trust and let her assign me tiny tasks that slowly became bigger. Silvie hated being forced to rest but could understand why she needed to. I loved working there, even with the grumpy Gunner and Manny, who had a doorbell that kept me running ragged.

Silvie finally caught on to what they were doing and threatened to rip them a new asshole, and they behaved. She said they loathed being disturbed by customers, which is why they rang the bell. I didn't mention the coffee and sandwich runs they had often sent me on! Working in the morning to mid-afternoon was pleasant and left me a decent amount of time at home.

Cowboy had moved seamlessly into our household, moving in with me overnight. It was so stress-free and easy between us. I couldn't quite believe my luck. Cowboy loved coming back to dinner on the table and reading bedtime stories to the kids. He inserted himself into every aspect of our lives, and we felt like an actual family.

We still hadn't slept together fully. Both of us were not one hundred per cent comfortable with each other. But we had explored each other's bodies a great deal. My horrible tattoo was also finally gone, and my beautiful waterfall was in its place. I loved worshipping Cowboy's body, with his little twitches and rock-hard cock. It was beautiful, and I no longer felt self-conscious about my softer, more rounded body. Cowboy worshipped every inch of me, so who cared what anyone else thought?

We'd encountered some weird stares when we'd been out as a family, holding hands, or Cowboy with his arm around my waist. But we let them stare. They had no impact on our love.

They were mere irritants! There'd been some jealous looks as well as curious ones. Some women had offered me sly winks, but my blank expression had them scurrying away. I knew Cowboy had ordered my cut and his patch to say he was claimed by me, and I was so excited at having to stitch it on for him! Yeah, our love was solid, and nothing could rock it. I was sure of it.

Chapter Eleven.

Jemma

Confused, I woke to a voice I'd never wanted to hear again. Cowboy was downstairs arguing with someone that I hated beyond reason. Angrily, I slipped on a dressing gown and belted down the stairs. There at the door stood Desmond, Klutz's older brother. Furious, I shoved in front of Cowboy and glared.

"What are you doing here? You're meant to be locked up!" I yelled.

"Oh, don't worry, Jemma. You and Lynda did your jobs perfectly. I'm facing jail time, thanks to you two!" Desmond sniped, and I folded my arms across my chest.

Surprisingly, Desmond's puffed-up arrogance disappeared, and he deflated in front of my eyes.

"Jemma, I need to talk to you, please."

Cowboy's heat hit my back, and I knew he'd support whatever decision I made.

"Why? To bully me into not testifying? That won't work," I retorted. And it wouldn't. Hell, I may not be as strong as I hoped, but I was a damn sight stronger than they realised.

"No, Jemma. As much as this galls me, it concerns Ami and Bethany," Desmond replied with a weary wipe of a hand over his face. My nieces? What on earth?

"Jemma?" Cowboy growled.

"Okay, come in. But keep in mind any shit, and I'll happily let Cowboy and his brother take you apart," I said.

Desmond stepped inside, and I could tell he was not impressed with the size of the house. Compared to the mansions we'd lived in, this was small, but I liked it. At least I wasn't rattling around a huge empty space alone. This was a

pleasant change, and I didn't feel as lonely as I did in Daryl's home.

"Thought Daryl had taken care of you," Desmond opened, and I scowled.

"If you mean his life insurance and savings, yes. However, I wouldn't say Daryl took care of me, Desmond. It was more like I earned it," I retorted, and Desmond's eyes widened.

"You've changed," Desmond commented.

"Yes. Getting free of a control freak wanna be Mafia Godfather of a father-in-law does wonders for a woman's ego. Being able to make her own choices and not wear something he'd approved of. Or able to speak her mind without being treated like an imbecile. Or hell, even deciding what she wants to eat at a restaurant without your father's condemning stare," I replied, and Desmond flinched.

"It also makes a real change not to be beaten because I had an opinion of my own. Or just because the husband's a drunk asshole and is in the mood to hit someone. Because I turned into what Daryl wanted after he beat me to a pulp during the supposed honeymoon. But then Daryl doesn't like the fact I won't love him anymore? Your family was sick, Desmond, and that evil old man was behind everything. Only two siblings had the backbone to stand up to Jermaine; that was neither you nor Daryl.

"Truthfully, I hope Daryl is in hell and rotting alone. I couldn't care less. I haven't since two weeks after we married. And while I hate most of the family, I wouldn't walk away from my nieces and nephews. So please tell me why you're disturbing my and Cowboy's day before we start work?"

"I'm out on bail, allowed for a few days to resolve issues with Ami and Bethany. Oh, don't worry, I have an ankle monitor attached." Desmond pulled up a pant leg and showed the electronic tag he wore.

"What do you want, dude? Jemma and I have to get the kids to school and then work," Cowboy demanded, losing patience.

Wild lounged against the door, and Desmond eyed him warily.

“Diane’s mom and dad won’t take the girls. They say they’re spoilt, rude, and brats. Diane’s going down as long as I am. We’re looking at, at least twenty years, Jemma. With Diane’s parents not taking the kids and her brother out of the country, no one knows where, child services have the kids,” Desmond said, rubbing his brow.

“Why’s that Jemma’s problem?” Cowboy asked, puzzled. But I’d already guessed and couldn’t believe the unmitigated cheek of Desmond. But why I was surprised, I didn’t know; the entire family believed they were entitled. This was another extension of their beliefs.

“The girls are going into care because no one wants them,” Desmond answered and shot Cowboy a look. He was clearly puzzled about what Cowboy’s status was in all this.

“Dude, we got that,” Wild added.

“Desmond wants me to take Ami and Bethany,” I spoke up, and Cowboy and Wild sent me incredulous looks.

“For fuckin’ real?” Wild spluttered.

“Yeah, I am right, aren’t I? There’s only me, Lynda, and Klutz you can approach, and out of all of us, I’m the one the girls know best,” I said.

Desmond nodded.

“They love you, Jemma,” Desmond exclaimed, and I snorted.

“No, Desmond, they do not. I’m the aunt they’re familiar with. The girls are rude, entitled, and ruined beyond belief. You and Diane did that. Kendrick, Suzie, and their other cousins hate Ami and Bethany. For the other cousins who are just as bad, that’s saying something.

“Oh, don’t defend them. Ami and Bethany are vile children. And they will attempt to bully Kendrick and Suzie should they come here. Can’t give you an answer right now. I need to think about it; so does Cowboy, my partner, and my kids! I’ll not

make Kendrick and Suzie unhappy, not while they are finally turning into real kids and not little robots!”

Desmond wasn't happy with my answer. That much was obvious, but Desmond sucked his pride in.

“When could you let me know?” Desmond asked politely.

I looked at Cowboy, who shrugged.

“Tonight,” Cowboy said, and I nodded.

That gave me time to speak to him and Suzie and Kendrick. There was no way I was subjecting the kids to Ami's and Bethany's level of vileness unless they agreed.

“Know this. If we take the girls, and I do mean we, as in Cowboy and me, the girls will learn boundaries, rules, the meaning of hard work and so on. They won't be pampered princesses; I'll punish them as necessary. Desmond, I expect full custodial rights. As will Cowboy. Sadly, Ami and Bethany will be in their twenties when you get out if what you're saying is true. Depending on where you and Diane end up, I don't think weekly visits would be appropriate for a start. Once a month would be best, and you wouldn't be allowed to interfere in our decisions,” I said firmly.

“You'd let us see them still?” Desmond asked hopefully.

“I was never the monster your family was. Scheduled visits would be required, Desmond, as we have plans at the weekend. Cowboy and I are starting out, and we want our own children, so we require time to discuss this,” I replied.

“Were you outside last night? Watching?” Wild asked.

“Me? No? I only got bail this morning, and I have a man with me to ensure I don't break it. He drove me here. I have three days to resolve the kid's living problems, which is the court being generous. Courts don't usually allow prisoners to do this. If you won't take Ami and Bethany, my next stop is Lynda and Klutz.” Desmond shook his head at the word Klutz. Desmond was uncomfortable using Klutz's club name.

“Any family is better than none, right?” Cowboy asked astutely, and Desmond flushed.

“I’ll leave you to think about it. This is the number where I can be reached,” Desmond said, handing me a piece of paper.

“I can only promise we’ll discuss this,” I replied as Cowboy straightened and led Desmond away.

“You owe me nothing, Jemma. I know that. But keeping the kids out of the system would mean a lot. Yeah, my opinion means little, but thank you for considering this,” Desmond spoke as he left.

Cowboy stared when he returned, but I ignored the question in his eyes.

“Let’s get the kids ready. We’ll consider this while we’re at work. Because, to be honest, that came out of the blue!”

Cowboy nodded and jogged up the stairs, taking them two at a time to wake the children up. I gazed after him, wondering what the heck to do now. After getting the kids dressed for school and driving to HQ to drop them off, Cowboy and I had little time to talk. As we parked on the forecourt, Cowboy turned with a smile. I hurried to wrap myself around him, needing his warmth and comfort.

“Whatever you want to do, babe, we do. Simple as. If you wanna take in spoilt brats and teach them how to be decent human beings, that’s fine,” Cowboy said. “But we’ll need a bigger place!”

“You are not wrong there! Cowboy, honestly, I don’t know. You’re taking on my two children and possibly my nieces. And truthfully, Ami and Bethany are vile and really spoilt. They’d be a right handful to cope with at first,” I replied.

“Will they, though? Their family has now been banged up for six or seven months? Where have they been all this time? It sounds like the parents took them in but then gave them to child services. Even if they’ve only stayed there a month or two, it’ll be plenty to knock their snottiness out. Quite likely, they’re desperate for a friendly face. But you choose, baby, whatever you want. As long as you’re safe, sound, and happy, that’s all I care about.”

Aw shit, Cowboy was amazing beyond belief.

“And if we end up with two spoilt brats?”

“Won’t be after Eddie and her posse get hold of them,” Cowboy said with a laugh.

Oh, no! They wouldn’t be. The thought made me smile.

“Let me think. This has come out of the blue. And is certainly unexpected.”

“Whatever you choose, babe, I’m right behind you. Every single step, just remember that,” Cowboy replied, kissing my head before walking towards the tattoo parlour.

Cowboy

“What do you think Jemma will do?” Wild asked at lunchtime.

The shop had been busy this morning, so they’d not discussed the situation yet.

“Dunno. Those kids were Jemma’s family, although not by blood. Jemma doesn’t seem to like them. Words like vile and spoilt were bandied about, bro.”

“What do you think?”

“Don’t bother me either way, to be honest. If we gain two more children, so be it. But those kids will respect Jemma, and that’s final. By all reports, those youngsters are in a class of their own. Who knows, a couple of months in care homes possibly did them a world of good,” I commented.

“Or made them beyond redemption,” Wild countered.

“Yup, or that! But two little girls need a home. If Jemma offers them one, then I’ll support her decision. Doesn’t matter to me because kids are made to be loved. And I got love to give, so we’ll be okay. Jemma and I may be newish, but we’re already solid. Ain’t nothing gonna shake our foundation!”

“If you think you’ll manage, bro, then you can. You ain’t nobody who set his mind to something and failed. It’s the one thing I always envied. The ability to adapt and adjust.”

“Wild, it’s not as if we had much choice. You and I either broke or bent. We bent and came out stronger. Yeah, I got

anger for those bitches, but that hate does not define me. Their actions don't define me. I decide who the fuck I am. And I may have struggled, bro, ain't gonna lie, but I knew I'd make it because you were there."

Wild bent his head, and I hoped I hadn't sent him to a bad place.

"No one else was there for us. Nobody. Not when we needed help. And we desperately needed rescuing. But I couldn't sit back and let the darkness win. Shit, bro, I had you to care for. You credit me with surviving, I credit you with my life, Cowboy. Because there was a dark period when I nearly ate the end of a gun. Then you came home, and I knew I couldn't do that. And now, look at you, bro.

"A good woman, two kids, a home, a bike, a club and brothers. You have everything I wished you to have. Worth not eating that gun, so I could witness this," Wild said, his eyes staring into the distance.

An icy feeling ran through me. Something was wrong with Wild.

"Talk," I murmured.

A bitter smile crossed Wild's lips.

"Shit's good. Just ain't gonna get a happy ending. Some bitches still look down upon us!"

"Tell me the fuck who!"

"Bro, let it go. Bitch sees me as a piece of meat to fuck. Nothing else. A toy to play with. Time's coming, there's gonna be a reckoning, and she'll have to decide. She keeps acting as if she's going to make a choice, but I know better. Seems I fell for a woman playing games like those bitches who paid us."

"Walk away, Wild. Now!"

A rueful smile crossed Wild's lips, and I saw pain deep in his eyes.

"Problem is, I am addicted, Cowboy. So fuckin' in love, I can't see straight. But all she sees is a man who can fuck her senseless. So tired of sneaking around to fuck her. I want to be

out in the open like you and Jemma. Jemma doesn't give a fuck who judges the age gap between you and her. Jemma knows she's got your love and is proud to stand by your side."

"Wild," I whispered, worried by Wild's broken tone.

"Don't worry. Shit's good. I'll take what I can and be her dirty little secret. She's ashamed of being seen with me, a mainly uneducated biker who's younger. I don't fit into her professional or personal image. But I certainly fulfil the secret part. Soon enough, the bough will break," Wild said.

Anxiously, I caught Wild's eyes and held them.

"Walk away. This bitch is destroying you."

"Love her, not so easy," Wild mused.

"Then we'll grab Jemma and the kids, and we'll leave. Be healthier than the relationship you're in now," I offered.

Wild laughed bitterly. A hand rose to cup my cheek.

"Bro, fuck, I love you with everything I got. No matter how bad shit gets with this woman, I won't do anything stupid. But shit's gotta run its path, dude. What's that saying Drake says? The piper has to be paid? Maybe this is karma. Who the hell knows? Some twisted version of fate informing me I could have a woman like this. But I'm trash and therefore can't. Dunno, don't care. Cowboy, I'm gonna enjoy the sex and then get the fuck out of dodge," Wild said with a dry chuckle.

I wracked my brain, trying to think about who this girl was. I'd not noticed Wild hanging around someone, although he disappeared occasionally. Something was seriously wrong. Almost as if Wild believed he deserved to be treated like a whore again.

Wild laughed, slapped me on the back, and walked inside the shop.

Alone, I wondered what the hell to do.

Jemma

"Well, the kids made their thoughts clear," Cowboy said with a low chuckle.

“Painfully!” I laughed.

We’d spoken to the children. Suzie and Kendrick’s concerns were what we’d expected. As far as Kendrick was concerned, if Ami and Bethany didn’t bother him, fine. Suzie had far more opinions.

First, Suzie informed us she would not share her bedroom, clothes, or toys. Finally, if Ami or Bethany smacked her, and Suzie put the beat-down on them, they got what they deserved. Oh boy! Eddie was certainly having an influence.

Cowboy and I had been amused as Suzie laid out what was Suzie’s laws, and then our girl went off to play. We sat in the backyard with an open bottle of wine, discussing the options. Finally, Cowboy asked the question that there was only one answer to.

“Could you live with yourself, Jemma, knowing you abandoned the girls to a care home or foster parents who might abuse them?”

Half an hour later, we’d contacted Desmond and said we would take them. But we wanted full custody, and Desmond could not challenge it, nor could Diane.

Because the answer was no. I couldn’t live without knowing. Should anything happen to those girls, I’d never forgive myself.

“Better find a bigger house. Cowboy, I’ve got money. We can afford six figures,” I said.

“Jemma, I have savings too, not as much as you, but you buy the house, and I’ll pay the bills? I can afford to buy a bigger car outright too. And we’ll go half on grocery bills?” Cowboy suggested.

Damn, I was shocked he wasn’t prepared to go all hulk smash over the money.

“You happy with that?”

Cowboy shrugged.

“Babe, no point denying that you got money to buy a bigger house while I’m still getting started with Rage. I don’t get a

full cut, and if we're gonna have four kids, and however many extra we wanna add, then you gotta purchase the house. All I ask is, can I have somewhere to hide from everyone when shit gets too much?"

I laughed at Cowboy's honesty.

"As long as I have the same!"

"Of course! Want help looking for houses?" Cowboy asked.

"Don't you want to?"

"Dunno, babe. Never had a home. You know how to build a home. I've no idea," Cowboy mused.

"We'll go together! After all, you're going to be living there too!"

"Whatever makes you happy," Cowboy replied.

"You make me happy," I said, trailing a hand down his chest.

Cowboy's eyes lit up. The kids were asleep by now. Night had fallen, and Cowboy rose to his feet. Desire was already in his eyes, as no doubt it was mine. But tonight, I wanted everything. And I hoped we'd become comfortable enough with each other that nothing would stop us.

Cowboy picked me up as I squealed and carried me inside. Laughing, he locked up one-handed and then took me to the bedroom.

Gently, he placed me on my feet and cupped my face, drinking in my kisses. I would never tire of kissing Cowboy or feeling his lips against mine. With a murmur, I shoved into him, ripping his tee off and allowing my mouth to worship his chest.

Each muscle I licked or teased responded beautifully, as did my body, to his ministrations. Within minutes, we were naked and in a world where only we existed. We stumbled towards the bed, fingers reluctant to release each other, and tumbled down. I knew for a fact Cowboy could go for several hours just worshipping and loving me. But tonight, I needed to keep Cowboy focused on one thing. I wrapped my legs around his

trim waist as he rose above me. A Greek god with all the beauty they boasted.

Cowboy's arms bunched as he held his weight, and I wriggled into place and locked our pelvis's together. I stared into his eyes as I hoped he'd get the message.

"Tonight?" Cowboy whispered hoarsely.

"Yes," I murmured.

Cowboy swooped, lavishing attention on my throat, collarbones, and breasts. We'd discovered I loved my nipples pinched hard and sucked to the point of pain. Cowboy worked his way down my body, loving and preparing me for his entrance. Talented fingers and lips turned me into a mess, and I was panting and begging by the time Cowboy finished. I desperately needed his cock tonight, and I reached down and gripped it.

Two could play Cowboy's game, I thought as he surged upwards to claim my mouth. My hands kept moving, encouraging, hardening him further. My legs opened to welcome his girth, and I positioned Cowboy at my entrance. So wild with desire, I nearly slapped him when he paused.

"Look into my eyes, Jemma. Stay with me," Cowboy said hoarsely.

Ready to throw a tantrum, I did as he asked as he slowly pushed inside. Daryl just used to shove his way in, whether or not I was prepared. Cowboy was making sure I had every chance to say no and ensured that I wasn't in pain. The only time I winced was when he sharply thrust forward for the last few inches. Cowboy froze as I forced panic away.

"Good?" he asked, and I nodded.

Cowboy pulled out and slid back in. A cry left my lips at the feel of him. He was big, as I already knew, but against the walls of my pussy, he felt huge. Cowboy repeated his action, keeping to a slow, steady pace.

I was overwhelmed, and I reached out to grab his ass.

Cowboy froze on the spot, but I kept kneading, rubbing and patting, staying well away from his anus. Slowly he relaxed after realising I would not invade there and began moving again.

“My God!” the cry left my lips as Cowboy upped the pace.

Now he was hammering me, and my legs were so tightly wrapped around him that Cowboy couldn't escape if he wanted to. Our bodies matched each other's urgency as we gave into an urgent passion and let it ride out. We were hot, slick messes with only one desire. To fuck the brains out of our beloved.

Weeks of preparation finally came to fruition as waves of pleasure swept over us. We were lost in feelings neither one of us had ever experienced before.

My pussy walls tightened, and Cowboy urged me to cum. I recognised this feeling because Cowboy had made me experience it many times. I screamed as I orgasmed, my nails digging into his back, and my legs tightened. My walls clamped down on his cock as Cowboy thrust inside me, wringing every drop of pleasure possible.

“You!” I cried, needing to feel his release. Cowboy gripped my ass and drove deep, sending aftershocks through me.

Oh God, was that a second? The thought hit no sooner than I erupted again as his seed poured into me.

Cowboy, with gritted teeth, drove into my pussy a few more times before releasing a small groan, and his head dropped.

“Holy shit!” he mumbled, resting on his elbows.

“I agree!” I muttered.

“Never experienced such emotions!”

“Me either!” I agreed happily, drifting along on a cloud of euphoria. Cowboy pulled out slowly, despite my complaints, and went to get a washcloth. No matter what we'd done, Cowboy always cleaned me up.

“Babe, we didn't use protection!” Cowboy exclaimed as he looked at his seed spilling out of me.

Huh? Didn't we?

"Who cares?" I whispered and reached for him.

Cowboy's eyes warmed, and he leaned into my embrace, supporting his weight. His lips claimed mine, and my hands moved downwards, cupping his hardening cock.

"More," I said greedily.

"Yeah," he replied, taking my mouth.

Cowboy nestled between my legs and thrust gently against my folds. With each thrust, he hardened further until he could slip in again.

"Forever!" Cowboy groaned as he seated himself fully.

"And ever!" I agreed as my pussy clamped down.

Yeah, I could do this forever. And never get bored.

Chapter Twelve.

Cowboy

Wild and I were clearing up late a week later. It was our turn to close, and it had just gone eleven. The last customer had left an hour ago, and we were in the final stages of the nightly wipe-down. Determinedly, I was trying to get information from Wild about this mystery woman when the bell above the door buzzed. Puzzled, I looked across as I believed we'd locked up.

"Sorry, we're closed," I called out as I came out of the breakroom and froze.

"Cowboy, leave now," Wild demanded, but I shook my head.

Rio fuckin' Valden stood before Wild, holding a gun on him.

"Come here, boy!" Rio sneered.

I could smell the alcohol from where I stood, but that firearm was steady on Wild.

"Rio, you're messing with the wrong people," I warned, approaching slowly, keeping my hands high.

"Think I got anything to lose? You and that other bastard MC have driven me out of business! I'm losing customers!" Rio snarled.

I leaned against the reception desk.

"So, in your usual drink-addled state, you believe it's our fault. When the fuck are you going to take responsibility for your actions?" I demanded as anger rose.

"You know shit. You've always had it in for me!" Rio screeched as the gun turned to face me.

I didn't flinch. This was my sacrifice for Wild. A thank you for everything he'd sacrificed for me.

“Bullshit. You shoved your cock into our mom, yet it was our fault we were born. You kept the boozing up, despite our mother asking you to get help, and she left because of it. Yet you blamed us instead of admitting it was your addiction. Perfect Rio Valden couldn’t possibly have a drinking problem. But he’s an asshole who’d beat two young boys who had no idea how to keep house because they were damn kids.

“You were a piece of shit husband and a worse dad. Oh, I don’t blame Mom for running as far as she could to escape you. But I blame Mom for leaving us with you, knowing that you’d turn to beating us. Some fuckin’ father you were. I’d have preferred being in a home rather than living with you. Never knowing if you would be in a good mood and feed us, or in a crap mood, and beat us. Made no difference to our lives.

“And now, because of your addiction, you wanna blame us for losing your business? People were complaining about your standards long before we came along. Rage just gave them another better, more youthful, and sober option!” I sneered.

“Shut the fuck up, you little cunt!” Rio roared and fired straight at me.

I didn’t flinch as it grazed my arm, and Wild gained three steps.

“Why couldn’t you die at childbirth?” Rio snarled, spittle dripping from his lips.

“And why couldn’t you die in your own vomit? What a fuckin’ suitable ending. Only now, you’ll end up in an unmarked grave, just another drunken asshole!” I taunted.

Rio shrieked and fired again. This one missed me, but as Wild stepped forward, Rio saw him this time. The asshole spun on Wild, and it was a dead shot. Rio couldn’t miss Wild as close as he was. Angrily, I roared no and raced toward Wild as Rio grinned and lifted his hand straight in Wild’s face.

Many things happened at once. A woman screamed some words I couldn’t figure out. Rio turned to look when glass shattered in a roar of noise. A bullet fired, followed by a

second, and I crashed into Rio, taking him down. A scream came from outside, and sirens wailed as footsteps pounded the pavement. My stunned gaze met Wild's as he wavered on his feet but remained standing. Blood poured down Wild's head, and I slammed Rio's head several times against the floor before leaping up.

"Wild!" I screamed, tearing my vocal cords.

"Cowboy, I'm okay!" Wild cried, raising a hand and touching the cut. His legs wobbled, and I sat Wild on a chair away from the glass. A scream rose behind me again, and I heard men talking slowly but firmly to someone.

Quickly, I checked on Wild, saw it was a graze, and turned round. My jaw dropped as I noticed Jemma standing in front of the shop with a gun. Jemma was aiming it at where Rio had been standing, and small cat-like mews were coming from her, punctuated by a scream. Rage surrounded her.

"Baby!" I called, and Jemma's frightened eyes met mine.

"That guy shot you! He was gonna shoot Wild!" Jemma's voice rose hysterically.

Slowly, I stepped forward as that gun was now aimed at me.

"Baby, I know, and you saved us. We're both alive because of you!" I said calmly, trying to reach my Jemma.

"Cowboy, I saw him through the glass and just fired. I wasn't going to let him take you away from me!" Jemma wailed.

Jemma suddenly looked down at her hand, screeched, and threw the gun. It would have been funny if not for the fact the firearm released another round. The brothers began patting themselves down, looking for a wound, and sighed when they realised it had missed everyone.

"Get Jemma out of here!" I hissed to Ace.

Ace shook his head.

"Can't cover this up. There are witnesses. But it's okay, dude, don't worry. Rio was turning to fire on her. This is self-defence. We got it on camera!" Mac said, interrupting.

“Thank fuck!” I whispered as I gathered Jemma up.

“Jemma also yelled at Rio to drop his weapon twice. She gave clear warning she’d shoot,” Mac added.

Cop cars screeched to a halt, followed by an ambulance. Ramirez and Ben leapt out, and I sighed in relief. Jemma would get a fair shake down with Ben and Ramirez. Bobby Lucas and Dan Horton secured the scene while paramedics loaded Rio. I caught Rio’s maddened gaze, and I promised death. No matter what happened, Rio was a dead man walking. Ramirez was gently questioning Jemma, who was shocked and horrified at her actions.

Ramirez took Jemma’s statement and then told me to take her home. Ben would collect mine tomorrow, but they would take Wild’s. Mac had handed over the footage, proving Rio was turning the gun on Jemma. Camera angles are a funny thing. Mac also had the footage of Rio shooting me.

When we got home, Klutz and Calamity waited for us with panic on their faces. They’d been babysitting the children while I worked late. Jemma had attended an old lady meeting tonight. They fussed over Jemma as I settled her down and checked in on the four kids. All four were sleeping, which was great. We’d got Ami and Bethany three days ago. Bethany seemed to have undergone a complete personality change. She was a sweet little girl the same age as Kendrick.

I’m guessing two months in care homes could work miracles but not so much on Ami. As soon as Ami landed, she’d demanded Suzie’s room for herself, as she was the eldest of the four kids. Being told no, and that she was sharing with Bethany, had gone down like a ton of bricks. The following tantrum ended with Ami being forced to watch us remove all the new toys bought for her and a firm telling of the rules.

Since then, Ami has tested us in every way possible. The brat was wearing Jemma down, and I’d ensure I was around tomorrow. Jemma would be getting a lay-in. I said goodnight to Calamity and Klutz and let them both out. Klutz was rather bemused we’d taken in Ami and Bethany, but he was coming around once a day to build a bond. Something Bethany was

clearly grateful about while Ami had a chip on her shoulder. Ami would learn soon enough, I decided.

My phone pinged as I was undressing Jemma and getting her into bed. Once Jemma was settled, I promised her a hot chocolate and returned to the kitchen. It was a message from Wild.

Wild's head wound was a graze and was now patched up. Rio underwent surgery after Jemma's bullet had lodged in his fat gut. I was burning with fury and wished my sperm donor would die, but that was too much to ask for. And also might put Jemma in a dangerous position. Annoyed, I made Jemma's hot chocolate the way she liked it, with milk and cream and texted Wild a reply.

Carrying it upstairs, I discovered Jemma curled into a ball in the middle of the bed.

Of course, I knew her soft heart would be having trouble coming to terms with shooting a man. I placed the drink on the table and scooted in behind her.

"The asshole's alive and made it through surgery," I said.

"That's good, isn't it?" Jemma asked.

"For you, yes; for him, no. Because if we get our hands on him, Rio will wish your bullet had killed him." I growled.

"Rio's a nasty man. Who does that to their own kids?" Jemma questioned. "Even Desmond approached the court to speak to family members concerning his children. That must have taken some convincing, but Desmond cared enough about them."

"Rio never saw Wild or me as anything but a problem, baby girl. Let shit go. Thanks to you, Wild and I are both alive," I said firmly.

"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw you standing there, and Rio was aiming at you. Our whole life flashed before me, and I thought I would lose everything. It didn't take much to pull that gun and fire, Cowboy," Jemma admitted.

“And if you hadn’t, we’d both be dead and possibly you. Rio wouldn’t have left you as a witness. Then all four kids wouldn’t have had anyone!”

Jemma thought about that for a while.

“Somehow, I don’t feel so bad now,” she said.

“Good, drink your chocolate, and let’s go to bed. One of the holy terrors will be up early!” I replied with a yawn. I moved my shoulder and winced.

“You should have gone to the hospital!” Jemma chided.

“Babe, it was a graze. I don’t even need stitches. So drink up before I fall asleep before you, and you know I hate that!”

“I love you, Cowboy!” Jemma whispered and did as she was told.

As Jemma settled into my arms and tucked her head under my chin as she liked to, peace swept over me. Shit would be good going forward. We had a future together. My mind flicked to Wild for a brief moment. I’d help him when he asked because he would do the same for me. We were brothers. And Wild had taught me family was everything. And so had the beautiful angel sleeping in my arms. Who’d have believed a prostitute, no, a victim, no, a survivor, could end up with a life as glorious as mine? Fuckin’ hadn’t been me!

The Valden boys’ story concludes in Wild, Book four of
Rage MC-The Prospects.

Turn the page for the Epilogue.

Epilogue.

Ghost

I slid the envelope through the door of the sleeping couple upstairs. Shit was going to hit the fan very quickly. I was bone tired of being alone on the outside. I wanted to come home. The contents inside would warn Rage of the trouble heading their way. Because while Santos was down and out, the guy behind him wasn't. And the asshole wasn't finished with Rage by a long shot. The good thing was, I was now part of his inner circle. I'd yet to meet this big man, but he'd burn once I confirmed his identity.

The guy upstairs was owed this. The woman who'd been attacked belonged to him. The kid deserved revenge. I was just helping him get it.

Drake

"Sure it's Ghost?" I asked Mac.

"Yup, clear picture. Whatever Ghost posted through Cowboy's door, we'll have to wait until morning. You know what I don't get? Why doesn't Ghost come home? What's so bad that Ghost has to stay away? His brothers, his family. Ghost was never like this, so what the fuck happened?"

"Mac, once I get those answers, you all will!"

"Ghost wasn't one to play games!"

"Nah, hey, is that Ramirez pulling up?" I asked, seeing a cop car approach the gates. Recognising Ramirez, I buzzed him through, and Ben walked beside him.

I left security, went out to meet them, and stopped when I saw their faces.

"Drake, we need to take you in for questioning. A body turned up. It has been identified," Ramirez announced.

"Who?" I demanded as Mac and Gauntlet appeared behind me.

“Bulldog. Shit ain’t official; it’s just questioning,” Ben replied.

“Get my lawyer,” I said to Mac, who nodded. “I’ll come, but we’ll wait for my lawyer, okay?”

“Sure thing. As said in a friendly chat, you knew Bulldog’s enemies better than anyone. Whatever you can remember will help. Because this is yet another ex-Rage body come to light,” Ben said.

The suspicion was clear in his eyes. And Ben was right. I’d been very active in Bulldog’s death. As had Ace.

Well, guess it was time to pay that damn piper!

Characters.

Rage MC

Founders

Arrow. Drake's father.

Axel. See below.

Norfolk. Aurora Victoria's grandfather.

Fury.

Spike.

Drake Michaelson. DOB. 1975. Drake is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. His father started Rage MC and died before Drake was old enough to become president. Drake became VP and, in a hostile takeover, became president. Phoenix thinks he looks like Tim McGraw with longer hair. Drake has a leanness to him but has well-defined muscles and broad shoulders. Drake sports dark brown eyes with laughter lines. He's six foot four. He adopted Phoe's 16 children, and they have two of their own.

Apache. DOB 1969. Apache is a second-gen Rage; he was in the second lot of brothers recruited into Rage. He is one of Drake's enforcers. Apache has bright green eyes and is six foot two. He is of Native American origin. Apache's described as absolutely stunning, with high cheekbones and raven black hair that hangs past his shoulders. Apache's real name is Tyee (meaning Chief) Blackelk. He looks like Lou Diamond Philips. Apache is partnered with Rock in a construction company. He is married to Silvie and has two children with her.

Ace. DOB 1983. Ace is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Ace is Drake's VP. He's described as looking like a young Lou Diamond Philips. Like his father, he is Native American. Ace has bright green eyes and is six foot two. He is described much like his father, absolutely stunning with high cheekbones and raven black hair that hangs past his shoulders. Ace is no stranger to violence

and will do whatever it takes to protect his club. He is now married to Artemis and has several children with her.

Fish. DOB 1978. Fish's birth name is Justin Greenway. He is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Fish is Drake's sergeant at arms. He's been married to Marsha for many years and has three children. Fish runs the Rage garage. Fish has a bushy beard and untamed hair, which he keeps in check with a bandana. He is tall and broadly built and has an innate kindness.

Texas. DOB 1965. Texas is a second-gen Rage; he was in the second lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Texas's full name is Blake Craven. Texas is an older man and is the MC's secretary and treasurer. He works on bike design and specialises in paintwork. He has a robust moral code but is mindful of what the MC is capable of. Texas once alludes to cleaning up after their messes. Texas is tall and broad, with a goatee, dark salt and pepper hair slightly too long and piercing brown eyes. He can also play the keyboard. Texas stands at six foot four, and his old lady is Penny.

Axel. DOB 1951. Axel was one of the founders of the club, which makes him first generation Rage. He is the Chaplin of the MC. The Chaplin's role is to look after Rage's needs spiritually. Axel ensures their heads are straight and performs their marriages and death ceremonies. He has blue eyes, a salt-and-pepper beard, and is very loud. He's built like a mountain. Axel has wild hair which hangs to his shoulders. He is six foot six. Axel claims an old lady, a schoolteacher called Ellen and dotes on her.

Gunner. DOB 1976. Gunner is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Gunner is one of Drake's Enforcers at the MC. Gunner is described as having silver-grey eyes with thick lashes. His name is Cole Washington. James Washington is Gunner's brother, and they are estranged. Gunner's described as having long sandy brown hair, high cheekbones and firm, soft lips. Gunner owns four houses, three of which he rents; he also works at Made by Rage carving wood with Manny. He pays fifty per cent with Manny into the pot. His old lady is Autumn.

Slick. DOB 1978. Slick is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Slick loves books and is happy reading quietly. He has soft brown eyes and is heavily muscled. Slick runs a leasing company; he rents over twenty properties and pays fifty per cent into the pot. He also plays chess.

Manny. DOB 1983. Manny is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Manny's described as tall, sexy as in the cute boy next door way, with tousled blond hair and light amber-coloured eyes. He was beaten by Bulldog for failing to report a pregnant prostitute and then shot in the back by Bulldog's men. Manny is six foot four. He carves wood and works his own section of Made by Rage. He pays fifty per cent with Gunner into the pot. Manny enjoys playing chess.

Lowrider. DOB 1984. Lowrider is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Lowrider has ebony hair shaved short at the sides and longer on top. He has a roman nose, full lips, and blue eyes. Lowrider has a tattoo of black flames that crawls up his throat. He's six foot three of lean, powerful muscle and tanned. (He looks like Colin Farrell.) Lowrider's actual name is Nathan Miller. Lowrider is a mechanic and makes builds from scratch. His old lady is Lindsey.

Ezra. DOB 1979. Ezra is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Ezra has a younger sister called Lindsey, who seeks him out. He has brown eyes, is tall and has shaggy dark hair. Ezra's a broad-shouldered man with a deep, broad chest, beautiful bone structure and a neatly trimmed goatee. (Looks like Robert Downey Junior.) Ezra owns a landscaping company which is in high demand.

Mac. DOB 1970. Mac is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Mac's adept at playing the drums. He was shot protecting Lindsey from her ex-husband. Mac is responsible for running the bar. He is married to Casey.

Rock. DOB 1985. Rock is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Rock is six foot four and huge. He has a goatee and a Dodge Charger he's very protective of. He runs the Blackrock construction company with Apache. Rock has soft brown eyes and dark brown hair. He is closest to Lex out of the MC. Rock and Carly adopt three orphans he and Drake saved in the floods.

Lex. DOB 1984. Lex is third generation Rage; he was in the third lot of brothers recruited into Rage. He runs the Rage shop. Lex has hazel eyes framed by thick dark lashes. He has a dimple on his right cheek.

Blaze. DOB 1992. Blaze is a fourth-generation Rage; he was in the fourth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. He became a brother in 2016. Blaze ran the parts store but stopped when he opened a gym with Hunter. He's got green eyes. Blaze is close to Carly and thinks of her as a little sister. Blaze owns a Harley Dyna Glide and a Military Enfield he restored.

Slate. DOB 1992. Slate is a fourth-generation Rage; he was in the fourth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Became a brother in 2016. Slate runs into Penny's burning house in Rage's Heat to save her and the children with Texas. He works with Ezra in a landscaping company.

Hunter. DOB 1991. Hunter is a fourth-generation Rage; he was in the fourth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Became a brother in 2016. Hunter is also a designer for paintwork on bikes. He opens a gym with Blaze. Hunter is ripped and covered in tattoos. His old lady is Mina

Jett. DOB. 1990. Jett is a fourth-generation Rage; he was in the fourth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Became a brother in 2015. His name is Alexander Cutter. He has black hair, dark brown eyes, high cheekbones, a square jawline and firm, soft lips. He is tall and broad, lean-hipped, long-legged and tightly muscled. Jett is a mechanic, engine designer, and paintwork designer. His old lady is Sin.

Calamity. DOB 1996. Calamity is a fifth-generation Rage; he was in the fifth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. His name is Billy Tomkins. Calamity becomes a prospect after

only being on Rage for a month. He's a talented mechanic, body designer and spray painter. He interferes and stops Frenzy from harming Silvie and takes a bullet in the shoulder for Autumn. In the Rage of Angels, we discover Calamity is taking a night class for car design.

Calamity has been in love with Rosie for years but wouldn't touch her until he became a brother. He has to face his past in this book and also has to make a decision to pick either Rage or Rosie. Calamity chooses Rosie.

Savage. DOB 1983. Savage is a fifth-generation Rage; he was in the fifth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Savage is thirty-two years old and is a mechanic. Savage is Mina's alt. He shares a house with Slate.

Gauntlet. DOB 1987. Gauntlet is a fifth-generation Rage; he was in the fifth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. He works in the garage.

Klutz. DOB 1989. Klutz is a fifth-generation Rage; he was in the fifth lot of brothers recruited into Rage. Klutz is a talented bartender and often pulls scenes similar to those in the film Cocktail. He's African American. Klutz's roommate was dealing drugs in college, and Klutz got swept up in the sting. The cops beat him, and then his innocence was proven, and he was freed. He is married to Aurora Victoria.

Prospects.

Carmine. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1996, half African American and half white; he plays for the Cubs. Carmine joined Rage in 2019. He's from Maine and was adopted in 2010. Carmine looked after Tye, Harley, and Serenity on the streets. Phoe alludes to Carmine sacrificing himself to protect Harley and Serenity.

Tyelar. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1996, Tye is half Mexican and half Caucasian and is from Maine. Tye joined Rage in 2019. He was adopted in 2010. In the Hunter's Rage, Tyelar is playing for the Blackhawks. Carmine had to fly out and sort his head out. Tye, like Carmine, looked after Harley and Serenity. Phoe alludes to Tye sacrificing himself to protect Harley and Serenity.

Harley. DOB 1999. Harley's from Maine and was adopted in 2010. In November 2015, two seventeen-year-olds attacked Harley from behind, cracking his skull and putting him into a coma. Harley was protecting Christian. He has soft brown eyes and ash-blond hair. Harley woke up in Nov 2016 after the flooding of Rapid City. He joined Rage in 2019. Harley is now an apprentice Blacksmith after being told he'll never make a professional baseball player.

Cody. DOB 2000. Carmine found Cody living on the streets in Colorado; he was adopted in 2011. Bullies fear Cody because he will call them on their behaviour. Cody speaks to Phoe about joining the Trusts while he is at college. He and Christian want to run them when Phoe retires. In the meantime, he wants to manage the Rebirth Trust. Cody joined Rage in 2019.

Wild. DOB December 1999. He is known as Jonas Valden and approached Rage to join the club when he was fifteen. His father is a well-known tattoo artist, Rio Valden. Wild takes his younger brother and runs away.

Cowboy. DOB 2002, Cowboy is hot-headed and apt to act before thinking. Wild is three years older than him and has taken care of him for several years. Cowboy is immensely loyal to his brother. He leaps from his bike to Wild's, trusting his brother will catch him. His name is Zac Valden. He gets with

Rage Old Ladies.

Phoenix. DOB 1979. Drake's old lady. She is English and left England to escape an abusive relationship. She has six children she gave birth to and adopted eleven. Phoe is exceedingly well off and runs three National Charities. The Phoenix Trust, the Rebirth Trust and the Eternal Trust. On meeting, Drake Phoe has two more children with him. Phoe has long, blond hair and is green-eyed and five foot tall. She met Hellfire MC first and is loyal to them and a Hellfire sister. Her alternative guy is Ace.

Marsha Greenway. DOB 1978. Fish's old lady and the club's only old lady until Phoenix meets Drake. She's known

to be kind and caring. Axel is Marsha's alternative guy. Although the old ladies don't have a ranking, Marsha is Phoe's VP. Marsha has blue eyes and shoulder-length brown hair.

Silvie Stanton. DOB 1982. She's claimed by Apache. Silvie's kind and generous. The MC has a lot of respect for her. She has blonde, curly hair and is close to Gunner. Silvie has soft brown eyes. She works at the Made by Rage shop, working for Lindsey, helping cut material and then as a receptionist. Finally, she becomes the shop manager. Although the old ladies don't have a ranking, Silvie is Phoe's Chaplin. Her alternative guy is Gunner.

Artemis, aka Kayleigh Mitchell. DOB 1987. She has curly red hair and green eyes. She's small, dainty and muscled. Artemis has a heart-shaped pixie face and full lips. Kayleigh was taken in by Master Hoshi, and out of her alleged death, Artemis arose.

She was part of a group called Revenge before she left and formed the Artemis group. The Artemis Group became the Juno group when she went legal with her efforts. She has combat skills and has killed many times. Artemis's alternative guy is Drake. She is Phoe's equivalent of an enforcer. Artemis now has a large team working for her on search and rescue for child and women trafficking. She also provides protection, and James Washington makes use of her skills. She's extremely expensive.

Sinclair Montgomery. DOB 1993. Sin takes over her father's shop, the Reading Nook, when he dies, and they turn it into something special with Reid. Sin was an only child, and Reid became her surrogate brother. She is socially awkward and inept and feels out of place in crowds. She's described as dainty with brown hair and big blue eyes. Sin doesn't think she's pretty, but people describe her as beautiful. She has low self-esteem created by attending college and university when she was fifteen. Manny is Sin's alternative guy.

Penny Nelson. DOB 1976. Penny is a cook and server at Reading Nook. She loves cooking and baking and makes everything from scratch. She has a warm and caring attitude. Penny has two children, a son of five and a daughter of three.

She has short dark hair cut into a bob and is a few pounds overweight with blue eyes and freckles. Penny is five foot six. Her alternative guy is Fish.

Lindsey Miller nee Smithson. DOB 1989. She is ten years younger than Ezra and is his baby sister. She has brown eyes with gold flecks and long waist-length brown hair with red highlights. Her face is a sweetheart shape, and she has plump lips and high cheekbones. Lindsey has her own business called Made by Rage, Designs by Lindsey. While Lindsey is wary of strangers, she has no worries about speaking her mind to the Rage brothers. She's kind and generous. Lindsey's books are published under the pen name of L. Smithson. Her alternative guy is Mac.

Autumn Rydell. DOB 1990. When Rage finds Autumn, she's on her knees, unable to cope and has no money. She resists the relationship with Gunner at first. Autumn starts work at the Rage Garage as their office girl. Calamity is her alternative guy, and Autumn is also an enforcer for Phoe. Autumn is a brunette with dark brown eyes and a sweet heart-shaped face. She is about five foot six and is slender but has curves in the right place.

Carly Lennon. DOB 1997. She has long dark brown hair and enormous brown eyes. Carly arrived at Made by Rage underweight and traumatised. Lindsey and Silvie decided to look after her. Rock worships the ground Carly walks on. She and Rock adopt three orphans. Blaze is her alternative.

Ellen Keating. DOB 1961. Ellen works at the Black Oak Hills Academy. Ellen has rounded curves and chestnut hair with strands of grey. She usually works long hours from seven in the morning till six at night. She became the English Department Head when she was thirty-five and has held the job for twenty years.

Geneviève Angelique Blanchard. DOB 1994. Vivie is twenty-three when she meets Lex. She owns her own business, Chocolates by Geneviève. She also owns Blanchards Creations and a vineyard, amongst several other things. Vivie is a billionaire but shies away from the public. She has brown hair and green eyes and loves reading. She inherited

everything from both sets of grandparents. Vivie also holds the title Duchesse Toulouse, something Lex is slightly uncomfortable with. After her attack, Vivie stops talking, and it takes an ex-girlfriend of Lex's being mean to make her talk.

Alison Jackson. DOB 1995. Ali runs the Jackson ranch and is well thought of in the local community. When her parents died, her brother Ice Dawg moved into the farm with his biker gang. They sacked all her staff and isolated her. Ali saves Blaze from being killed by the gang and is tortured herself. Blaze protects her as he feels she suffered because of him. Ali is strong, mouthy, and not frightened to use a gun if needed. She is loyal and dedicated to raising her younger siblings. Ali's alternative is Slick.

Thomasina Mae Blake. DOB 1990. She has one sister younger than her who died, and her parents are alive, but both have divorced and remarried. Her Godfather is Walter West. Mina has been a shut-in for three years after a stalker murdered three people close to her. He stalked her for the two previous years before turning to violence. Mina was a child actress who turned into a famous actress. Since she became a shut-in, she has begun writing books about a PI under the name A. Dudley. Her alt is Savage.

Rosie Craven. (Penny and Texas) DOB 1995. Rosie is now a qualified veterinarian, and she is Texas's daughter. She's a beautiful girl with long dark hair, Slender tall and pretty, with piercing brown eyes. She is harassed by Brett, takes a civil suit against him, and quits work. When Calamity is kicked from Rage, she stands by his side and cuts Texas and Rage off. Rosie has opened her own clinic and, with Jon, a rescue centre. She also wants to open an animal sanctuary and a rehousing shelter. Rosie helps take down a dog fighting ring. Rosie's alt is Fanatic.

Aurora Victoria. She is Norfolk's granddaughter and was taken away for her protection when she was younger. Her grandmother is now dead, and Aurora has returned to Rapid City. Aurora opens a witch's shop and performs readings on people. She also has visions. Aurora's alt is Gauntlet. She

knows Klutz is her soulmate straight away and marries him quickly.

Jemma Edwards. Jemma was married to Klutz's brother Daryl. The marriage was abusive, and she planned to escape when he died. She inherited everything and moved to Rapid City to be with Klutz and his sister Lynda. Jemma struggles to come to terms with the abuse and falls in love with Cowboy. When she learns about his past, she's worried he might see her as an abuser too. She has two children. Suzie, six and Kendrick, four. She takes on Desmond's two girls, Ami and Bethany.

Rage Children.

Micah. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1995, he wants to be a mechanic and design street racing cars. He is English. In the Hunters Rage, Micah has moved to Miami and is working for a famous garage living his dream of designing cars. In Rage's Terror, he quits his job and returns to Rapid City for Harley. He is now a member of Hellfire MC.

Carmine. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1996, half African American and half white, he plays for the Cubs. See Rage list.

Tyelar. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1996, Tye is half Mexican and half Caucasian and is from Maine. He was adopted in 2010. See Rage List Serenity.

Jodie. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1997. She likes tennis and is close to Serenity. Jodie in Crafting of Rage has a minor role in a tv drama. Drake disapproves.

We find out in The Crafting of Rage Jodie's minor role has become a more significant role. In the Protection of Rage, we find out Jodie is flying back and forth to visit Harley whenever she gets a break.

Serenity. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1998, She is from Maine and plays tennis well but also likes ice hockey. She was adopted in 2010. At the end of Crafting of Rage, Serenity signed as a lingerie model. Serenity cancels her job to return home for Harley in Rage's Terror.

Harley. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 1999, Harley's from Maine and was adopted in 2010. See Rage list.

Cody. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2000. Carmine found Cody living on the streets in Colorado. He was adopted in 2011. After Harley's attack, Cody stepped up to protect his siblings at school. Cody is widely popular at school and is known to be a hothead. Bullies fear Cody because he will call them on their behaviour.

Christian. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2002. Christian defends Carmine against a group of seventeen-year-olds who were calling Carmine names. He runs for help from Harley and see's Harley get attacked. After Harley's attack, Christian withdrew into himself, and Marsha arranged for homeschooling for a few months. When he returned to school, Christian took up boxing and martial arts.

Jared. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2004. Jared is a hothead and known to use his fists to solve problems. He is widely popular at school.

Aaron. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2005. He was born after his father died, and he never met him. Aaron, the same as Jared, is a hothead and known to use his fists to solve issues. He is widely popular at school. Aaron broke his arm in 2016, leaping from the uneven bars and not listening to safety advice.

Eddie and Tony. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2010. African American, adopted in 2012. Eddie is a little diva. She says what she thinks and does what she wants. She's very strong-willed and quite funny. Drake adores her. Tony is quieter and follows his twin's lead.

Timmy and Scout. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2014. Adopted in 2014. Their mother was a drug addict. They have severe illnesses which Phoe hopes medical care will cure. The twins get the all-clear in the Crafting of Rage.

Garrett and Jake. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2014. Adopted in 2014. Their mother was a drug addict. They have severe illnesses which Phoe hopes medical care will cure.

Dante Michaelson. (Phoe and Drake) DOB 2015. Everyone says that Dante is the spitting image of Drake, including his father's attitude. Dante is strong-willed and possessive of Phoe. He hates to share his mother. He is the future President of Rage and claims Aria when he's twenty months old.

Nova (Conway) Blackelk. (Ace and Artemis) Born Feb 2003. Nova looks like Ace. Nova has countless gold medals in mixed martial arts. She has green eyes, a straight curtain of black hair and olive skin.

Falcon (Conway) Blackelk. (Artemis and Ace) Born Feb 2003. He looks like his father, Ace. Falcon prefers swimming and baseball while also winning medals for mixed martial arts. He has green eyes, a straight curtain of black hair and olive skin.

Gregory Nelson. (Penny and Texas) DOB 2011. Penny's five-year-old son. He didn't remember his father and was over the moon when Texas adopted him.

Daisy Nelson. (Penny and Texas) DOB 2013. Penny's three-year-old daughter, she loves Texas and her new big sister Rosie.

Rosie Craven. (Penny and Texas) DOB 1995. Rosie is studying to be a vet at university; she is Texas's daughter. In the Innocence of Rage, she has an attraction to Calamity but wants to finish University first. She's a beautiful girl with long dark hair, Slender and tall and pretty, with piercing brown eyes

Amelia Cutter. (Sin and Jett) DOB 2013. She is Jett's daughter and is adopted by Sin. Her mother had called her Ursula Letitia Jean. Sin and Jett changed her name to Amelia Abigail.

Davy Miller nee Masterson. (Lindsey and Lowrider) DOB 2012. Lowrider adopts her. The little girl saw her mother get beaten and snuck Ezra Junior out of the house to safety.

Ezra Junior Miller nee Masterson. (Lindsey and Lowrider) DOB 2015. Ezra holds his own against Dante even though Dante is older than him. Everyone says he's the future

VP of Rage MC, and Dante claims Alyssa for him. From Love's Rage, everyone calls him EJ. He has dark hair.

Elijah Miller. (Lindsey and Lowrider) DOB 30th September 2016

Aiden Rydell. (Autumn and Gunner) Born 1st of December 2011, his father was Carter Rydell, and he is the eldest of Autumn's three children. Aiden idolises Gunner and looks up to him.

Aria Rydell. (Autumn and Gunner) Born in May 2014, she is the eldest of the twins. Aria's very shy and quiet. Aria is discovered to be a natural skier, and Gunner gets her lessons at Terry's Peak between December and April. Phoe is having an indoor ski slope built for Aria to continue practising on.

Alyssa Rydell. (Autumn and Gunner) Born May 2014, the youngest of the twins. Alyssa is the open one and the more excitable one. Alyssa isn't into skiing and goes dancing lessons instead.

Peyton Michaelson. (Phoe and Drake) DOB June 2016.

Nokomis Isis Phoenix Blackelk. (Artemis and Ace) She was the firstborn of the twins. Nokomis means Daughter of the Moon. Born 14th Feb 2016.

Nashoba Tyee Drake Blackelk. (Artemis and Ace) Tyee is Apache's name and means Chief. Nashoba means wolf. Born 14th Feb 2016.

Hawk Axel Greenway. (Fish and Marsha) Born 4th of March 2016.

Julianna Kayleigh Greenway. (Fish and Marsha) Born 4th of March 2016.

Keith Ware. Born 1984. Keith is Axel's oldest child and only son. At thirty, Keith resembled a zombie, bone-thin, greasy, lank hair and unkempt stubble. Keith steals one hundred thousand dollars of cocaine from the Deminio Cartel and is killed because of it. But before he dies, Keith sells out Willow.

Willow Ware. Born 1991. When Axel goes to rescue Willow from drugs, she looked like a streetwalker. Her hair was teased out, and her makeup pancaked on. Willow had just turned twenty-three and appeared ten years older. She has her father's blue eyes. Willow is actually an undercover FBI officer and has been under for five years. She escapes the trap Keith set for her and warns Axel that the cartel is coming for him as payback for her and Keith.

Brooke Cutter. (Jett and Sin.) 29th April 2016.

Blake Johnson. (Rock and Carly.) Born 2010. He became an orphan with his brother and sister in 2016 when a flood hit the city, and his parents died. Rock and Carly adopt him and his siblings.

Harrison Johnson. (Rock and Carly.) Born 2011. He became an orphan with his brother and sister in 2016 when a flood hit the city, and his parents died. Rock and Carly adopt him and his siblings.

Bonnie Johnson. (Rock and Carly.) Born 2014. She became an orphan with her brothers in 2016 when a flood hit the city, and her parents died. Rock and Carly adopt her and her siblings.

Noah and Asher Washington. (Gunner and Autumn) Born 15th January 2017. Noah was born first.

Eagle and Kite Blackelk. (Silvie and Apache.) Born 1st Dec 2016

Maverick Drake Greenway. (Fish and Marsha) Born 21st April 2017.

Robin Cutter (Sin and Jett) 22nd June 2017

Keme Blackelk. (Ace and Artemis) Born on 30th June 2017. His name means Thunder.

Levi Cutter. (Sin and Jett) 16th July 2018.

Bastian Johnson. (Rock and Carly) 25th Sept 2018.

Zak Miller. (Lindsey and lowrider) 16th Oct 2018.

Halona Autumn Blackelk. (Silvie and Apache) 22nd Nov 2018

Austin Blanchard. (Vivie and Lex) 3rd June 2020.

Beau Blanchard. (Vivie and Lex) 3rd June 2020.

Everleigh Blanchard. (Vivie and Lex) 3rd June 2020.

Nathan. (Penny and Texas) Born 2010. Adopted in 2020.

Lilah. (Penny and Texas) Born 2017. Adopted in 2020.

Suzie Edwards. (Cowboy and Jemma). Born 2014.

Kendrick Edwards. (Cowboy and Jemma). Born 2016.

Ami Edwards. (Cowboy and Jemma). Born 2012.

Bethany Edwards. (Cowboy and Jemma). Born 2016.

Hellfire MC.

Chance Michaelson. DOB 1973. Chance is the Hellfire President. His father started Hellfire. Chance looks like Tim McGraw with long hair. He is Drake's older cousin. They were brought up together and are as close as brothers. They both fought to get their clubs clean from the filth that infected them. Chance is six foot four and projects a deceptive leanness; he has a muscled chest and shoulders, not heavy like a wrestler but with clear muscle definition. He's lean-hipped and long-legged. Chance's hair is shaved on the sides, the top left long, and tied back in a ponytail. He has sharp, bright green eyes with laughter lines. Chance has a neat goatee the same colour as his hair, which is a brown so dark it looks black sometimes. Has a tattoo of a pin-up girl on his right arm. He is married to Clio.

Diesel. Diesel is Hellfire's Sergeant at arms. He buys and flips houses, putting half the profit into the Hellfire coffers. Diesel, a quiet man who speaks when he has something to say, once had an old lady who split from him during the fight to clean the club. He's married to Alice.

Levi. Paint's pictures of landscapes. He has darkness in his past and sometimes disappears for a few weeks. No one knows what he does during that time. Levi also does tattoos.

Chatter. Chatter had witnessed his girl gunned down in front of him when Hellfire took their club back from the evil men who'd infested it. He works on car designs.

Smokey. Smokey has just become a prospect. He's called Smokey because he was always on a grill smoking ribs or something. Does tattoos.

Wraith. He's called Wraith because as big as he was, the man moved like a ghost and has become a prospect. Does tattoos.

RCPD.

Antonio Ramirez. He is over six-foot tall and has wavy black hair, olive tanned skin. He is Mexican and has brown soft, gentle eyes. Tonio is lean-hipped and long-legged, and broad-shouldered. He is a good cop, and Drake thinks a lot of him. Ramirez brought down his previous chief, who was taking bribes from Santos. He also quit his job when he was called out on being too close to Rage, which led to a walkout from RCPD. Tonio is involved in a fiery relationship with Sophia Hawthorne. Dylan is amused at how his cousin is running the cop ragged. Tonio is classed as one of Rage even though he's not a brother, and Drake is exceptionally fond of Tonio.

Eric Benjamin. Known as Ben. Partner of Ramirez. He's a clean cop and thinks Ramirez sometimes turns a blind eye to Rage, but he'll always back his partner up. Ben finally realises in the Hope of Rage that Rage is clean, and he's been judging them. Ben gets claimed in 2018.

Officer Bobby Lucas. An officer that is friendly with Rage MC

Officer Dan Horton. An officer that is friendly with Rage MC.

Other Characters.

Magic. He owns a bar out in the hills on an open stretch of road that is a biker-neutral zone. Magic doesn't allow violence in his bar nor truces to be broken in it. He's a big man, but no one knows his age. No one wants to upset Magic. He's

rumoured to have buried the bodies of those who've upset him in the hills behind his bar.

Daryl Edwards. Klutz's older brother. He stalked and kidnapped Aurora.

Desmond Edwards. One of Klutz's brothers.

Jemma Edwards. She is Daryl's wife and goes missing with her two children.

Lynda Edwards. She is the second youngest child and wanted to support Klutz, but her family threatened to throw her grandparents out if she did. She managed to help Jemma escape Daryl.

Jermaine Edwards. Klutz's father. He gets arrested for multiple crimes.

Dan Grey. Willow's partner in the FBI.

Kyra Jersey. A tattooist who comes to work for Rage Hellfire Designer Tattoos.

Ariella Norman. A tattooist who comes to work for Rage Hellfire Designer Tattoos.

Reggie Patrick. A tattooist who comes to work for Rage Hellfire Designer Tattoos.

Bailey Rogers. A tattooist who comes to work for Rage Hellfire Designer Tattoos.

Blythe London. She is a body piercer who used to work for Rio Valden before quitting.

Rio Valden. Cowboy and Wild's father who abused them. He beat and starved them.

Mrs Jeannot. Woman who runs the child exploitation ring. She was killed by the old ladies.

Claire. Her daughter. She was killed by the old ladies.

The Pets!

Calamity and Rosie. **Precious**-a white raven and **Layla**-a Great Pyrenees. She's a beautiful dog with a thick creamy white coat and gentle brown eyes and stands about two and a half feet high. **Henrik**-a Bernese Mountain dog. He has beautiful markings with tan colouring on his legs and tufts on his cheeks and either side of his chest. Henrik has four white paws and a white chest, while the rest is a thick black coat. His nose and mouth were white, with a trail leading up between his eyes. Henrik was two and a half feet high, slightly smaller than Layla. **Peter**-a Black Raven. **Merlin**-a Maine Coon. **Arthur**-a Norwegian Forrest cat. **Empress**-a beautiful black and grey Teacup Persian. She likes to ride around on Merlin. **Wolfie**-a Lykoi cat. Wolfie is skinny with sparse, thin fur, but his facial markings make him look like a feline werewolf. **Jester**-a beautiful white arctic fox. **Harold**-a hedgehog. **Terence**-a tortoise. **Dawn**-a muntjac deer.

Carrie. An ugly beat-up cat.

Mac and Casey. **Pirate**-a baby macaw. **Lazybones**-a big fluffy lazy cat.

Nova. **Tallulah**-a Goliath Birdeater Tarantula.

Tony. English Bulldog.

Christian. A Rat.

Jared. A lizard.

Aria. A tortoise.

Alyssa. A giant tortoise.

Willow. A Chinchilla.

Axel. A Doberman.

Daisy. Chihuahua and a hedgehog

Greg. A blobfish and stick insects.

Penny. Two hamsters.

Slick. A hawk.

Eddie. A piranha and a donkey.

Davy. A snake.

Jake. A snake.

Scout. A snake.

Bonnie. A pony.

Manny. A fluffy white cat and a German Shepherd.

Cody. Tadpoles.

Falcon. A snowy white owl.

Ben. A de-scented skunk.

Tonio. A cat.

Scout. A donkey.

Cowboy. A Labrador.

Wild. A Labrador.

Suzie and Kendrick. Two kittens.

Thank you for reading Cowboy. Please take a gander at the Hellfire MC Series, starting with [Chance's Hell](#). For more Rage, check out Rage MC, book one [The Rage of the Phoenix](#) is the beginning of the Rage MC world. Or take a peek at Washingtons, starting with [James](#).

Also, take a gander at the Love Beyond Death series, book one of which, [Oakwood Manor](#), is out now. And the new series of Love Beyond Death-The Inns begins with [The Jekyll and Hyde](#). If you enjoyed this book, please leave a review at,

[Goodreads](#) and [Amazon](#)

Please remember your reviews are so important to me!

Thank you!

Elizabeth.