



FINN

SHATTERED SOULS MC

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

HEATHER DAHLGREN

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Also by Heather Dahlgren

Heather Dahlgren

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It is because everything must come to an end that everything is so beautiful.

— Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz

MC MEMBERS

SHATTERED SOULS

Brooks Madden - President - wife - Gloria (deceased) -
girlfriend - Maren

Enzo Hynes - VP - wife - Nora

Zane Madden - SGT at Arms - wife - Harper

Kace Chambers - Member - girlfriend - Ivy

Riley Giddens - Member - girlfriend - Gillian

Porter Lawson - Member

Alex Mannes - Member - deceased

Finn Ganley - Member - girlfriend – Mia

Prologue

Mia

“Hey, I’m here,” I yell through my parent’s house.

“In the kitchen,” my mom calls.

My childhood home brings me a comfort that I’ve yet to find anywhere else. It’s filled with good memories. I miss having that. I’ve searched for it, but I tend to end up with guys who are anything but comforting.

My dad has always been there for my mom. I’ve never heard them argue or even disagree. They appear to have the perfect life. Over the years, I’ve wondered if that’s possible, even looked to find something that wasn’t perfect with them. The harder I looked, the more it became clear that whatever their secret to success is, it’s something I’ll never find.

“There’s my beautiful girl.” My mom kisses my cheek and gets back to finishing dinner.

“Where’s Dad?” I ask, pouring myself a glass of wine.

She smiles as she finishes mashing the potatoes. “He’ll be home shortly. He had some business to take care of.”

He always has business to take care of. Being a successful prosecutor has its benefits, but it has its downfalls too. There have been times when he's working on a case that we wouldn't see him for days at a time. But it also provides us the luxury of living the way we do.

"How's your friend doing?" she asks.

I smile, sipping my wine. "She's great. Going back to Vegas."

I miss my friend, Ivy, and she hasn't even left yet. I don't have many—actually, I don't have any real friends. She was as real as they get, but she was following her heart and her positive pregnancy test back to Vegas.

My mom sits down across from me and frowns. "I'm sorry. I know you enjoyed having her friendship."

"It's not about me. It's about her happiness."

"For me, it's always about you. I just want you happy," she says.

I get up to get more wine. "Mom, I'm a grown woman. You don't need to worry about me. I'm in charge of my happiness now."

"Letting go isn't easy," my dad says, walking into the kitchen.

I shake my head, grinning as he kisses my mom. "So I keep hearing."

"How's everything going?" he says, kissing my cheek.

I tell them about work and my nonexistent love life. My mom continues to tell me not to settle and that the perfect guy is out there. It gets tiresome hearing it constantly. I understand

parents feel like their child is the best, but sometimes my parents are over the top with it.

“How’d everything work out with your friend?” my dad asks.

“She’s moving back to Vegas. Thanks for helping her get out of her lease,” I say.

“No problem.”

I finish off my wine, thinking about the guys that came to her place. I was equal parts turned on and scared. They were all unbelievably hot, with a hardness that I’m sure you need to know them to get through. I’ll be honest. I can see the appeal.

“Her boyfriend is actually part of a motorcycle club,” I say.

“What? I’m glad she went home. You don’t need to be mixed up in any kind of criminal activity,” my mom says.

I laugh, tucking my hair behind my ear. “I met some of them. They were all very nice and extremely protective of each other.”

“Where did you say your friend was from?” my dad asks.

“Jim,” my mom says.

I look between them, but my dad keeps his focus on me. “Vegas, why?”

He shakes his head, grabbing a beer out of the fridge. “What club?”

I think back, trying to remember what it said on their leather cuts. “It was something souls, I believe. Why?”

My mother drops a glass, and it shatters all over the floor. Just as quickly, my father is wrapping his arms around her.

What the hell?

“Someone wanna tell me what’s going on?”

“Nothing, sweetie. My hands were soapy,” my mom says, pulling away from my dad.

They both stare at each other with small smiles. Not smiles of sadness or even love. They are smiles of understanding.

“What the hell is going on?”

My dad kisses my mom before glancing at me. “We had a friend, a long time ago, who got mixed up with a club like that. It was a bad time and memories we don’t like to think about.”

I look between them and cross my arms. “You guys were involved with a motorcycle club?”

My dad laughs, shaking his head. “No, a friend was. We were just the ones she confided in.”

“So, what happened to her?” I ask.

“She ran and found a better life,” my dad says.

I don’t know anything about clubs like that. I have no idea what they get mixed up in. The guys I met seemed hard, but I saw the love when Kace looked at Ivy. I’m sure, like any guy, it doesn’t matter if they are part of a club or a rich billionaire. He can be an asshole. I know I’ve personally experienced the latter.

“It’s a good thing your friend is gone. Stay away from her and those guys. They bring nothing but trouble to your door,” my mom says.

“I have no interest in those guys, but I’m not going to stop talking to Ivy. You just said you were the confidant for your

friend. I'll be the same for her," I say, raising an eyebrow.

My dad wraps his arm around me and kisses the top of my head. "You're right. You be there for your friend and as always, if you need anything from me, just ask."

I don't know what the hell that was all about, but it doesn't really matter. Ivy is my friend, and I'll always be here for her.

What my parents don't know can't hurt them.

Present Day

Finn

“This doesn’t make any sense,” Mia says, pacing my small living room.

Riley, a Shattered Souls club member, had gotten himself in some fucked up shit. Promising his soul to the feds when that soul isn’t his to give away. Doing it all behind the club’s back just added fuel to the fire. If it wasn’t for Mia’s stepfather, we’d all be fucked.

The problem is she just found out that the man who raised her is not her real father. Porter, another Shattered Souls member, is her father.

Finding out has to be difficult. Finding out the man who raised you isn’t your real father because your real father yells it in front of everyone is something else completely.

“Sweetheart,” I say, reaching for her.

She backs away, shaking her head. “Don’t call me that. I hate that nickname.”

I blow out a breath running my hands through my hair. She's processing shit, I get that. If there's one thing I know how to do, it's take care of a woman.

My mother is a drug addict who didn't give two shits about me. She was constantly bringing home men, sleeping with them for some free cocaine. I was eight years old the first time I had to save her life. The guy she brought home wanted payment for the amount of coke she had up her nose. Sex wasn't enough to flip that bill. There was no one else there but me, and I grabbed a knife out of the drawer and stabbed him in the arm. The fear that wrapped around me was like nothing I'd felt before, but I somehow managed to run to the trailer next door to get help. The guy tried chasing me, but I was smaller and faster. Not to mention I wasn't high.

This went on my entire childhood. If I wasn't saving her pathetic life, I was stealing food, so we both didn't die. The older I got, the more she took advantage of the fact that I would be there to help her. It got to the point she thought of it as some kind of game.

"You're a good boy, Finn. One day you will walk among kings. You will be a part of their kingdom—their empire. You will be feared and worshipped. You will fly high and soar gracefully. You're only a mere mortal now, but one day my boy, you will walk among kings."

She's high. She's always high. The stories she tells are fantasy, just like the world she lives in. It's cold, and there's no heat. The lights don't work anymore, and I hate being in the dark. Bad things happen in the dark. I hear her screaming in the dark. I've been beaten by her friends in the dark. I've been locked outside in the dark. I've hurt her friends in the dark. I've cried in the dark. I always cry in the dark.

I hear the door slam, and I'm once again alone in the dark.

“Finn?” Mia says, snapping me out of my thoughts.

“What?” I turn to look at her. She has tears in her eyes while she wraps her arms around herself. She’s trying to hold herself together. It’s something I understand.

“Did you know that guy in your club was my father? Is that why you came looking for me?” she asks.

Even though anger fills my veins, I grab her and wrap my arms tightly around her. “No, baby. I came looking for you because I couldn’t stop thinking about you. Your eyes haunted my dreams,” I whisper. She tightens her hold on me, but I pull back to see her beautiful face. “I found out about Porter being your dad the other day. I swear to you, I had no idea. When I told the club your name, he told me that you’re his daughter. I was going to tell you, but I didn’t know if it was my place.”

She searches my face. Probably looking to see if I’m lying. We’ve been seeing each other for a couple of months. I first saw her when Kace went chasing after Ivy. She was at Ivy’s apartment. She lives in California, and I live in Vegas, so the time together has been limited. The sex is off the fucking charts, but we don’t really know each other that well. The time we spend together is usually naked, and the talking is usually dirty. So, she can keep looking to see if I’m lying, but she doesn’t know how well I can hide my secrets.

“I feel like my entire life has been a lie,” she says, shaking her head.

“Listen, you have two guys that want to be your father. It’s two more than I ever had. I don’t know the man that raised

you, but I do know Porter. He's a great guy with a huge heart. He'll do anything for the people he loves," I explain.

"Why did he let me go then? No contact in twenty-two years? That doesn't sound like a guy with a huge heart to me," she says angrily.

I kiss her forehead and step away. "It's not my story to tell, Mia. If you'd like to talk to him, I can arrange that." My phone rings, and I excuse myself.

I answer it, and I'm greeted by Gillian's sweet voice. She really has become my best friend, and I'm relieved to hear from her. "Hey, everything alright?"

I sigh, lighting a cigarette on the small front porch. "No fucking idea. She's all over the place with it all. Jim, her stepdad, tried to get her to go back to California with him, but she refused. She keeps saying her life is a lie. She's pissed at him, pissed at Porter, pissed at me. I might be outta my league on this one," I say.

She laughs, and I can't help the smirk that hits my lips. She went through hell with Riley. Every time someone in this club tries to make a relationship work, the gates of hell open and pull us all in. First, it was Zane and Harper. Then Kace and Ivy, followed by Riley and Gillian. Not to mention the shit that went down with Brooks and Gloria. Her death forever changed this club. Porter couldn't make it work with his ex and lost a child because of it. Alex lost his life in the name of love. It's a vicious cycle that seems to have no end.

"Do you want me and Ivy to come over? Maybe she just needs an old friend, and I'm sure you could use a friend," she suggests.

Smoke floats toward the sky as I crush out my smoke. “That might be a good idea. We have to be around the table in a few hours, so you think you can come now?”

“Yeah, I’ll grab Ivy, and we’ll be right over.”

I sigh as I nod. “Thanks, Gillian.”

“It’s all gonna be alright, Finn,” she says.

“If you say so,” I retort.

She laughs, and I hear her car door close. “I’m your best friend, asshole, you have to believe me.”

I laugh as I hang up with her. Hopefully, having them come over doesn’t piss Mia off more, but I don’t know what else to do. She has two men who want to be her father, and I don’t even know the name of mine. Where he is or what he looks like. If he’s dead or alive. So, I don’t think I’m the best one for advice on this.

If it was a junky mom, I’d be the one to go to. The answers are clear and easy.

I walk inside, and she’s sitting on the couch. I rent this place. It’s small, old, and sometimes lonely, but it’s mine. It’s never cold. There’s food in the fridge, and it’s never dark. It’s a safe place to sleep every night.

“Who was that?” she asks, peeking up at me.

“Gillian. She’s gonna come over with Ivy. We thought you could use a friend,” I say, shrugging.

She stands up and begins pacing again. Christ, she’s gonna wear a hole in my shitty floor. “Gillian doesn’t even know me,” she hisses.

“It doesn’t matter. That’s how we work. If someone needs help, we help. They don’t need to know you to do that. Plus, Ivy is your friend. She’s the reason we met in the first place,” I say.

She excuses herself to go to the bathroom, and I go into the kitchen. I grab a beer out of the fridge and guzzle it down. I feel bad for her, I do, but I’m not looking to get caught up in the middle of her daddy issues. I just got patched into the club. The responsibility is much bigger now. I don’t need to be distracted.

I didn’t have the best example of relationships growing up, so this is all new to me. I’ve been with plenty of women and had a few relationships that lasted a couple of months, but that’s it. The wiring in me tells me to flee, so that’s what I do.

My phone buzzes, and I check the text. It’s from Zane telling us to be around the table in an hour. I toss my phone down and finish my beer.

“I’m sorry, Finn. None of this is your fault or your problem, and I’m taking it all out on you,” Mia says, wrapping her small arms around me.

My large arms hold her close, and I rest my chin on the top of her head. “You’re going through a lot. I’m not taking it personally.” I pull back so she can see my face. “I do need to leave in like forty-five minutes, though.”

“For what?” she asks, searching my eyes.

“Club business.”

She nods and kisses my chest. “Right, I can’t know.”

I don’t say anything because she’s right. This meeting is about her stepfather. Porter won’t let go of the fact that he wants something from us. I don’t know if I agree. He seems to

do just about anything Mia asks of him. I know there's bad blood there, but I think Porter is living in the past with this one.

"Are you hungry?" I ask.

"No, I don't think I can stomach anything right now."

Thankfully, the door opens. Ivy and Gillian come walking in, and I feel like a weight is lifted. Maybe I'm not ready for something serious.

Ivy goes right to Mia, hugging her. Gillian smiles at me, and I give her a quick hug. "Thanks."

"Come out front for a second," she says.

I follow her outside and light a cigarette, sitting down on the one step that there is. "Christ, I don't know what I'm doing, Gillian. It was easy when we were just messing around, but this shit is complicated."

She sits next to me and rests her hand on my knee. I glance over at her, and she smiles. "You don't strike me as the kind of guy who runs when things get tough."

"I'm not," I say, taking a drag of my smoke.

"Do you like her?" she asks, raising an eyebrow.

I run my hand through my hair and look out at the dead grass. "Yeah, but ..."

She puts a finger over my lips, silencing me. I smile under her finger, and she nods. "When you're with her, does your pulse race? Does your heart pound? Are your thoughts consumed with her? Does your body burn when she's near and ache when she's gone? Do you think you could walk away today and not think about her tomorrow?"

I close my eyes as I run my hand down my face. “She deserves better than me,” I say.

“Shut the fuck up. Don’t ever say that again. She’s the lucky one. No one else could protect her or love her the way you would,” she says.

My eyes snap open as I jerk my head toward her. “Damn, Gillian. Love is so far off I can’t even think about that. I like being with her. We have a good time. If I walked away today, yeah, I’d fucking think of her tomorrow. But I’m not in love.”

I toss my smoke, and she wraps her arm around my shoulders. “I’m not saying you love her. I’m saying no one would love her the way you could. The club scares the fuck out of outsiders. I know from experience. You guys are rough, hard, and possessive as hell. But you love, protect, and comfort your old ladies with a fierceness I’ve never seen. Until Riley, I had no idea what it felt like to have your soul connect with someone else. I can assure you that each of the girls feel the same. You’re worth everything, Finn. When you’re ready to love, you’ll know it.”

I grin as I search her face. “If you weren’t my best friend, I’d drag you to the bedroom for that little speech.”

She laughs, resting her head on my shoulder. “Being your best friend is what’s stopping you, not the fact I’m engaged to Riley.”

I chuckle as I wrap my arm around her. “Yeah, pretty much.” My phone rings, and I grab it out of my pocket. “Oh fuck, I need to get to Souls.” I jump up and look down at her. “You good?”

“We’ve got Mia. You go.”

“Thanks, Gillian, for everything.”

Mia

“I don’t know what to do, Ivy,” I say, peeking up at her. I’ve just spent the last half hour trying to talk it all out, but it’s getting me nowhere.

“It has to be your decision, Mia. I can’t make it for you,” Ivy says.

I don’t want to face any of it. Yesterday life was normal, and today I don’t even know who I am. My parents lied to me. Not just about my real father but about their friend that got mixed up with the club. It wasn’t a friend; it was my mom.

If they are lying about this, what else are they lying about? I have more questions than answers. The only ones who will give me answers are my parents, but I feel so betrayed I don’t want to talk to them right now.

Finn offered to introduce me to Porter, but I’m definitely not ready for that. I don’t know if I ever will be. I was raised by two parents that loved me unconditionally. Maybe he made a deal for that to happen, or maybe he just knocked her up and didn’t care. Either way, it doesn’t matter. I’m confused and angry, but I’m not sure I want to have another father.

“Finn had to get to Souls,” Gillian says, walking in.

My eyes meet hers for a moment, and I nod. I don't trust her. Finn is constantly talking about her, she rushes over here to be with him, and he doesn't even bother to tell me he is leaving me alone in his house. He told me she's engaged, but I'm sure none of them are trustworthy. I saw what happened with Ivy. She couldn't get away fast enough. She says she's happy now, but is she, or is she just afraid to leave?

I close my eyes against my thoughts. That's not fair. Finn is a member of the club, and I really like him. We have a good time together, and he's the best sex I've ever had in my life. I've been pushing him to let me come to Vegas and stay. I wanted to meet the rest of the club. It's every bit as intriguing as it is terrifying. That's the pull. I get it.

Now though, things are different. I don't trust anyone. The feeling of being alone in all this is terrifying. Finn's club, my parents—I feel betrayed by them all.

“Mia, is there anything I can do to help?” Gillian asks.

I don't trust her, so I look at Ivy. “Can we talk?”

Gillian doesn't even say a word. She steps back outside and closes the door. Part of me feels bad, but the other part, the bigger part, doesn't care.

“What's up?” Ivy asks.

I sit down next to her and sigh. “What's Gillian's deal?”

She laughs and turns toward me. “What do you mean?”

“Finn is always talking about her. She rushes over here, and they sit outside the entire time. He leaves without saying shit to me but sends her in with the message. Are they fucking?”

She flinches back and widens her eyes. “Woah, back the fuck up. First of all, Gillian and Finn are best friends. In this club, you need a best friend. She’s the reason I’m here. She called me and said she wanted to help you, not Finn, you. She thought since we were friends that me being here would help.” She moves closer to me, and I see a hardness in my friend I’ve never seen before. “Gillian and her fiancé just came out of the other side of some serious shit. Shit, you couldn’t begin to imagine. The love they have for each other runs so deep, just as deep as my love for Kace. She would never betray Riley, and neither would Finn. I know you don’t know these people, and right now, your head is all fucked up trying to process what went down. But they would never hurt one another, especially not for some pussy. Gillian lost her sister in a tragic way. Her heart is huge, and her intentions are real. You can’t expect to make things work with Finn if you don’t trust him. Believe me, I’ve learned that the hard way.”

She sits back, and my eyes widen. “You’re different here.”

“What?” she asks, shaking her head.

“In California, you were sweet and big-hearted. Here you’re hard and defensive,” I say, standing up. “I get it. These are your friends.”

“My family,” she corrects.

I sigh and cross my arms. “Fine, your family. But I don’t know them. I can’t blindly hand over my trust without some kind of knowledge. Finn and I are so new. He doesn’t know much about me, and I know nothing about him. We fuck around, have some laughs, and he leaves. I wanted to come here, to be included more, but now I don’t think I can handle any of it.”

She gets up and hugs me. “I’m sorry. I don’t mean to come off defensive, but this club saved me in more ways than you could ever imagine. They are my son’s family. It took time, a lot of time, but once I accepted them, they accepted me. If you want to try and make things work with Finn, you’re gonna need to accept the club. It’s complicated for you, I get that. But Finn will never walk away from the club, and he’ll never fully give himself to someone who doesn’t accept them. The jealousy and anger toward members you don’t know needs to stop. If you want Finn.”

I wipe my eyes, trying to hold back the tears. “I don’t know what I want, Ivy. I like Finn a lot. This just changes everything.”

She nods and grabs her purse. “I understand. You need to talk to your mom and find your truth. But in the meantime, why don’t you let us take you to lunch. You can get to know Gillian because she’s not going anywhere.”



We’ve been at lunch for over an hour. I misjudged Gillian. I let my jealousy get the best of me. I’m a jealous person. There’s nothing I can do about that. I’ve tried, but it’s always there. Probably because I’ve been cheated on so many times, and I always end up looking like a fool. Now I just believe everyone is trying to get with who I like or who I’m with.

Gillian is every bit as funny and kindhearted as Finn has told me. Having lunch with Ivy and Gillian, we’re laughing at stories of exes and jobs we’ve had. It helped me relax. It feels like I’m just having lunch with a bunch of friends, just like I do in California.

The conversation has now moved onto their relationships and the club, though. I'm trying to not let it affect the good mood I was just in.

"You know, the three of us are the only outsiders they've ever let in," Gillian says, sipping her beer.

"I'm not in anything," I say.

"But you like Finn, right?" Gillian asks.

I finish off my glass of wine, holding on to the glass. "Yeah, I do."

She smiles, lighting up her entire face. "Good, he likes you too."

Ivy laughs, and I glance over at her. "Sorry, but this sounds like a middle school talk at the lunch table."

All three of us laugh, and it's just what I needed.

"Too good to come have lunch at Souls Two?"

I remember this girl. She came to Ivy's apartment. She kinda scared the shit outta me.

"Shut up, Harper. We didn't want to have our first lunch with Mia involve tits and ass," Ivy says.

She pulls out a chair and sits down, dropping her heavy purse on the floor. "If you can't handle tits and ass, you are sitting at the wrong table, sweetheart."

"Harper," Ivy hisses.

She leans back in her chair and smiles. "What? We own strip clubs. If she wants to be around, she's gotta get used to it."

"I have no problem with tits and ass. I actually have them, myself," I say, shrugging.

Harper laughs, shaking her head. “Oh yeah, I like you.”

It shouldn't make me feel better, but it does. I'm not sure how it all works, but I believe she just accepted me. She seems to be the one in charge. The top girl or whatever. She's definitely the most intimidating I've met so far.

“I'm sorry for the shit that went down. I can't imagine how you're feeling. I just want to say that Porter is a good man. I'm sure you're going to go home and get your mom's side of the situation. I just want you to consider letting Porter give his side as well,” Harper says.

I understand what she's saying, but it's too much right now. The idea of talking to a man that is a stranger to me and getting his side of the story is daunting. I don't know that I can do that. Not yet, anyway.

“I just need to figure everything out,” I reply.

“Did you come from Souls?” Gillian asks.

“Yeah, I had some paperwork to drop off. Why?”

She shrugs, and both Ivy and Harper laugh. “Really? Didn't you climb out of his bed before going to Finn's?” Harper asks.

“Like you aren't waiting for Z to come home to have you screaming,” she says, laughing.

“Try finding time with a baby,” Ivy groans.

The friendship these girls have makes me envious. The girls I'm friends with in California are fun, but I don't have any close friends. Not like this. They seem to know exactly what the other is thinking without many words. I've never had a friend like that. My parents always watched closely over

who I hung out with. They really didn't let me get close to anyone.

My brows dip when I begin to think about it all. They don't have any friends. It's always just been the three of us. My friends have always been kept at arm's length.

More pieces to the puzzle keep appearing, but I can't fit any of them together.

"You alright?" Ivy asks.

I snap out of my thoughts and nod. "Yeah. I need to get home, though. Will someone tell Finn I'll call him when I can?"

"Of course," Ivy says, resting her hand on mine.

It's time to find out the truth.

Whether they're ready to tell me or not.

It's time.

Finn

“Hey brother, you doing alright?” Zane asks, sitting next to me.

I shrug, keeping my attention on the strippers on stage. It’s a good distraction from the noise in my head. “Yeah.”

“I know you don’t like talking about your private life, and we bust your balls a lot. Take it from me, don’t let that shit fester because you might take all your rage out on a prospect who doesn’t deserve it,” he says, slapping my back.

I grin, glancing over at him. I’m only newly patched into the club. When all the bad shit went down with Harper and Z, I was a prospect. I was put in charge of keeping an eye on Harper—keeping her safe. Not once, but twice I fucked that up. Zane wanted to kill me, and I don’t blame him. He had enough going on with finding Kingsley before he found us. I’ve learned a lot since then. Made mistakes I’ll never make again.

“Sometimes the prospect deserves that rage,” I say, tipping back my beer.

“You proved yourself more than once, Finn. That shit with Harper wasn’t all on you, and you know that. I was in a bad

fucking place. I don't want to see you slip into that place," he says.

I chuckle and turn toward him. "I'm not, brother. I don't even know what Mia and I have going, but her daddy issues aren't going to throw me into a fit of rage. That's her shit to figure out."

He laughs, shaking his head. "One day, her shit will be yours. You'll see."

"Hey, you guys heard from Porter?" Kace asks, turning his chair around to sit down.

"No, why?" Z asks.

He plays with his lip ring as he looks between us. "Just haven't seen him since yesterday."

"Did you ask Riley?" I ask.

"Ask me what?" Riley pulls over a chair and sits down.

"You talk to Porter?" Z asks.

He tosses back a shot and slams the glass on the table. "Give him time. He's dealing with a lot of shit running through his head. Not everyone wants to sit around braiding hair and sharing stories."

"Fuck you, Riley. We're just worried," Kace says.

Riley nods and lights a smoke. "I know, but just give him a little time. He's gotta clear his head. If we don't hear from him by tomorrow, I'll go looking." He looks between Z and Kace. "You know damn well what it's like to need a distraction from your thoughts and how you do it."

Alcohol, women, and drugs. That's what he means.

"You hear from Mia?" Riley asks me.

“Nah,” I say, looking back toward the stage.

“You think you’re gonna?” he pushes.

I squeeze the back of my neck and look at him. “I have no idea.”

He starts laughing, and I cross my arms. “Leave it to you to finally find a chick, and her dad is Porter. She’s been a part of this club before you and had no fucking idea.”

The others join in laughing, but I find no humor in the situation. He’s right. I finally find a girl that I really like and want to spend time with, and it blows up in my face. My mother used to tell me that no relationship in life was worth pursuing. She said parents abandon you, friends stab you in the back, and romance doesn’t exist. It was something I believed for a long time, considering she was right about the parents abandoning you part. This club has given me a reason to believe that friends don’t stab you in the back. They become family. They’ll have your back without question. As far as romance, I’ve seen it with members. I just never experienced that myself. So that’s still up for debate.

Before I can reply, Enzo walks over. “We need to be around the table.”

We all get up and follow Enzo. Walking into this room still gives me the chills. I’ve wanted to be a member of Shattered Souls long before I even knew what it was. It was when I saw that biker, who I now know was Axel, Zane’s father, kill a man for raping a woman. He never spoke to me, probably never even saw me, but every time I heard that bike, I’d run out of the trailer. There was no male role model for me. When Axel would drive by, I always felt that he was the kind of dad I’d feel safe with. He was the guy I wanted to be when I grew up.

And here I am. Sitting around the same table he used to be at the head of. It's an overwhelming feeling. One I've never shared before. Unlike most of these guys, I'm private. I think it's a way of self-preservation. It's how I've survived this long.

"Where the fuck is Porter?" Brooks asks, looking around.

"He's dealing with ghosts from the past," Riley says.

Brooks shakes his head, letting his cigarette burn out in the ashtray in front of him. "We all have fucking ghosts from the past haunting us. He can't just disappear. I need a full goddamn table," he growls.

"I'll go get him," Riley says, standing up.

"You'll go after this. Fill him in," Brooks says.

"What the hell is going on now?" Z asks.

Brooks scrubs his face and leans onto the table. "I got word from our California brothers that the feds are nosing around. Trying to get information on us."

Riley leans back in his seat, covering his face. After everything he just went through, this has got to feel like a punch in the gut. Z and Kace exchange looks, and I fold my hands on the table.

"I thought this shit was put to bed," I say.

"So did we, but apparently not," Enzo says.

Riley punches the table, breathing heavily. "I'm not doing this shit again. We need to fight back now," he growls.

"Hold on. We don't even know what's going on. They could just be pushing for information on what happened with Agent McKay. It could be an internal thing. Might not even have anything to do with us," Z says.

“Bullshit! If they weren’t trying to bring us down, they’d be here,” Riley shouts.

He has a point. If this wasn’t about us, they’d be nosing around here, not California. I look up suddenly and stare at the wall. California. Could it be a coincidence that Mia’s father is in California, and now shit is getting stirred again? Or maybe I’m overthinking it all and shit just never went to rest.

“Finn,” Enzo says.

I snap out of my thoughts and look around. “What?”

“You alright?”

I adjust my position in the chair and nod. “Yeah, just trying to figure out why the fuck the feds want us so bad.”

“It all comes down to Kingsley being killed. That piece of shit had his hand in everything. The feds are just as dirty as he was. They’re never going to stop until they get their revenge on us because losing Kingsley means they lost a fuck load of money coming in,” Riley says, scrubbing his face. “They won’t stop until we’re all in fucking federal prison.”

“Fuck,” Brooks yells, bringing his fist down on the table. “We need some intel. We need someone inside.”

“Maybe we take a road trip to see our brothers in California. See if they have anyone we can trust,” Z suggests.

Brooks looks around the table. “I’m fucking tired of this shit. If it’s not another club cutting us off at the knees, it’s the goddamn feds. We’ve lost brothers, been betrayed, and been forced to make unimaginable decisions. We need to be two steps ahead of this shit. Find fucking Porter, and tomorrow we vote on going to California. See what the fuck we can dig up.” He throws his beer bottle at the wall, and it shatters across the floor.

“I’ll take Finn, and we’ll go find Porter,” Riley says, standing up.

“I shouldn’t need to say this shit, but some of you handed over your balls. Nothing leaves this fucking room. I don’t give a shit if you’re balls deep inside that pussy, and she’s begging to know. Keep your mouths shut,” Brooks growls.

No one says anything. We just get up and walk out of the room. I follow Riley outside, and we get on our bikes. This shit is bad, and maybe I should mention what I was thinking, but if I’m wrong, it will make shit even worse. It’s probably best to go into this with no suspects.

My thoughts drift to Mia, and when they do, a cold chill wraps around me. Something isn’t right. I need to call her. Once we get Porter, I need to make sure she’s alright. She could be tied to us at this point, and I never want that weight on my shoulders.

We pull up to Porter’s house, and there are no lights on. I hop off my bike, shaking my head. “You think he’s even here?”

Riley bangs on the door, yelling his name. “Guess we’ll find out.” The door opens, and Porter is standing there in just boxers. “Fuck, Porter.”

“What the hell do you want?”

“Well, speaking for myself, I’d like you to put on some fucking clothes because I need to bleach my eyes to get this fucking image out of them,” Riley says.

I laugh as I step up next to him. “We’ve got trouble. We need everyone around the table tomorrow morning.”

He goes to slam the door, but Riley sticks his boot in the way. “How about you get dressed, and we take you back to

Souls now.”

“Back off, Riley. I’ll be there tomorrow,” he hisses.

“You didn’t answer tonight when Enzo called and texted telling you to be around the table. But you want me to believe you’ll be there in the morning? I know you’re going through some shit, Porter, but club shit first. Get dressed,” Riley says.

Riley is always the one joking and teasing. It’s a rare moment when you see this side of him. The serious, concerned side.

“I’ll meet you there,” Porter says.

Riley pushes the door open, and we walk inside. “We’ll wait for you.”

Porter walks away, mumbling what a pain in the ass Riley is. He glances at me, running his hand through his hair. “This is how he was when his ex took Mia and left. I don’t know what the deal is with her, but maybe you can talk to her. See if she’ll just sit down with him, give him a chance.”

I nod. “I’ll bring it up. I can’t push her to do anything, though. It’s not my place to force family on her.”

“No, it’s not, but you can try to help your brother,” he says, raising his eyebrow.

I look at him, crossing my arms. “I always do.”

Riley is texting Gillian, so I look around. Most of the photos hanging on the walls are pictures of him with club members. There’s one of him, Riley, Brooks, Enzo, and Axel. I stare at it and notice how each of them looks a little happier, a little less hard. The club has been through a lot of shit since that picture was taken. Too many attacks and lives lost. This

shit with the feds needs to end. This club, all my brothers, deserve to have peace again.

There's only one picture hanging that isn't the club, and it has to be Mia. She's little, like maybe three, but it's definitely her. Her eyes are the giveaway. This picture hanging up proves he never stopped thinking of her. She needs to know that. I can start to help the healing of this club with Mia and Porter.

"That's Mia," Porter says, walking toward me.

I turn to him and nod. "I know. Same eyes."

He sighs and runs his hands down his face. "I should've fought harder," he whispers.

"You did what you thought was best," I say.

"No, I did what I was fucking told," he hisses.

I grab his shoulders and force him to look at me. "You don't know what would've happened if you fought. She had a good life, a happy life. She doesn't hold any anger in her heart. She's pure, sweet, funny, and sensitive. Letting her go might have hurt you, but you allowed her to have a great fucking life. I wish someone would've done that shit for me. You did right by her, Porter."

He grabs me in a quick hug and pulls back with a nod. "Thanks, Finn."

I nod, and Riley walks over. "You girls done?"

"Says the guy whose balls are no longer his," Porter says.

"My balls are well taken care of. They were in the sweet, hot mouth of my girl this morning," Riley says, grabbing his crotch.

"Christ, shut up. Let's get back," I say, walking away.

There are some images of Gillian and Riley I could do without.



We're all sitting around the table, waiting on Brooks to say something. He sighs and scrubs his face. "Our brothers in California have an inside guy. I think we should see what they have to say and fast. I'm not going to bend over and wait to get fucked again. So, all in favor of going to see our brothers in California?"

It's a unanimous vote. We're going to California.

"We'll head out in an hour," Enzo says.

We all leave the table and go out to have a drink before getting our shit together. Kace brings us all a beer and sits down. "I fucking hate California," he says, tipping his beer back.

Z chuckles and slaps his back. "You have your girl. No reason to hate it anymore."

I pull my phone out of my pocket and press call as I walk outside. It rings in my ear, and I shake my head, thinking she's going to ignore me.

"Hey," she breathlessly answers.

I close my eyes and realize how much I've missed her soft voice. It brings a comfort to me that I'm not used to, but one I'm starting to crave. "Hey. I just wanted to see if you were alright?"

She sighs, and I light a smoke. "It's all fucked up, Finn. I just want to forget about it all for a while," she whispers.

My cock stirs, knowing exactly what she means. “Let me help you forget, baby. I’ll be in California tomorrow.”

“You’re coming here? Why?”

“Can’t talk about that, but I can help you forget.”

She’s quiet for a minute before I can hear the smile in her voice. “I’d really like that, Finn. I miss you.”

I swallow as I look out at the blue sky in front of me. “I miss you too.”

“Will you be able to come to my place?”

“Yeah, I can make that happen. I’ll text you and let you know when,” I say.

The urge to be with her, touch her, is crippling me. I’m starting to think she might have a stronger hold on me than I think because the thought of being with her after just a few days is making it easier to breathe.

“I’m sorry I left without telling you,” she says.

“Don’t be. I get it.”

“Hey, Finn?”

I toss my cigarette and lean against the building. “Yeah?”

“I can’t wait to see you.”

“Me either, baby,” I say.

I close my eyes and drop my head back against the wall. I don’t think that’s what she wanted to say, but I’m not going to push. Not yet. But before I leave California, I need answers. Answers about my club and whatever this is with Mia.

I’m tired of living in limbo.

Mia

I'm pacing my condo, waiting for Finn. He just texted, saying he'd be here in ten minutes. I'm excited and nervous to see him. I feel like so much has changed in a few days. He'll have questions, and I don't really have answers to give him. The only thing I know for certain is that with all this shit happening, the only person I've been thinking of is Finn.

I don't know what's going on with us. I don't know if what we have going on is just fucking around or if it's a relationship. I've been wondering for a while, but I haven't wanted to push him away by asking.

If I've learned anything in the last few days, it's that unanswered questions lead to problems. I have enough problems, so as nervous as I am, I'm going to ask Finn what this is.

When I first saw him that night when they all came rushing to Ivy's rescue, I felt like the wind was knocked out of me. When his blue eyes hit mine, my knees felt weak. His muscular body was noticeable even with his clothes on. His badass look intrigued me. The tattoos covering his body, including his neck, are alluring. He looks hard, gritty, and powerful. Yet, his eyes hold a sadness, a vulnerability.

When he called me a couple of months later to let me know everything that had happened with Ivy, I couldn't stop myself from asking him to meet me. He knew what I wanted, and he came running. We haven't stopped since.

My thoughts are consumed by him. My body burns for him. My heart is terrified to be shattered, though. But right now, I don't have a choice. It's a risk I'm willing to take. One I need to take.

I hear his bike pull up, and I open the door just as he's walking toward it. "Hey," I say, moving so he can come in.

I don't even get the door closed before he pushes me against it, slamming his mouth to mine. His strong hands hold tightly onto my hips. My fingers drag through his hair, grabbing fistfuls. He pushes his knee between my legs, pulling me closer. My body is on fire, and I rub my pussy against his leg to relieve the ache.

He growls against my mouth and pulls away, kissing down my neck. His hands drag up my body, and he grabs onto my hair. He turns my head, giving himself better access to my soft neck. His hot mouth is searing me, but when he bites down on my tender skin, I scream out.

"Fuck, I love how you react to me, baby," he says, kissing the spot he just bit.

"I need you, Finn," I moan.

He reaches down and pulls my sundress over my head, tossing it behind him. My hard nipples are begging for his touch as his hands skate down my sides. "I need you too, but I'm fucking starving, and your pussy is what I'm craving."

I close my eyes, and my head drops back against the door. The way he talks when he's turned on is the most erotic thing

I've ever experienced. He doesn't hold back with words or his body.

The sound of his cut hitting the floor causes me to open my eyes. I reach down and pull at the bottom of his white shirt, and he helps me get it over his head. He unbuckles his belt, and within seconds his jeans hit the floor.

I reach out and touch his muscular, art-covered body. He used to intimidate me, but now I crave his touch. I look up into his heated eyes as I slip my panties down my legs. "I thought you were hungry?"

He growls, reaching down and grabbing me by my hips. He lifts me, so my legs fall onto his shoulders as he slams me against the door. I reach up, holding onto the thick molding to steady myself. He buries his face in my pussy, groaning when he notices how wet I am. His tongue licks at me frantically. My head falls back, and I moan when he bites down on my throbbing clit.

"Fuck, babe," I yell.

His fingers dig into my hips as he pulls me closer to his face. I move my hips slightly, rubbing against his face. He moans as his fingers sink into my skin so hard I know I'll be bruised. His head bobs as he feasts on me. His teeth scrape against me, his lips work over mine, and his tongue pushes inside my aching pussy.

"Finn, please," I beg.

He lifts his head, biting my inner thigh. "Please, what, baby?"

"Make me come," I moan.

He moves his hands to my back and walks over to the couch with me on his shoulders. We sink down slowly, and

when my back hits the couch, he pushes my legs back as far as they'll go. "Fuck, Mia. I could come looking at your dripping wet pussy." With his free hand, he drags a finger through my wetness. It causes me to shiver, and he grins. "Hold your legs back for me. Rub this soft, wet pussy on my face because I'm getting back to my fucking meal."

I grab my ankles as he once again buries his face in my pussy. "Fuck, yes," I shout, feeling more of him in this position.

He presses his tongue against my ass and slowly licks up to my clit. He sucks on my clit, and I do what he asked and rub against him. A growl vibrates on my pussy, and he bites down. He sucks, bites, and licks at me as my hips continue to move. He slams two fingers inside my wet pussy and bites down on my clit, sending a shock through my body.

I ride his fingers, feeling his hot mouth right by them as he continues his feast. His thick fingers push me close to the edge. I feel my body begin to tense.

"I'm so fucking close," I cry out.

He fucks me with his fingers as his face presses deeper into me. His tongue lashes out against my clit at a frantic pace. I begin to shake, and he knows because he bites down on my clit, and I fall over the edge.

"Oh God, yes," I scream as my orgasm rips through me. It washes away all my fears, leaving me feeling completely sated.

Finn bites on my inner thigh again, and I let go of my ankles. He looks up at me from between my legs, and I see my release glistening on him. "So, fucking good, baby." He slowly moves up my body and presses his wet lips to mine. I taste

myself and whimper when he pulls my hair, deepening the kiss.

I feel his hard cock straining against his boxers, and I break the kiss. He searches my eyes, and I smile. “You want inside my tight pussy, baby?”

His hands move to cup my face, and he raises an eyebrow. “That an invitation because I didn’t think I needed one anymore.” Fuck, he always renders me speechless. “That’s what I thought. Get on the floor, on your hands and knees.”

I slide to the floor, grateful I have a small carpet over the hardwood. I hear him rip open the condom, and I peek over my shoulder. His muscles flex as he rolls it over his hard dick. He wraps his hand around it, pumping. My eyes snap up to his, and he gives me a small grin. “Fuck me, Finn.”

He slaps my ass, and I cry out. “I’m in charge, baby. I’ll fuck you when I’m ready,” he hisses.

Fuck, this dominant side of him is hot. It makes my pussy ache even more, and I try to squeeze my legs together. He grabs onto my hair, pulling my head back. Leaning over my back so his face is closer to mine, he nips at my bottom lip. “You make me crazy, baby. I can’t control myself with you.”

“I don’t want you to,” I whisper, searching his lust-filled eyes.

He presses a soft kiss to my shoulder, and a fraction of a second later, he pulls my hair and slams his big cock into me. I shout out in pleasure, and he groans. He releases my hair, lightly trailing his fingers down my back. His touch is so soft, but he’s pounding into me at a punishing pace. My body tries to process both feelings, but it’s all overwhelming.

“Your ass is perfect,” he says, sinking his fingers into it. He digs his fingers in as hard as he’s fucking me. “Your tight, greedy pussy feels so fucking good wrapped around me. I can’t wait this long anymore, baby. I need to feel you more than a couple times a month.”

I moan, agreeing with him, but he’s once again made it impossible to speak. I push myself back against him, and he hisses. We’re both moving frantically, trying to fall over the edge. He reaches around and pinches my clit, and I squeeze my eyes shut. I’m so close, and I know he is too.

“Fuck,” I manage as I begin to shake.

He slaps my ass and grabs my hair again, forcing my face toward him. He pounds into me harder and impossibly faster as he searches my eyes. “Come on me, Mia. I want to feel you all over my dick,” he growls.

I don’t know if it’s his heated look, dirty words, or master cock, but my release crashes over me like a fucking tsunami. I shout his name as he continues his punishing rhythm.

“Mia, fuck,” he groans, slamming into me a few more times. His orgasm finds him, and he growls as it takes over.

He kisses my shoulder as he pulls out of me. We both collapse to the floor, and he pulls me against him. My head is lying on his chest as he traces circles on my back. We’re both relaxed and completely satisfied. I feel safe in his large arms, and my heartbeat starts to pick back up.

I rest my chin on his chest, and he lifts his eyes to mine. “I feel safe with you, Finn. I feel like nothing bad can happen, and no one can hurt me when I’m in your arms.”

He pushes up onto his elbows and presses a soft kiss to my lips. “I’ll never let anyone hurt you, baby.”

It causes my body to warm, and I smile at him. “What is this?” He tilts his head, raising an eyebrow. I blow out a breath and reach up, dragging my thumb across his bottom lip. “Are we just fuck buddies, or are we a couple or what?”

He smiles and sits up, leaning his back against the couch. I straddle him as his fingers sink into my hair. “I’m not good at this. Relationships aren’t something I’m familiar with. I didn’t have loving parents to show me, and I wasn’t raised with any sort of understanding of relationships.” He pauses as he searches my eyes, and my stomach sinks. He’s not ready, and it hurts more than it should. “But if you’re willing to be patient and understanding, I’d really fucking like you to be my girl.”

Tears prick my eyes as I kiss his cheek. “I’m more than willing,” I whisper.

He holds me tightly against him, and I feel his heart pounding in his chest. It’s overwhelming, and I need to fight back the tears.

“I’m gonna make you so fucking happy, Mia,” he whispers against my hair.

A tear falls, and I swallow down my emotions. “You already do, Finn.” I pull back a bit to see his handsome face, and he wipes his thumb under my eyes, snapping his worried blues to mine. “They’re happy tears, babe.” I grab his hands, and he grins. “When do you go back?”

He sighs and releases my hands so he can scrub his face. “I have club shit to handle tomorrow morning, and then we head back.”

I nod and rest my head on his shoulder. “When will I see you again?”

“Come to Vegas,” he says. My eyes widen, and I lift my head. He kisses me all too quickly and shrugs. “I don’t know how to do all this, Mia. What I do know is that when I’m not with you, I ache.”

I wrap my arms around his neck and press my lips to his. It’s a slow, sweet kiss. He deserves so much more than what he’s had, and I only know bits and pieces. I’m done trying to please everyone but myself. Being with Finn is what I want. I have no doubt it will be hard as hell, but I’d like to try.

He rests his forehead on mine, and I smile. “I ache when I’m not with you too, babe. I’ll come to Vegas.”

His eyes widen, and a playful smile hits his lips. “Are you fucking serious?”

I shrug, smiling. “I know there’s shit to figure out with Porter. I just don’t want that to get in the way of what we have.”

“I’m not going to get in the middle of what you decide to do with that situation, but you have to understand those are my brothers, my family. If you want to be a part of my life, you need to be a part of theirs,” he says, tucking a piece of hair behind my ear.

I smile and press a kiss to his lips. “I can handle that.”

“Okay, because there are a lot of times I’m not around, and those girls, Gillian and the others, they’ll be your family. You all need to lean on each other, depend on each other, and trust each other. They can be overwhelming and pushy as hell, so you need to be able to handle it,” he says, rubbing my shoulders.

I’ll handle it all. That I can guarantee.

“It’s worth it,” I whisper.

He smiles against my lips and lowers me to the floor. I guess we're not making it to the bed tonight.

Finn

We pull up outside of the club that our brothers, Shattered Souls California, have in California, Twisted Souls. Where we have a strip club in Vegas, they have a regular club in California. A bar that I've heard is extremely successful and profitable. The big stucco building is a huge contrast to what we have in Vegas. There are large windows, large palm trees, sitting areas outside, and a bright neon sign proudly displaying the name.

It looks like the kind of place that would pull in the crowds. I can imagine hanging out here myself.

“Listen, these are all good guys. Milo Huxley—Hux—the president, and Kadon Ashford—the VP, keep Twisted Souls and their chapter of Shattered Souls running like a well-oiled machine. They handle their shit quickly and quietly. Probably something we could all learn from,” Brooks says, taking a long drag of his cigarette.

Enzo nods, agreeing with Brooks. “There are no secrets between our clubs. We've helped each other plenty of times, and that shit doesn't happen without trust. So don't fucking bullshit them.”

“Why the fuck are you two acting like we’ve never dealt with another chapter before?” Z asks, crossing his arms.

Brooks looks around at us all and shakes his head. “A lot of shit has gone down with our club since I last spoke with Hux. Shit, I would’ve preferred to keep at our table, but now that’s not gonna happen.” He looks at Porter as he tosses his smoke. “It could bring up some old wounds.”

That’s what this is about. They are gonna bring up Mia’s mom. I don’t know much about Mia’s mom or stepdad, but I have to believe they work as a team. That’s how it is with each of our club members and their old ladies. I guess that’s how it is with all relationships. But I could be wrong. What the fuck do I know about relationships?

“Don’t fucking worry about me. I know how to keep my shit together,” Porter says, glancing at Riley. “I’m not the one who reacts first and thinks second.”

“Not gonna apologize for who I am, brother. I’ll always shoot first and ask questions later,” Riley says, shrugging.

“Maybe we wouldn’t be in this position if you didn’t do that shit,” Porter hisses.

“Enough,” Brooks shouts. “We don’t even know why the feds are up our asses. It could have to do with Riley opening that door, or it could have to do with something else. Either way, it doesn’t fucking matter. We face it as a club, so shut the hell up.”

Porter isn’t really blaming Riley. He’s got too many demons trying to surface, and Riley is just his excuse right now.

“Alright, let’s fucking do this,” Enzo says.

We walk into the club, and I'm fucking blown away. I thought the outside was nice, but this is fucking amazing. It's dark and moody, but the walls are made of steel or some kind of metal, with bright blue lights between each steel beam that wraps the walls. It gives off a cool, relaxing feel. It's huge with two stories. The bottom floor has a stage for bands in the center of the far back wall. A large steel bar, again with blue lights, is at the opposite end of the room from the stage. There is a huge dance floor in the center with seating placed throughout. They have almost what looks like cubbies with bench seating and a table on the wall in front of us. There are six booths like that, and I'm betting that's for the high rollers. The guys who want some privacy but need to feel the action as well. The second level has several doors and a large railing wrapping around the entire thing. I'm sure people go up there for sex, but the balcony area is large and wraps around the entire room, so I'm sure there is plenty of dancing going on up there too. They can look down on what is happening below. It's a cool fucking setup.

"Damn, this is what I'm talking about," Riley says, letting out a low whistle.

I nod, glancing at him. "This place has a good vibe."

"Holy shit, Brooks." We all turn, and the two guys that are walking over must be Hux and Kadon. That's how we'd do it, send out our president and vice president.

"Hux, it's been a long time," Brooks says, giving him a quick guy hug. He repeats it to who I assume is Kadon and smiles at them both. "This place looks a hell of a lot different from the last time I saw it."

Kadon runs his hand down his beard as he nods. "Took a long fucking time to get it this way, but it's profitable as fuck."

“We might need to share some business ideas,” Z says, shaking Kadon’s hand. “I’m gonna need to bring my old lady here. She’d love this.”

“Any time, brother, you know that,” Kadon says. “How’s married life?”

Zane smiles and slaps Kadon’s back. “Better than I deserve.”

“You settle down yet?” Riley asks.

Kadon laughs, pulling his sunglasses off and hooking them onto his shirt. “Just like you, brother. My dick is a wanderer.”

“I’m engaged,” Riley proudly says.

Hux and Kadon both laugh as they look between us all. When we don’t join them, Kadon clears his throat. “Oh shit, you’re serious. Well, congrats, man.”

Hux looks at me and raises an eyebrow. He’s a big guy and looks intimidating as hell. He lifts his chin toward me and glances at Brooks. “Trustworthy?”

Brooks motions for me, and I step up next to him. “This is Finn. He’s newly patched in, but the best damn prospect we’ve ever had. I trust him with my life.” Brooks introduces me to Hux and Kadon.

“Finn, nice to meet you, brother,” Kadon says, shaking my hand.

Hux nods and slaps my shoulder, a grin finally finding its way to his lips. “It’s fucking great to see young blood in the mix. Welcome, brother.”

“What the fuck? Kace and I are still young,” Z says, crossing his arms.

Everyone laughs, and I realize for the first time how this brotherhood isn't just within the walls of our Vegas club, but it's everywhere.

Shattered Souls California has piqued my interest, and I'd really love to know what their story is. I'll never ask, but maybe I'll get a chance to hear it sometime.

"Let's go talk," Hux says, walking toward a door I didn't even notice until now. It looks like part of the wall, and unless you are up close, you have no idea it's a door. This place is really fucking upscale.

Once we get behind the closed door, it's more like what we're used to. The walls are painted tan, and the long hallway has photos of club members, past and present. At the end of the hallway, there's a large wooden door, much like ours, that Hux pulls open.

The room is larger than ours, but a large wooden table with leather chairs around it makes it feel like home to me. I glance around as everyone begins to take their seats. As I sit, a few more guys come in and pull up chairs to sit with us all.

Hux leans back in his chair and smiles. "This is a nice fucking view, seeing our chapters together."

"I wish it was under different circumstances," Brooks says, lighting a cigarette.

"Right, let's get to it," Hux says, resting his tattooed arms on the table. He went from relaxed and smiling to focused and serious.

"We recently had a run-in with the feds," Brooks begins, glancing at Riley. "Dirty prick tried using Riley to get his revenge for Kingsley being gone. We had him arrested, but now you're telling me the feds are sniffing around, so maybe

that shit didn't go down how we thought. I don't trust those assholes."

"Riley, what the fuck happened, brother?" one of the guys who came in asks.

This is my first time with another chapter, but these guys all obviously know each other. I feel like an outsider looking in, and I haven't felt that since I was first a prospect.

"That piece of shit found my kryptonite. He wanted info, or he was arresting my girl. I wanted to kill him, but we decided to play it a different way," he says, shrugging.

"You have a girl?" the guy asks, laughing.

"Don't be jealous. My dick has young, tight pussy every day, Declan," Riley says, grabbing his crotch.

Alright, so that guy is Declan, and by his placement at the table, he's the SAA.

"Riley, enough about your fucking dick," Brooks hisses.

Everyone laughs, but Brooks finds no humor. He's anxious, and it's showing. Hux nods his head, and another guy slides a folder toward him.

"Thanks, Wesley."

Hux passes it to Brooks, who flips it open and looks through whatever is in there.

"Wes, how the fuck you doing, brother?" Zane asks.

"Can't complain. How's Harper?" he asks.

Zane smiles, just thinking about her. "She's great. Thinking about bringing her here. She runs our second joint, and I think she'd like to see how you guys are set up."

“Hell yeah, let’s set that shit up,” Wesley says, bumping Z’s fist.

“Brooks, what are we looking at?” Enzo asks.

Brooks lifts his eyes to me, and I stare back. Fuck. “Finn, when you met Jim Woodward, did he say what he did for a living?”

I think back and shake my head. “Nah, he barely looked at me. He didn’t say shit about anything.”

The guy is definitely a shady mother fucker. I got that vibe off him immediately. Maybe it’s ‘cause he was hiding secrets from Mia and I was close to that secret, or maybe it’s something else. The look on Brooks’ face tells me it’s the latter.

“Well, looks like he’s been the one snooping around. Looking into you and Porter.” He slams the folder closed and scrubs his face. “He’s a dirty fucking prosecutor.”

“So, he’s got big contacts and connections,” Zane says, shaking his head.

“Jim Woodward? He has a daughter, Mia?” Hux asks.

My spine stiffens as he says her name. That’s my girl. How the fuck does he know her?

“That’s my fucking daughter,” Porter says, clenching his fists.

Every Cali member turns to stare at Porter. “The fuck you talking about, Porter?” Hux asks.

He drops his head into his hands and stares at the table. “My ex took Mia when she was little and moved here with that prick Jim. I fucked up letting that happen, and now karma has

finally come back to bite me in the fat ass because Finn is dating her.”

This time they all look at me. “You fucking serious?” Hux asks.

I nod and cross my arms. “I didn’t know the situation, but even if I did, it wouldn’t have stopped me. Whatever is going on with her parents, she has no idea. She’s naive to this life completely.”

Zane chuckles, but I ignore him, keeping my hard eyes on Hux. He has my respect as president of this chapter, but I’m not gonna let them talk shit about my girl. I don’t give a fuck how that makes me look. I just told her last night I wanted to make this work. That I wouldn’t let anyone hurt her, and I won’t. I don’t know what the hell I’m doing when it comes to relationships, but the need to defend her to this club, or anyone for that matter, is fucking strong. It’s something I need to get used to.

“You’re right. She has no idea the shit her stepdaddy is mixed up in. Neither does her mother,” Kadon says.

“How do you know this about them?” I ask.

“Jim has tried sniffing around here in the past, but we’ve got nothing for him. Twisted Souls’ business is legit, and our club business is well protected. He’s got deep connections with the feds, so I wouldn’t be surprised if he sent that dirty prick to Riley to get his foot in your door. But with Porter being Mia’s dad and Finn banging her, that changes everything,” Hux says, shaking his head.

Porter snaps his head to me, and I try not to grin. He’s so pissed about everything, but he’s looking at me like his daughter was a virgin, and I took it from her.

“So now what?” Brooks asks.

“Now you need to figure out what he knows. What could he have against you?” Hux asks.

Zane sighs, scrubbing his face. “Kingsley’s death. That’s what the feds are most pissed about. When he was killed, so was their deal. Don’t know how many feds had their hands in that pot, but I’m guessing it was more than the one that came at Riley.”

Hux lights a cigar, and the smoke floats around his head. “Who did the kill?”

It’s quiet, and Zane finally clears his throat. “Me.”

Fuck. He’s lying. Harper killed her father, but Zane will never allow her any more pain.

“Anyone know for sure? Was there a funeral? His club still together?” He tilts his head, looking at Zane. “His daughter know?”

He knows Zane is lying, and Brooks looks about ready to kill Zane for the lie. I don’t know what help any of this is doing. If this chapter knows anything, it’s how to fuck with our emotions.

“It was taken care of properly, like everything we do. None of that shit matters. Kingsley’s death is known because he’s gone. There’s no body for proof, but his drug trafficking is gone, so they know he is. Anything else is circumstantial,” Brooks growls.

“You know how this shit goes, Brooks. No such thing as circumstantial. They want evidence, they’ll make that shit appear,” Kadon says.

“So, we kill him, end the problem,” Riley suggests, grinning.

Hux chuckles, shaking his head. “If it was only that easy, brother. Wesley can dig around and talk to our contacts. See if there’s something helpful. But if you want to be rid of the demon, you’re gonna need to face him.”

I look around the table, confused. Hux just said don’t kill him but wouldn’t getting rid of the demon be killing him?

“Meaning?” Zane asks.

“Meaning, you need leverage. You need the fucking advantage.” Hux looks at Riley and nods. “He found your kryptonite. It’s time you found his.”

My eyes widen as I snap my head to Brooks. “No fucking way.”

Brooks doesn’t even glance my way. He keeps his focus on Hux. Zane gives me pity eyes, and I shake my head. Mia has nothing to do with any of this. Use her fucking mother. I’m not going to allow anyone to use Mia as bait. I don’t know shit about relationships or love, but I know how to protect someone. I just asked Mia last night to be patient with me as I try to figure this out. I sure as fuck won’t ask her to also put her life on the line.

“See what Wesley can dig up. I appreciate your help, and believe me, I wish we could stick around, but we need to get back to Vegas,” Brooks says.

“You need help, you fucking call,” Hux says, getting up to give Brooks a hug.

“Be careful. This guy is a slimy fuck,” Kadon says.

We all get up, and they all talk a bit, but my head is spinning.

Am I just too new to this to understand exactly what the plan is, or am I gonna lose the girl before I even have her?

Mia

I look at the suitcases waiting to be wheeled out to my car. I'm leaving for Vegas today, and the only ones who know are Finn and me. My parents are going to go ballistic, but I don't care anymore. After talking with them, I have more questions than answers. I feel like everything in my life is a lie. There were no answers. Only more questions.

I walk into my mother's house, and she comes rushing from the kitchen. "Mia, thank goodness," she cries, reaching out to hug me.

I've never stepped away from the affection my mother shows me, but right now, I can't even handle her near me. Her face drops as I step out of the way, and she crosses her arms. I do the same, and we stare at each other, neither wanting to be the first to speak.

She sighs, shaking her head. "I'm sure you have questions," she says.

I give a bitter laugh, running my hands through my hair. I compose myself and turn my angry eyes toward her. "No more lies. Nothing fits together, and I need to know the truth."

She nods and walks over to pick up her phone. My eyebrows dip as I look at her. "I'm calling your father," she

whispers.

“Which one?” I hiss.

Her eyes widen, and a look of anger crosses her face. She’s crazy if she thinks I can control my mouth or my anger at this point. I’ve had too much time to think, and she’s the only one with the answers.

“Your father is on his way. Let’s wait for him,” she says, moving to the kitchen.

I follow behind, my body beginning to shake with anger. “Why? Why can’t you ever talk to me without him? Do you need your stories to line up?”

She spins around, and her eyes narrow as she looks at me. “We have no stories.”

My laugh is hollow as I sit down at the table. “Oh really? So, Porter Lawson, a member of the Shattered Souls MC, isn’t my real father? You didn’t lie to me my entire life, creating a story that cut out one of the main characters?”

“I did everything for you, Mia. Every decision I’ve ever made. Every consequence I’ve ever faced. Every pain I’ve ever felt. Every tear I’ve shed. It’s all been for you. To make sure you have the life you deserve,” she angrily says.

“Was he a bad man? A bad father? Did he hurt you? Did you feel desperate to run?” I whisper, searching her watery eyes.

“Yes.”

I spin around to see my father dropping his briefcase to the floor. He walks over to my mom and kisses her gently, and for the first time in my life, I see it as manipulation, not love.

“Mom, is that true?” I ask, ignoring what my father just said.

She peeks at him, and I notice his slight nod. What the fuck?

“Yes, it’s true,” she whispers.

My stomach twists as I think of what she must’ve gone through, but the very small grin on my father’s face makes me wonder if I’m still being lied to.

I take a deep breath and nod. “I want to know exactly what happened.”

“Porter is a bad man. You and your mother needed to be safe, and I provided that without question. There’s nothing else to know,” my father says, wrapping his arm around my mom.

“Why?” I ask.

“Why what?” he asks, dipping his brows.

I stand up and pace the kitchen. The anger slowly turning to rage. I’m not getting answers. I’m getting dismissed.

I stop pacing, putting my hands on my hips. “Why is Porter a bad man? What did he do that made you feel you needed to run? Did you have a relationship with him? Did you love him?”

“Mia,” my mom says, reaching for me.

I step back, shaking my head. “No! I don’t want a fucking hug.”

“Watch it,” my dad hisses.

I ignore him and focus on my mom. “Did you have a relationship with Porter?”

“Yes,” she whispers.

“How long were you together?” I ask.

“Vic, don’t,” my dad whispers, turning my mom’s face to his. “Don’t.”

I watch this playing out in front of me, and I suddenly realize that all the times I thought my dad was being loving and sweet, he was being controlling and manipulative. My stomach tightens in knots, seeing what a lie my life has been, and I’m starting to wonder who the bad guy really is. Porter or my father?

“Let her talk,” I shout.

“Mia, you’ve had a stressful couple of days. Why don’t you go lay down and rest?” my dad says, grinning.

Fuck this. “Okay, Jim. How about you answer my questions since you seem to be the one in control here.”

“Don’t call me that,” he growls, locking his angry eyes on mine.

I shrug and cross my arms. “Did you force my mother away from my real father?”

“Excuse me?” he shouts.

“Mia,” my mom yells.

I look at both of them, and tears fill my eyes. The loving, doting parents I thought they were was a lie. They have secrets and lies that they don’t seem to want to share. My father has a hardness to him that I’ve never experienced, and my mother looks beaten down. Did they always, and I just never noticed? Was I so caught up in the idea of happily ever after that I didn’t see the truth?

“Are you going to answer any of my questions?” I ask, looking between them both.

“I told you all you need to know,” my father says.

I shake my head, walking out of the kitchen. “You told me shit.”

They are both yelling as I slam the front door behind me.

If I want answers. Real answers. I’m gonna need to ask someone who knows the truth.

I’m gonna need to ask Porter.

I shake my head, clearing it of the thoughts of the other day. Grabbing my phone off the dresser, I pull up Finn’s name, and my stomach flips. I’m excited and nervous about this move, but I’m done hiding from finding my happiness. Finn makes me feel things I’ve never felt before. He doesn’t hide who he is. I don’t know a lot, but I know enough.

I can trust him, and that’s something I’ve never had with a guy before.

Me: I’m leaving in ten minutes.

I see the dots moving, and I can’t help the smile that spreads across my face.

Finn: Drive safely. Call when you get into town, and I’ll meet you at the house.

Finn’s house is not what I’m accustomed to. It’s small, old, and dingy. I’m used to my huge brand-new apartment. The open floor plan and huge windows with a view of the ocean. The hardwood floors, bright white walls, and new furniture. Even before I moved in here, I lived with my parents, and that house is enormous. All updated, bright, and cheery. A big pool in the yard and a cleaning lady to make sure it always looked perfect.

Finn's place is the exact opposite of all of that, and maybe that's exactly what I need.

My entire life, I've had everything handed to me. I never wanted for a thing. I don't pay for this apartment or for the car that was given to me as a birthday gift. I work a job that I don't like because it's something to break up my time.

Finn is happy with what he has, and maybe it's time I start to realize I don't need these things. That they are a luxury that I've been granted.

I grab the three suitcases and wheel them into my living room. I look around and nod.

I'm leaving my old life in California and starting a new one in Vegas.

I'm done living under the weight of my parents and their lies. I'm going to get the truth and hopefully find love.

It's up to the men of Shattered Souls now.

Will they help me or destroy me?

Finn

Once we got back to Vegas and back to where I felt the most comfortable, we discussed what we had learned in California.

I was wrong when I thought Brooks wanted to use Mia as bait, and I'm fucking thankful for that. He does, however, want to use her mother. I never met her, and I have no idea how the hell we're going to make this happen, but as always, we'll figure out a way.

"Have you heard from Mia?" Gillian asks, breaking my thoughts.

I sip my beer as I glance at her. "Couple hours ago. She said she'll call when she gets into town."

She smiles and rests her hand on my shoulder. "I'm proud of you for not giving up on her."

I frown as I search her face. "I never said I was giving up on her. I said it was a lot for her to handle and I wasn't gonna interfere. I really like her, Gillian."

She rests her head on my shoulder, sipping her beer. "I know you do, Finn. I can see it in your eyes when you talk about her."

"I have no idea what the fuck I'm doing," I admit.

She giggles, and I can't help but smile. "None of us know what we're doing. But you don't give yourself enough credit. You love everyone in this club, and you're ferocious and protective. You always say you weren't taught how relationships are supposed to be, but you've been watching them happen in front of you since you've been here. You've seen that no love story is perfect. With happiness comes heartbreak. You've seen the way your brothers love their old ladies. How they've put their lives on the line to protect them. How he can't keep his hands off her. How he looks at her like she's the most beautiful woman he's ever laid eyes on." She lifts her head off my shoulder and smiles. "You know how to do this. You're just scared."

I kiss her cheek as I squeeze her hand. "I don't get scared, Gillian. I might be unsure or confused, but never scared. I never had a chance to let that feeling in because the minute I did, bad shit would've happened. But you're right. I have experienced some of the greatest love stories."

She sighs, looking over at Riley. "Mine's the best, though, right?"

I laugh, shaking my head. "In your book."

Riley senses Gillian staring and comes stalking over. "You alright, baby girl?"

"Perfect," she says, smiling.

He kisses her and looks over at me. "Mia here yet?"

"Would I be here if she was?" I ask, raising an eyebrow.

"Oh, look who is finding his balls," Riley says, standing up straight. "Did that pussy make your baby balls drop finally?"

He's laughing, and I roll my eyes. I never discuss my private life. It drives most of the guys crazy, especially Riley,

but it's just not who I am. I'm not going to sit here and tell them how I fucked Mia or how she sucked my dick. I like to keep those things to myself and fantasize about them when Mia isn't around as I jerk off.

It doesn't bother me to listen to them talk about their dicks. I'm just not going to join in.

"Stop. You know Finn is private," Harper says, sitting down.

"Yeah, we'll see how long that lasts now that he's going to be shacking up with Mia," Riley says, giving Harper a wink. "Come on, baby girl. My dick isn't ashamed to let everyone know I wanna fuck you."

Gillian laughs as she stands up. "Your dick isn't ashamed to do anything."

"Christ," I mumble.

They walk off, and I look at Harper, who is grinning at me. "Ignore Riley. You know how he gets."

I laugh, finishing off my beer. "I always ignore Riley."

"So you and Mia are moving in together, huh?"

I grab the back of my neck as I nod. "Yeah, gonna give it a go."

"I like her. I think she'll fit in here," she says, looking around.

I grin, appreciating her subtle way of telling me she thinks it's a good idea. Harper is the toughest and most opinionated of all the girls. They follow her lead. Even Nora knows that. But she doesn't trust easily, especially after everything she's been through. I'm not sure sometimes how she manages to stay standing, but I think we're a lot alike in that regard.

Her father was an abusive, cruel, ruthless man, and she suffered because of him every day, just like I suffered because of my mother. She didn't physically abuse me, her boyfriends took care of that. She just loved her drugs, and I was an imposition. I protected us both, and most of the time, she had no idea because she was either high or passed out. She didn't care that I was taking care of myself and her. She didn't care about anything but her drugs.

Harper and I both had parents who cared more about themselves than us. They wouldn't have cared if we lived or died. We never knew love and affection.

I squeeze the back of my neck and swallow my fears. "Harper?" She looks at me, tilting her head. "Was loving Zane something that came easily for you? After all the shit you've been through, how did you know?"

She looks off into the distance and keeps her eyes focused on Zane. "I loved Zane before I even realized what love was. He was the first person in my life, besides my mom, who was gentle. He listened to me, he protected me, he made me feel safe." She meets my eyes and grins. "I think you're asking how did I know that I loved him, and the answer is easy, Finn. You just know. You feel it. It takes over, and you suddenly realize you can't live another day without that person. I don't know your whole story, but I know you didn't have it easy. Believe me when I tell you that this isn't easy either. You'll fight your demons. But when you know, you know it'll be worth it." She finishes her drink and leans across the table toward me. "Do you love her?"

I shake my head, crossing my arms. "I care about her. I like being with her. But I don't love her."

She nods and sits back. “Don’t fight it, Finn. It makes shit so much worse. You need to talk to her. Trust her with your past. It won’t work if you aren’t honest about it all.”

I grin and stand up to grab my phone out of my pocket when it rings. “I’ll do my best, Harper.” I look down at the screen and see Mia’s name. I smile as I look back at Harper. “Thank you.”

I walk away as I hit answer on my phone. “Hey.”

“Hey, I’m here. Should be at your place in about twenty minutes.”

Her soft, sweet voice has my dick jumping to life, and I walk out the door. “Good, I’ll see you there.”

I hang up and climb onto my bike. As I ride to my place, I think about what Harper said. No one knows my past, and maybe it’s time that someone does.



I’m standing in the kitchen smoking a cigarette. The reality of the situation suddenly hit me, and I fucking hope I’m not making a mistake. The longest we’ve been together is a few days at most. Now she’ll be living here in my house. In the only place I feel like I can relax and breathe. Her place in California is no comparison to this place. I could never afford to give her such luxuries. Is that going to cause problems? Is she going to want to come in here and redo shit to her liking?

I close my eyes, gripping the counter as my smoke burns away in the ashtray. I have no idea what I was thinking when I told her to come to Vegas. In that moment, I couldn’t think of

anything else. I couldn't imagine not being with her constantly.

I hope I feel the same when she walks through the door.

Headlights flash on my wall, and I take a deep breath, smashing out my cigarette. I wipe my hands on my jeans and open the door as she climbs out of her car.

She notices me and her entire face lights up with her smile. She closes her door and runs toward me. I chuckle as I go to meet her on the concrete walkway.

She jumps into my arms, and I hold her tightly against me. Her arms wrap around my neck, and her legs latch around my waist. "I missed you so much," she whispers, burying her face in my neck.

"Me too," I whisper, holding her tighter.

All the uncertainty I was feeling vanished as I lifted her head to look at me. Her blue eyes bounce between mine, reflecting the need I'm sure mine show.

I press my lips to hers, and the minute our tongues touch, my body shakes with need. I bite her bottom lip, and she whimpers.

"I need to be buried inside that perfect pussy, baby," I say, walking toward the front door.

Her fingers tangle in my hair as she smiles. "I need it too."

We get through the door, and I knock everything off the counter. Glass shatters to the floor, papers fly around, and beer spills. I don't miss a beat, sitting her on the counter and pushing her sundress up.

My eyes snap to hers, and she's biting her lip. "No panties?" She smiles coyly, nodding her head. I keep my eyes

locked with hers as I drag my finger through her wet heat. I groan when I feel how wet she is. “The only thing I want covering this sweet pussy from now on is my mouth. No more panties,” I growl.

I slam two fingers into her tight, wet pussy, digging the fingers of my other hand into her ass. Pulling her against my hand. She moans out, dropping her head back. Her tits push closer to my face, and I pull down the top of her dress, sucking one of her hard nipples into my mouth.

“Yes,” she cries out, moving her hips to ride my fingers.

I bite her nipple as I curl my fingers inside her. She moans loudly, and my dick presses painfully against my jeans. I continue to pump my fingers, hitting her in the right spot over and over. Watching her with her back arched as I work her over on the counter is fucking hot, but I need more.

I reach down, working quickly to free my cock. I grab a condom out of my pocket and let my jeans hit the floor. I pull my fingers out of her, and she cries out in protest. A chuckle slips from me as her eyes collide with mine.

I hand her the condom, grabbing my thick dick and stroking it. “Roll it on me so I can give you the orgasm your body is burning for, baby.”

With shaking hands, she straightens herself and rips open the wrapper, dropping it on the counter next to us. She reaches forward, and her soft hand brushes against the tip of my dick. I hiss, and she bites her lip as she begins to roll it over my long, hard cock.

When she’s finished, she looks up at me with heat heavy in her eyes. I reach forward and drag my thumb across her bottom lip. “You want my cock buried inside your aching

pussy?” I run my hands up her thighs, pushing her legs further apart. “Hold onto the counter, baby. This is gonna be rough,” I whisper, digging my fingers into her skin.

“Finn, please,” she cries out, grabbing tightly onto the sides of the counter.

“Fuck, I love when you beg for me,” I say.

I pull her to the edge of the counter, digging my fingers into her hips, and before her ass completely hits the counter again, I slam into her.

“Fuck,” she cries out, holding so tightly onto the counter her knuckles are white.

I drive into her fast and hard, holding her in place. Every grunt I release is matched by her moans. I lean forward and drag my tongue from her neck up to her mouth, biting down on her bottom lip. She moans and opens up for me. My tongue fucks her mouth as frantically as my dick fucks her pussy.

I feel her tightening on me, and I break the kiss. “You’re allowing me to take your orgasm quickly, baby,” I groan out.

She cries out, squeezing her eyes tight. “I can’t help it. It feels so good.”

I grin as I roll my hips, causing her to scream. “You feel so good wrapped so tight around me. So wet and hot, trying to pull my release from me.” She shouts my name when I reach between us and pinch her clit. “Come for me, Mia. Give me what I want,” I growl. I pound into her and rub her clit, causing her body to begin to shake. “That’s it, fuck. Let it go, baby.”

She squeezes me tightly and screams as her orgasm tears through her. “Fuck, Finn.”

I don't slow my pace as I chase my own release. I grab her hair and pull her toward me, crashing my lips to hers. Her pussy is pulsing around me, pulling my release closer to the edge. Our kiss is as frantic as the speed I'm fucking her, and when she moans into my mouth, I groan as my release rips me apart.

"Fuck," I hiss, stilling as my fingers tangle in her hair.

Her arms wrap around my neck, and I kiss her neck softly as we both try to recover. Her fingers move up and down my back, slowly and lightly. It's overwhelming to feel something so soft after fucking so hard.

I lift my head and press my lips against hers. "I can't control myself with you," I whisper.

"I never want you to," she replies.

After a few minutes, I pull out of her, and she flinches. I grin, knowing she'll still feel me even when I'm not around.

I look around at the mess and shake my head, smiling as I look up at her clear blue eyes. "Not even here long and look at the mess you've caused."

She laughs as she pulls her dress back up. I miss the sight of her naked body but focus on the mess. "Don't move until I clean up the glass."

I quickly clean it all up and help her off the counter.

She smiles up at me, and my heart slams against my chest.

There's no more concern. This is where she belongs.

Mia

My phone has been blowing up since my parents found out I had left. I've gotten sweet messages begging me to come home and messages from both of them screaming about what a disgrace I am. The text messages are just as endless.

Finn keeps telling me to answer, but I haven't. If I do, they will continue the yelling, especially since I turned the tracker off on my phone. They have no idea where I am, and it's killing them. They've had complete control of my life until recently, and they can't stand it.

"Your phone is ringing again," Finn yells from the kitchen.

I finish my makeup and walk out of the bathroom. "I should just change my fucking number at this point." I power down the phone and toss it back on the counter. "There, now we don't need to listen to it."

He shakes his head but doesn't say anything. He needs to go meet up with his club, which happens much more often than I imagined it would. I've been here nearly two weeks, and I've already spent a couple of nights alone.

I have no job, no family, and no friends. It's been a little lonely if I'm being honest, but when Finn walks through the

door or gives me that sexy grin, I forget all that. I'll figure out my place.

Which is why I agreed to go to the club with him today. Normally, he asks, and I tell him, no, but today I'm going. I'm tired of feeling like I'm hiding out in his house. I'll never make friends or find out my truth if I don't put myself out there.

"We need to leave in a minute," Finn says, grabbing his cigarettes off the counter.

Nerves hit me, and I grab his arm. He looks at me with concern, and I sigh. "Maybe I should stay here."

"What? Why? I thought you finally wanted to come hang out with the girls," he says, turning to wrap his arms around my waist.

I rest my hands on his muscular chest and shrug. "I want to, but I'm nervous."

"Nervous of what?" he asks, lifting an eyebrow.

"I don't know, Finn. The girls are intimidating. The guys are downright terrifying. Not to mention my birth father is walking among them all. I don't know how to act or what to say to anyone. I'm so out of place. No one had my privileged life, and I think they hold that against me," I rush out.

He chuckles, and I try to pull away from his hold. His arms tighten around me, and he kisses the top of my head. "I'm sorry. I'm not laughing at you. I'm laughing because you sound so much like I did when I was first a prospect."

I tilt my head and ask, "What do you mean?"

He gently runs his thumb down my cheek and grins. "When I was first a prospect, I didn't know anyone. I wasn't

allowed to know about club business. I wasn't allowed to ask questions. I did what I was told to prove myself to them. They don't make it easy, but that's not because they didn't want me around. It was so I could prove to them I wanted to be there. That I was willing to do anything to be a part of the MC. They wanted to see if I was capable of handling things without breaking."

"Sounds like bullying," I say.

He shakes his head, grinning. "No, it's not bullying. It's building up. You can't be a part of this world unless you can handle it. The only way to know that is to be thrown into it. You either prove you can do it, or you walk away. I fucked up a lot before I proved myself, but they didn't give up on me. They knew I wasn't wasting my time or their time."

I search his eyes, and he grins. "So, how's this the same?"

He chuckles and presses his lips to mine. "Because, baby, they are going to make sure you can handle it. The girls are going to ask you more questions than you'll be willing to answer. They are going to make sure you aren't here to cause trouble or hurt me." His fingers dig into my sides, and he continues, "They want to make sure you're gonna stick around."

Finn hasn't told me much about his past or present, to be honest. We mostly talk about sex or food. But the way he's looking at me and holding me makes me think he's afraid I'm going to leave him. Maybe it's time we start talking about it all.

"I'm not going anywhere." I push up on my toes and kiss his cheek. "I'll handle today. I'll deal with the nerves on one condition."

He lifts his eyebrows, searching my eyes. “What?”

“Tonight, we start to share things about ourselves. Not just what position we like or what food is our favorite.”

He closes his eyes and pulls me in for a hug. “Okay, Mia.”

Once we leave, it only takes a few minutes to get to the club. I’d like to say I pushed down all my nerves, but I haven’t. As we walk through the door, I can feel my stomach flipping.

“Christ,” Finn whispers.

“What?” I ask, holding on to him tightly. I look around like someone is going to jump out at me.

He glances down at me, tucking a piece of hair behind my ear. “Nothing, baby. You know you don’t need to be scared here. Everyone here is family. No one is going to hurt you.”

I nod as I glance around at the club. It’s nothing like I imagined. There’s a lot of wood which normally I wouldn’t like, but here it makes the place feel warm and inviting. The stage is huge, which must mean they have a lot of women up there at night. The bar in the back, closer to the stage, is a great place for it. You don’t miss a thing. The tables are spread throughout, and I notice one table has all the girls around it. Some I’ve met, others I haven’t.

I look back up at Finn, and he presses his strong lips to mine. “I’ll introduce you, don’t worry.”

I smile, loving that he knows what I am thinking.

When we get to the table, I tighten my hold on Finn’s hand. This is it. This is my introduction into his world.

“Everyone, this is Mia. Mia, you know Ivy, Gillian, and Harper. This lovely lady is Nora. That beauty is Adalyn, and

this charmer is Maren,” he says, pointing everyone out.

“Nice to meet you,” I say, smiling through my nerves.

“We’ll see,” Nora says, causing them all to laugh.

I look around and realize I’m chum among the sharks. I glance up at Finn, and he has no expression on his face. He gives nothing away sometimes, and it’s confusing as hell.

“Nora put your claws away,” Ivy says, laughing.

It’s strange seeing Ivy in this crowd of women. I’m not saying they aren’t all beautiful because they are, but they don’t look welcoming. They appear tough and maybe a little hard. It doesn’t make you want to pull up a chair. It makes you want to run out the door.

“Finn, they’re waiting for you. Go, we’ve got Mia. I promise it’s good,” Gillian says, smiling.

He looks down at me, and I nod. He gives me a quick kiss on the cheek and rushes off behind a door.

I’m completely on my own.

“Sit, Mia. Let’s get to know you,” Nora says.

I pull out the only open seat, which is next to Gillian and Adalyn. I fold my hands on my lap, trying to keep from visibly shaking in my seat.

“You’re from California?” Adalyn asks.

She has kind eyes that hold a sadness. I wonder what her story is.

“Yes. I’ve been there since I can remember. Until recently, I thought I was born there, but apparently, I was born in Vegas,” I say.

“How’s it going living with Finn?” Gillian asks.

Alright, maybe this isn't going to be so bad. They don't seem to be wanting to cut me open. They are just asking things to get to know me better.

I smile at Gillian. "So far, it's great. I mean, Finn isn't the most talkative person, but I think he's happy too."

"A silent man is never a good thing," Nora says, lifting a perfectly shaped eyebrow.

"Well, no. I mean, he talks, but he hasn't complained about anything, so I'm guessing that's good," I say, trying to fix what I said.

"These guys aren't like the guys you're used to. They don't sit behind a desk all day. They don't sit quietly while shit happens around them. They don't drive around in BMWs that daddy got them," Nora says, lifting her shoulders. Letting me know she isn't sorry for anything that comes out of her mouth.

"Hey," Harper says, leaning over to see Nora better. "I drive a BMW that my piece of shit father gave me."

Nora laughs, staring at Harper. "Sweetheart, you know damn well what I mean."

She means I'm used to dating rich guys and that I've been given everything I've ever wanted. But how the hell would she know that? Unless Ivy or Finn said something.

"So, what are your intentions with Finn? Is this your way of getting closer to Porter because that man has suffered enough? He doesn't need any more heartache," Nora says.

"Nora, enough," Harper hisses.

"I met Finn long before I knew about Porter," I say, holding my head up.

They really think low of me, and this is exactly what I was afraid of. I shouldn't need to defend myself or my relationship with Finn. It's no one else's business.

"We know that, sweetheart. We know everything. That's how we protect our guys," Nora says.

I look at Ivy, pleading with her to help me out here. I'm in over my head. Ivy laughs and reaches across the table for my hand. I lift my sweaty hand off my lap and place it in hers.

She smiles, squeezing my hand. "Every single one of us has had to sit through this. You're lucky Gloria is gone."

They all laugh, but I don't get the joke.

"We aren't trying to run you off. We're trying to figure you out. The guys need to be prospects before they get patched in. Us girls, we need to prove we are here for the right reasons," Gillian explains.

"And what are the right reasons?" I ask, looking around.

"If you're asking that, maybe you need to rethink your situation," Nora says, keeping her eyes on me.

I look around at each of them and realize they aren't here just because they want to protect their club or their guys. They aren't here just to see how much I'll take until I break. No, they are protecting Finn. Much like a bunch of older sisters would do if their brother brought home a new girl.

"Finn is the best thing that's ever happened to me. He makes me feel alive, safe and valued. He makes me happy. I know your opinion of me is important, but I'm more concerned with Finn's opinion of me," I say.

"I knew I was going to like you," Nora says, grinning.

Adalyn reaches over and pats my hand. “The club is not easy. Once you’re in, there’s no way out.”

“Adalyn, shut the hell up,” Nora hisses. She looks at me and nods. “Adalyn’s husband, Axel, was the president of Shattered Souls up until he was killed years ago. Her son is Zane, which is Harper’s husband. Her brother-in-law is Brooks, who is now the president. She may say once you’re in, there’s no way out, but that’s not true. This is her family. Some are blood, and some aren’t. She’s still in mourning, so don’t let that shit scare you.”

I turn to Adalyn, who is staring at the wall. “I’m sorry for your loss,” I whisper.

She grins but doesn’t reply, probably stuck in her head with memories.

“So, Ivy said you used to work with her in California,” Harper says.

“Yes, I was really nothing more than a gofer for a secretary,” I say, shaking my head as I try not to laugh.

I didn’t do much at that job. I didn’t need to be there. It was passing the time for me. I’ve been thinking I should look for a job here, but I honestly don’t know what I would want to do. Better yet, I don’t know what I could do. I have no training in anything.

“Well, if you’re interested in working with us, I run Souls Two. I could find something for you to do,” Harper says.

“You all work there?”

Nora laughs, shaking her head. “Not us old ladies.”

“I run it, Ivy is in charge of the waitresses, and Gillian does all the computer work. We’re a great team,” Harper

explains.

“How long have you all known each other?”

I’m getting more comfortable, and now I’m intrigued to find out more about them all.

Which is exactly what happens for the next hour. They explain who they are with, how long they’ve been together, and what it was like coming into the club. I’m sure there is more to each story, but I feel like I’ve gotten to know them a little better.

“Sweetheart, it’s not my place to open my mouth, but I just want you to know that Porter is a hell of a guy. And in all these years that you’ve been gone, he’s thought of you every single day,” Nora says, standing up. “Maybe think about giving him a chance.”

I force a grin but don’t reply.

I know I need to talk to Porter. He’s the only one with the answers to the questions I have. I’m just not ready for that yet.

“The guys just got back from visiting their brothers in California,” Harper says, wiggling her eyebrows.

I don’t know what that means, but that must have been why Finn was in California.

“Oh Christ, it’s been a long time since I’ve seen those guys, but fuck, Hux used to make my panties wet just looking at me,” Nora says, fanning herself.

Adalyn shakes her head with a small grin on her face. “Nora, stop it. They are all really great guys, and yes, they are easy on the eyes, but you’re a married woman.”

Everyone laughs, including me.

“She’s married, not dead. And she’s right. I’ve had the pleasure of meeting a couple of those guys a few times, and the sex that Z and I had after was insane. My imagination was in full swing,” Harper says, giving us a wink.

They continue talking about how hot and fuckable the guys from California are, and I can’t help but wonder if it’s because they are seeking something different, something new, or if they are all just that horny all the time.

Either way, it does intrigue me about Shattered Souls Cali, that’s for damn sure.

Being around the table with these women for the last hour and a half has proved to be eye-opening. They still have an edge to them, a wall that goes up when they are trying to protect the guys, but they are also funny and down to earth. They are all so close to each other, like best friends. Only they are more like family, and I’ll admit I am jealous of the relationship they all share.

They all love Ivy’s baby like he is their own. The way they talk about him and the way their faces light up when she’s telling a story that involves him, it’s amazing.

She’s not the same girl I met in California. She’s tougher, stronger, and so damn happy.

They’re all happy and completely in love.

After seeing the way my father seems to be manipulating my mother, I’ve been paying attention here. I don’t want to falsely believe anything ever again. But I don’t see anything like that. When they talk about their guys, they are genuinely happy. You can feel the love they have, and it’s real.

I don’t think I’ll ever know their stories, but I do know bits and pieces of Ivy’s, and I know it wasn’t easy. But I’m

learning that nothing good comes easy.

I glance over at Harper and wring my hands together. “Harper, I don’t really have any training in anything, but I would really like to talk about working for you.”

She smiles and nods her head. “Sounds good.” She looks between Ivy and Gillian. “Will one of you bring her in tomorrow?”

“Alex has a doctor’s appointment, so I can’t,” Ivy says.

Gillian looks between me and Harper and nods. “Yeah, I’ll do it.”

Harper slides her eyes to mine and folds her hands on the table. “Gillian will pick you up tomorrow at ten o’clock. We’ll show you around the club and sit down and discuss what you could potentially do.”

“Thank you,” I reply.

Her eyes harden as she keeps them focused on mine. “I don’t fuck around, Mia. If you’re not serious about working for me, don’t show up. I don’t have the time to waste, and I don’t like being taken advantage of. Got it?”

Harper is as protective of her business as she is of her man. I wish I had that kind of passion for something.

I don’t yet, but this is the first step in finding my true self. Even if it means I need to ride in with Gillian and listen to her talk about my boyfriend like she knows him better. And honestly, she probably does, but that’s changing tonight.

I held up my end of the deal by coming here. Finn has no choice but to hold up his end. I want to know him, really know him.

It’s long overdue.

Finn

“So, I’m excited and nervous as hell,” Mia says.

My eyes are focused on her, but I’m not listening to much of what she’s saying. It’s shitty, I know, but I can’t stop thinking about Brooks’ idea of getting Mia’s mom here. I don’t want to be a part of any of this shit, and I’m being dragged right in. Being put in the middle and the only one who understands is Zane. But he’s not going to do shit to help because the club needs this. I know that. I know it has to be done.

I just don’t want to be the one to do it.

“Finn.”

I scrub my face, sighing. “I’m sorry, Mia. I’ve got a lot of shit on my mind. So, Gillian is taking you to Souls Two tomorrow. That’s great. You’ll love working with them.”

She grabs our plates off the small table I have in the kitchen and brings them to the sink. After keeping her back to me for a few minutes, she turns around and leans against the counter. Her arms are crossed, and her plump lips are in a straight line.

Maybe she said more I didn’t pay attention to.

Christ.

“Finn, I just found out my entire life has been a lie. I have endless questions and no answers to anything. The only thing that makes this half bearable is you. And yet, I am trying to talk to you, and I’m greeted with blank stares and no replies. I know you have shit on your mind, but fuck, so do I. I have the weight of my existence on my shoulders, but I’m still trying here. I’ve got no one.”

I quickly move to her and pull her into my arms. “You’ve got me, baby. I’m sorry. You have my full attention. No more getting lost in my thoughts,” I say, tightening my hold.

Her arms are snaked around my lower back, and her head is tucked under my chin. “Prove I have you, Finn. You know my situation. Please tell me yours.”

I close my eyes and nod my head. It’s time to let her completely in. “Okay, baby.”

She lifts her head, shock clear on her face. “Really?”

I chuckle and press a soft kiss to her inviting lips. “What do you wanna know?”

We move to the couch, and she turns to look at me. I shouldn’t feel like she’s going to judge me, but I already can feel myself getting defensive, and she hasn’t said a word.

The club knows my mom lives in the trailer park, and they know that I used to watch Axel, but that’s it. They have no idea how bad it really was. No one does. Not even my mom. She doesn’t remember yesterday, never mind years ago.

“Are your parents alive?” she asks.

I grab the back of my neck and turn my head to look at her. Her blue eyes are full of questions, and I nod. “My mom is.

No idea who or where my father is.”

“You never met your father?” she asks.

“Nope.”

“Have you ever tried to find him?”

“Nope.”

“Do you know his name?”

“Nope.”

She groans and throws her hands up. “Is that how you’re going to answer my questions? Because it’s annoying as hell.”

I shake my head as I cross my arms. “You’re asking me questions I don’t have the answers to, Mia. I don’t know my father. Never met him. I don’t know his name, and neither does my mom. She never got it, I guess, or didn’t care to remember it. I can’t answer these questions because I don’t fucking know.”

Mia moves closer to me and rests her hand on my leg. “Shit, okay, I’m sorry. So, tell me about your mom. Does she live around here? Are you close?”

I clear my throat and decide it’s probably best just to get it all out there. I don’t really want to do question-by-question until she understands.

My eyes connect with hers, and I shrug. “My mom lives in a trailer park not far from here. It’s where I grew up. She’s a drug addict. She cared very little, if at all, about me. If it weren’t for me, she probably would have overdosed or been beaten to death by now. I didn’t have a good life, Mia. I wasn’t loved or cared for. I was beaten by her boyfriends or drug dealers. I was stealing to keep us both alive. I was protecting her from the violence her addiction brought to our door.” I see

the emotion in her eyes, so I look away. “I joined Shattered Souls because the only male figure I ever had was merely a glimpse of one. He was a Shattered Souls member. Every time I heard that bike, I would stop whatever I was doing just to look at him. He looked serious and protective. He took justice into his own hands, and it fascinated me. I knew when I was old enough, I would go looking for him, only I had no idea at the time what it all truly meant. When I found the club, I was so excited to be a part of the one piece of my childhood that didn’t make me tense.” I turn to look back at her as she wipes away a tear. “I wasn’t taught how to love. I didn’t witness relationships. My instincts are to survive and protect. That’s what makes me so good with the club. I just don’t know how to make it work in a relationship. I’m trying to figure it out. Trying to remember that love is real, I’ve seen it in the club, but it’s hard when you’ve never felt it yourself. No one’s ever loved me, and I’ve never loved anyone.”

Mia wipes away her tears, and I grin, resting my hand against her cheek. She wraps her hand around mine and presses her cheek harder against my hand. “Your past doesn’t determine your future, Finn. Also, you love your mom. That’s why you felt the need to protect, to keep you both safe. You did it for her. You may not have been loved, but you know how to love.”

I don’t know about all that. Maybe she’s right, but I did what I needed to do. Maybe that’s what you do when you love someone, or maybe that’s what you do when you just simply want to open your eyes the next day.

“No, I know that your past doesn’t determine your future. But it sure as hell fucks with your present,” I admit, ignoring the part about loving my mom.

She leans forward and presses her soft lips to mine. She pulls back too quickly and searches my eyes. I have no idea what she's looking for or what she thinks she'll find. Her eyes are soft and empathic, and I hate it. This is why I keep my past to myself. I don't want or need anyone's sympathy.

“Finn?”

“What baby?”

She smiles, leaning back a bit further to see my face better. “What's your last name?”

She begins to laugh, and I join in. How the hell could we be living together, and she doesn't even know my last name?

“Ganley. Finn Ganley,” I say.

She doesn't push me for anything else. She curls into my side, and we watch TV. This isn't how I thought it would go. I thought she'd keep pushing or judging me for not knowing or understanding love. At the very least, I figured she'd judge my mom. I know she's going through shit, but she had a good mom. A mom that fed her, clothed her, protected her, and loved her. She knows what love feels like.

“Finn, be a good boy and go play outside,” my mom says.

It's dark out, and I don't like the dark, but when the man she brought inside stands in front of me, I run.

I sit on the wooden step that leads into the trailer. It's cold out, and the wind is blowing strong. I should've brought a blanket out with me. I know better than to go inside when she has a man over. They don't like to be disturbed. Well, at least not while my mom is conscious. Once she starts to pass out, I'll need to go in and chase away the man before he hurts her.

I can hear the screams from inside, and I've learned the difference between the ones that she thinks are good and the ones that are bad. I'm only ten, but I know they are having sex. I don't understand why she screams like she's in pain, though.

"Hey kid, you got any cigarettes?"

I glance up at a teenage boy that lives a few trailers down from mine. He tugs his jacket tighter to him, and I shiver.

"No," I meekly say.

"Well, go inside and steal me some from your mom," he says.

"I'm not allowed in," I say.

He hears my mom screaming and chuckles. "Your mom sure knows how to have a good time."

I roll my eyes and look off into the distance. I guess his idea of a good time and mine are different.

"Go grab me her smokes," he says again.

I sigh, squeezing my hands into fists. He doesn't understand. If I go in there, I will see things I don't want to see. Things I shouldn't see. My mom getting high while a stranger is touching her. They'll both get angry, and I will regret it.

I'd rather deal with this teenager than a man that is clearly as high as my mom.

"No, I'm not going inside," I say.

He pushes me off the step, and I fall into the dirt. He opens the trailer door and steps inside. He's going to get us both in trouble, and I wrap my arms around myself, waiting for it.

I hear the screams, the anger, and the cries. I squeeze my eyes shut, hoping it will all just stop.

“Where is that little shit?” the man yells, slamming the trailer door open so fast I feel the force behind it.

He looks around, and I curl up smaller. Maybe he won’t see me if I make myself small enough.

“You try to steal from me again, and I will cut your dick off and send it to your mother,” my mom yells, throwing something out the door at the kid.

“Oh, there you are, you little shit. Get up,” the guy growls, leaning closer to me.

I rush to my feet, knowing better than to try and argue. His eyes are wild, and I know, even at my age, it’s because he’s high. He grabs my shirt, and I look over at my mom, naked, leaning against the doorway. She’s smoking a cigarette, staring ahead. She doesn’t care that I’m about to get my ass beat by this guy. She has no intention of saving me.

“Finn?”

I’m snapped out of my thoughts and glance down at Mia. Her eyes are heavy with sleep, and I kiss her forehead.

“Come on, let’s get some sleep. You have a big day tomorrow,” I say, standing up and holding my hand out to her.

She grabs it, and we walk to the bedroom.

This girl deserves so much more than a broken guy like me, but I fucking hope she doesn’t leave. She seems to be able to keep the voices of my past a little quieter, and I like it.

I really fucking like it.



I finish my coffee and crush out my cigarette when Mia comes out of the bathroom. She looks fucking amazing. Her long blonde hair has loose curls in it. Her makeup is dark, making her bright blue eyes pop. The tight jeans she has on and strapless black shirt make my dick hard. She looks like she belongs at Souls Two.

“Damn, baby. You look fucking good,” I say, wrapping my arms around her.

She smiles up at me, biting her lip. “You don’t think it’s too much?”

I grin, pressing my lips to hers, biting on her bottom lip as I pull away. “No, you look sexy as hell.”

“I really don’t know what I’m qualified to do,” she says, searching my eyes.

“Harper will help you.”

She nods, pulls away from me and sits down to slip on her black boots.

I can see the uncertainty in her eyes, so I sit next to her, resting my hand on her leg. “What’s going on in that gorgeous head?”

She gives a small smile and sighs. “What if I’m only qualified to strip?”

My hand tightens on her leg as my eyes harden on hers. “What the fuck did you just say?”

Her eyes widen as she stares at me. “I’m just nervous they’ll want me to strip,” she whispers.

“No one but me gets to see your perfect, tight body. No one but me gets to touch you. No one gets a glimpse of what is mine. You understand? You’re mine, Mia, and I don’t share with anyone,” I growl, feeling a wave of anger, jealousy, and possessiveness I’ve never felt before.

Her eyes drop to the floor, and I close mine, scrubbing my face. I drop to my knees in front of her and grab her hands. She lifts her confused eyes to mine, and I sigh.

“I’m sorry, Mia. I’m not trying to make you feel intimidated or controlled. The thought of someone else seeing you makes my skin burn as a wave of anger I’ve never felt takes over. I don’t know how to control that feeling, but I do know one hundred percent for sure you will not be stripping. You’re my girl, so it’s not an option. The girls who strip have no connection to the club. Harper won’t even allow that to be a choice,” I explain.

She leans forward and crashes her lips to mine. I don’t expect it, but I fucking grab her, pulling her closer. Her kiss is wild, and it makes my cock throb. She lets out a moan as my fingers tighten in her hair.

I pull back, both of us panting from the aggressive kiss.

Her heated eyes bounce between mine. “I didn’t feel intimidated or controlled. Your possessiveness turned me on,” she whispers.

“Fuck,” I growl, digging my fingers into her sides. “That’s good, baby, ‘cause it’s something I don’t think I’ll ever be able to control.”

“I don’t want you to,” she says, biting her lip.

A knock on the door has me pulling my eyes away from hers. “Hello?”

“Hey,” I say, smiling up at Gillian.

She looks between us and laughs. “Am I interrupting?”

I glance at Mia, pressing a soft kiss beneath her ear. “Tonight, I’m going to show you just how possessive I can be.”

I stand up and grin at Gillian. “Nope.”

Mia quickly finishes getting her boots on and goes to get her phone and purse. I glance behind me to make sure she isn’t there and turn back to Gillian. “She’s nervous. Don’t make this a test for her, alright? Let her start to feel like she belongs,” I quietly say.

A huge smile takes over her face as she nods. “And you were worried you wouldn’t know how to do this,” she says, giving me a wink.

Before I can say anything, Mia comes back into the living room. “Hey Gillian, sorry I didn’t say it when you walked it,” she says, blushing slightly.

Damn, that blush is new, and I fucking like it.

“No worries. I know what it’s like to be caught up in a moment.” She smiles, lighting a cigarette. “Harper doesn’t tolerate lateness, so we better get going.”

Mia nods and peeks up at me. “I’ll see you at the club later. Have fun. You’ve got this, baby,” I say, kissing her soft lips.

“Of course, she’s got this. Come on, Mia.”

They leave, and I smile, grabbing my keys. I need to get to the club. As much as I want to stay in this bubble I feel like I’m in when Mia is around, Brooks wants to discuss his plans.

The bubble pops as soon as I walk out the door.

Once we are all around the table, Brooks leans forward, looking around at us all. His eyes stay on Porter and me longer than anyone else, and I clench my fists.

“The only way to get to this prick is to get to what he loves,” he glances at Porter and sighs. “Sorry, Porter.”

“She made her choices,” he says, crossing his arms.

I haven’t given much thought to what this must be like for Porter. Not only is his daughter hanging around now, but his ex will be too. That’s a lot of shit to have to handle. An open wound I’m sure he thought was healed the best it could.

Brooks nods and continues. “We need to get Victoria here without Jim. We need to play on the mother/child angle.” His eyes slide to mine. “You’re gonna need to call her, tell her that her daughter needs her and only her. Tell her she has questions or a problem. I really don’t give a shit what lie you give. As long as it gets her here.”

I close my eyes, scrubbing my face. “And what happens if Jim is listening or refuses to let her come alone?” I ask, clenching my hands into fists as they slide to the table.

“You need to tell her that she’s talking to me. Tell her that, and she’ll come running,” Porter says, looking straight ahead.

“Why the fuck does she hate you so much?” Zane asks.

He looks over at Zane and clears his throat. “I drank a little too much,” he says.

I look around the table and notice Brooks, Enzo, and Riley shaking their heads.

“Bullshit,” Riley hisses.

Porter snaps his head toward him and narrows his eyes. “Shut the fuck up.”

“You realize when you act like you’re hiding something, it makes those of us who don’t know the story want to dig for the truth, right?” Kace says, crossing his massive arms.

“I thought we didn’t lie around this table,” Zane says, looking between them all.

“That’s for club business, not personal,” Enzo rushes out.

I shake my head and lean over the table. “Pretty sure in this situation, it is club business. If I’m making the call, using my girl as fucking bait, I should know the goddamn story.”

Riley laughs, nodding his head. “A little pussy and Finn’s baby balls have dropped and grown twice their size.”

I shake my head while they all laugh.

The laughter dies quickly, though, as Porter looks at me. “Vic, Mia’s mom, was the love of my life. After she had Mia, she suffered from postpartum depression. We didn’t know what the hell it was, and I didn’t pay close enough attention, so when she started using drugs, I didn’t notice. She was happy again, and that’s what I cared about. I don’t know what happened with Jim, why she picked the fuck up, took my daughter, and left. I have my suspicions, but nothing more.”

“What suspicions?” Kace asks.

He scrubs his face, running his hand down his beard. “Jim promised to keep her supply endless if she left with him.”

Fucking hell. If that’s true, Mia’s mom is more like mine than I ever thought. And if that’s the case, I’m not sure I’ll ever be able to convince her to come. My mom would watch while my throat was slit open as long as the reward was a high. If Mia’s mom is still an addict, we’ve got a bigger problem than anyone knows.

I blow out a breath, trying to figure out how to explain that without telling them my past. “Do we know if she’s clean now?”

“No idea, but I fucking hope so,” Porter says.

Shit, so do I.

“An addict might not care so much about their kid, so if she is still using, it might not be so easy,” I say, scratching the back of my neck.

Porter slams his fists down on the table and stares at me. “She’ll do it for Mia.”

I shake my head and lean back in my chair.

They have no idea.

“Finn, get her number off Mia’s phone, and we’ll come up with something,” Brooks says.

So fucking easy for him to say. I’m the one going behind her back.

She feels like I’m all she has, and I’m fucking with that.

I’m fucking with her trust.

I’m gonna lose her, and I have no one to blame but myself.

Mia

All of my fears were for nothing. Today has been an amazing day. Harper showed me around Souls Two, and to my surprise, it is nothing like the Souls we are always at. This is more high-end. I can see why she is so passionate about it. She explained how it used to look, beaten down, with holes all over, and it's hard to imagine seeing it now.

When we got to talking about what I could do, she was very nice. She said if I was someone just walking off the street, she'd start me as a waitress, but since I'm Finn's girl, she won't do that. It made my heart pound in my chest having the recognition.

Until today I never really considered how it would feel to be someone's girl. I was so determined and focused on finding true love that I never knew there was something more exciting. More sexy.

When Finn went all jealous alpha on me this morning, I was never more turned on in my life. He doesn't just want to be with me. He wants me to be his. He's jealous of another man even looking at me, and it's fucking hot.

So, when Harper kept calling me Finn's girl, it had adrenaline coursing through me. Giving me a high that I never

knew was possible but one I will crave now.

We decided that it's best I work with Ivy for now. I'll be helping her do the paperwork. It might not sound exciting, but it's real, and that's what I need. I want to feel wanted and appreciated. In California, it didn't matter if I didn't show up for work. I didn't do anything important. Here I'll be needed, and I like that feeling.

Harper said after I'm around a while and know more about the club and how it runs that we can evaluate and see if I'm suited for something different.

It's all very exciting.

We are all on our way to Souls now to meet up with the guys. This seems to be what they do. The guys do club stuff, and the girls run Souls Two, but at the end of the day, they always meet at Souls.

I smile in the passenger seat of Gillian's car.

I feel accepted for the first time in my life. I feel like I belong.

"Thinking about Finn?" she asks, laughing.

The smile stays on my face as I turn toward her. "No, I'm actually thinking about how I like being here."

She stops at a light and glances in my direction. She's definitely closer to my age, and Riley is definitely a lot older. It works for them, though. It's so easy to see that.

Her long black hair is down with some small curls throughout, and she pushes it off her face as she smiles.

"I'm gonna tell you something that Finn told me when I was new around here." I sit up straighter, waiting to hear this advice, thrilled that she's willing to share it with me.

“Everyone has a best friend in this club. Zane has Kace. Brooks has Enzo. Riley has Porter. Harper has Ivy. And I have Finn. He kinda fell into that role because I was so beaten down at the time, and he stepped in, making sure I didn’t give up. When you find your best friend, you’ll know what I mean.”

I think about this as the light changes, and she focuses on the road again. It does make sense. They all seem to have that one person, and I’m suddenly hit with jealousy.

“There’s no one left,” I whisper.

She peeks at me quickly, saying, “What?”

I clear my throat and shrug. “Everyone has a best friend already.”

She smiles and reaches her hand over, squeezing mine. “Do you know what it’s like to have a guy as a best friend? A guy that doesn’t like to even tell me about his personal life?” she asks, raising an eyebrow.

“No, because I’ve honestly never had a best friend. I never thought anything of it before, but with everything that has happened recently with my stepfather, I realize they were almost keeping me hidden. They kept me so sheltered that anyone who I did want to get close to eventually moved on because I couldn’t do shit. So, I really don’t know what it’s like having someone like that,” I admit, looking over at her.

She’s smiling as she keeps her eyes on the road. “Well, here’s the thing. Finn will always be my best friend. I’ll always be that person for him. But I miss having a girl best friend. Someone to compare sex stories with or go get drunk with. Someone that I can call when I’m pissed at Riley that isn’t going to judge my irrational reactions.” She turns her

head toward me and smiles. “I need a girl best friend. Do you know anyone looking?”

We both laugh, and I can feel the emotions building. My eyes are filling with tears, and I quickly wipe them.

“I’d love that,” I say.

“Me too, and since I’m going to take on the role, that means we’re getting drunk tonight to celebrate,” she says.

“Hell yes,” I agree.

We’re close to Souls, and I want to start out this new relationship on the right foot, so I swallow nervously, wringing my hands together. I turn my body toward her slightly and clear my throat.

“So, since we’re going to be best friends, I should admit that I didn’t trust you at first. I thought for sure something was going on with you and Finn. He would constantly talk about you and the club, and I thought there was no way a guy and girl could be friends like that. I know now that’s not the case, but I thought I should be honest with you,” I say, feeling lighter.

She parks outside of Souls and turns off the car. Turning in her seat, she smiles at me. “I know.” She laughs, shaking her head. “I could see it in your eyes that day I came over to Finn’s. I didn’t say anything to Finn because he overthinks shit as it is. I just knew that if you really cared about Finn, you’d eventually see that I’m no threat. I have a fiancé that makes me extremely happy. Not to mention he’s the best sex I’ve ever had in my life.” I laugh, but she’s not finished. “You and I are more similar than you might think. Besides being close in age, we both came into this club attached to someone they hate. Your stepfather and my sister.” I raise my eyebrows, and

she gives a tight smile. “My sister dated Kace, and it ended badly. Really badly. She got mixed up with the wrong club, and she was killed by a member of Shattered Souls.”

My hands fly to my mouth as my eyes widen. “Oh my God, Gillian, I’m so sorry. I had no idea.”

She gives me a tight grin. “Of course, you didn’t because this isn’t about my story. This is about you and Finn. But I just want you to know that I understand everything you’re going through. I hated this club for ending my sister’s life. It took a lot of time and anger until I was ready to accept the truth, but once I did, I was able to move on. I’ll never tell you what you should do, I’ll give you advice on what I think you should do, but I won’t push you. And my advice is to talk to Porter. Get the truth. He didn’t raise you. You don’t know him, but I can promise you one thing for sure, these guys will not lie to you. Even if it’s something you don’t want to hear, they’re gonna tell you.”

She pushes open her door and smiles. “So, don’t be jealous of my friendship with Finn because I went through the burning fires of hell to get where I am with Riley. He’s my world.”

She gets out of the car, and I rush out, grabbing her arm before we go inside. “Gillian, thank you,” I whisper.

She wraps her arm around my shoulders and smiles. “That’s what best friends are for,” she says, winking. “Now, let’s go get drunk.”



We’ve been sitting around talking for almost two hours. The guys had to go do something, so it’s just the girls, and for the

first time, I don't care. I'm starting to understand why they are all so close. They are constantly together.

I watch Ivy bounce her baby boy as he giggles, and my heart swells. I was there when she took that pregnancy test, and now this beautiful boy is here.

"You want kids?" Ivy asks, lifting an eyebrow.

I laugh, shaking my head. "That's not why I'm staring. I was thinking about how I was there when you took the pregnancy test."

She laughs, shaking her head. "Best thing that ever happened to me."

"My little Alex is the best thing to ever happen to this club," Harper says, tickling his little belly.

"Are you thinking about kids?" I ask.

She looks at me and laughs, tossing back the rest of her drink. "Hell no. I have no interest in being a mother. Too much to worry about. If my upbringing taught me anything, it's that some people should not have children."

"Harper, don't punish yourself and Zane for the mistakes your father made," Adalyn says.

The way she's looking at Alex, I can safely say she is hoping for a grandchild of her own.

Harper smiles, pulling her hair out of Alex's little hand. "I'm not punishing anyone. Zane and I both decided that kids are not in our future. We're happy to be the cool aunt and uncle."

"A child is the greatest blessing," Adalyn says, shaking her head.

Harper looks at her as her eyes harden. “You’re right. A child is a blessing, but I’m not going to bring a child into this world. You, of all people, should understand that,” she says through clenched teeth.

She straightens herself and smiles. “Plus, Ivy will give us more, and we all know when Gillian is ready, she’ll be pregnant in five minutes.”

“Hey, my man goes a hell of a lot longer than five minutes,” Gillian interrupts, laughing.

“Oh, we are all aware of your sex life, Gillian,” Ivy says, rolling her eyes.

Gillian smiles, looking around. “I want a girl. Riley will lose his shit,” she says.

They all erupt into laughter, and for the first time ever in my life, I wonder what it would be like to have a baby. I always knew I’d have one someday, but I imagine Finn as a father, and it makes my body warm. He’d be amazing. Especially after the awful childhood, he endured. He has so much love to give. He just doesn’t realize it.

“Mia?” Gillian asks.

“What?” I ask, looking around.

They laugh, and I shrug.

“Do you want kids one day?” Ivy asks.

I look around at their judging eyes and wonder what answer they are looking for. But I decide to just be honest, and I nod. “One day, yeah, I definitely want a baby.”

“No time soon,” I hear whispered in my ear.

Finn kisses beneath my ear, and I turn, smiling toward him. I can feel myself blushing being caught talking about kids.

“Hey,” I whisper.

All the guys are talking loudly while the girls are laughing, but my focus is on Finn. He’s staring at me, searching my face. It’s making my pussy wet, and I cross my legs to try to get a bit of relief.

“You having fun?” he asks.

“Yeah,” I reply, biting my lip.

He breaks his stare from me and looks around the table. “We’re gonna get out of here,” he says, grabbing my hand.

“Oh, come on, stay,” Gillian pleads, jutting out her lower lip.

I giggle, feeling the effect of the alcohol we’ve had. I glance up at Finn, but his focus is on Porter, and I suddenly feel extremely uncomfortable. I didn’t notice him walk over. It’s the first time since he yelled that I was his daughter that I’ve been this close to him. It’s too close.

I move closer to Finn and look up at him. “I’d like to go.”

He nods, and without another word, we walk out of Souls. The laughter and joking follow us outside, but once the door closes, it’s dead quiet.

Finn doesn’t say a word as he climbs on his bike. He hands me a helmet, and I slip it on. Usually, climbing on this bike excites me, but something is wrong. I can feel it.

The drive to his house is quick, and as I climb off the bike, he grabs my hand, leading me inside. Once the door is closed, he pushes me against it and slams his lips to mine.

I moan, holding tightly around his neck. This kiss is hard and rough. Controlling.

He breaks the kiss and rests his forehead on mine. The heat in his eyes is intense, but there's something else. Something darker.

"I don't want to lose you, Mia," he whispers.

My brows dip as my hold around his neck tightens. "You aren't losing me, Finn. I'm right here," I say, searching his eyes. Immediately, I think the comment about kids has thrown him off. Scared him, maybe. So, I rush to add, "I'm sorry the guys overheard my comment about kids. I didn't realize you guys were back. Everyone was giving their thoughts on kids."

He closes his eyes and digs his fingers into my sides. "Kids don't worry me, baby."

I move my hands to grip his hair, and he opens his eyes. The pain I see in them scares me. "Finn, what the hell is going on? You're scaring me," I whisper.

He backs up and pulls his shirt off, dropping it on the floor. "Strip, Mia." I begin to unbutton my jeans, and his eyes darken. "You better not be wearing panties," he growls.

My hands shake as I push my jeans to the floor and expose my uncovered pussy.

He lets out a ragged breath as his eyes slide up to mine. He moves to me so fast I have no time to react and pushes two fingers inside my wet pussy. I moan, dropping my head back.

He bites my neck as his fingers work me over. "Good girl," he whispers.

His talented fingers continue fucking me as he sucks and bites on my exposed neck. It's rough, it's hard, and it's

bringing on my orgasm quickly.

“Fuck, Finn. I’m so close,” I moan out. He quickly removes his fingers, and I groan, snapping my head up. “What the hell?”

He steps back and kicks off his jeans and boxers. He’s now standing in front of me completely naked with his dark tattoos dancing across his flesh and his hard cock jutting out.

He’s a fucking Adonis.

“Shirt off, Mia,” he says, stroking his thick cock, and staring at me.

I do as he asks and swallow the nervous excitement I’m feeling.

“Fuck, you are untouched perfection,” he groans.

“Finn, I need you,” I beg.

His eyes snap up to mine, and he holds his arms out. “I’m yours, baby. I’m giving myself to you completely. Take what you want and ask for what you need.”

I step forward and wrap my hand around his rock-hard cock, stroking as my eyes stay locked with his. “I want you, Finn. I want every goddamn piece, but right now, I want you to fuck me. Fuck me how you need to because something is going on and if you need to fuck it out of you, use me.”

He grabs me, lifts me and slams my back against the door. He slams his cock into me, and I shout out in shock and pleasure.

“I’ll never let you go, Mia. You’re mine. I’ll fucking fight to prove it,” he growls, digging his fingers into my ass.

“I’m yours, Finn. You don’t need to fight,” I say.

The pain is still visible in his eyes, but the intensity of the way he's fucking me is overshadowing everything else. I don't know what's wrong, and maybe after my body gets the release it's begging for I'll focus on it more. But right now, I can't think about that.

He pulls me off the door and out of me, putting me next to the kitchen table. He bends me over it and slams back into me.

"Fuck," I moan.

He pounds into me, fucking me at a speed he's never done before, and it's burning my entire body in the most delicious way. His fingers are digging into my hips so hard I know I'll be bruised, and when he reaches around and rubs my clit, I see stars.

"Oh God, I'm so fucking close," I shout.

"That's right, baby. Give me your release. It belongs to me. All your fucking orgasms belong to me," he groans.

He rubs my clit faster and fucks me harder. The table is moving from the force, and I hold on for the rough ride.

My body is beginning to shake, and I can't stop my screams. My orgasm rips through me with a force I've never experienced, and I arch off the table as I shout his name.

He smacks my ass before grabbing onto it as he continues to pound into me. "Fuck, baby," he growls as he stills behind me.

As his release finds him, mine is still making my body pulsate.

He leans over, kissing my neck gently, wrapping his muscular arms around me. "I can't lose you, Mia. I think I'm falling in love with you," he whispers.

I close my eyes, but a tear escapes regardless.

He's scared of his feelings.

"I'm falling in love with you, Finn."

He turns me and lifts me into his arms, kissing me with a sweetness so opposite to the way he just fucked me.

When he breaks the kiss, he sighs, tucking a piece of hair behind my ear. "Tell me no matter what happens, you'll always believe me when I tell you it had to happen."

I smile, running my fingers through his hair. "I promise, Finn. I'll always give you the benefit of the doubt."

"I fucking hope so," he whispers, holding me tightly against him.

I don't think it's just his feelings that are scaring him.

Something is going on.

Something bad.

I pull back and search his face. "What's going on?"

He kisses my swollen lips and sighs. "Club business, baby."

"So, you can't tell me?" He shakes his head, and I nod. "I'm not going anywhere, Finn. I know you do things a little off-color. It doesn't scare me."

He chuckles as he carries me toward the bedroom. "A little off-color?"

I shrug, and he tosses me on the bed. "I'll show you how I do things a little off-color."

Fuck yes.

Finn

I stare at Mia while she sleeps peacefully. Her world has been flipped upside down, and that was just the beginning.

She has no idea the shit storm that is about to unfold.

All the secrets and lies are going to come to the surface, and she's going to have more truth than she ever wanted.

Yesterday was fucking rough. Brooks was demanding I get ahold of Mia's mom. I couldn't stop thinking about what that would be like for me, if I didn't know my mom was a drug addict and she showed up unannounced.

Mia has this version of her mom. The overprotective, loving, caring woman that she knows. When she finds out about the addiction, it's going to hurt her, and I don't want to be the reason for that.

So, I told them that I won't be doing shit until Porter talked to Mia. I want her to know the past before it slaps her in the face. It's only fair.

When she wakes up, I'm going to have to tell her that Porter wants to talk, and I know she's going to fight it, but she needs to trust me.

Before that, though, I'm going to do something I've never done. I'm going to introduce her to my mom. I'm hoping that she can see the difference between my mom's addiction and her mom's.

It's only just the beginning, though, because after she learns the truth, I still need to get her mom here without her permission. It's going to start a war with her stepfather. A war she'll never be prepared for.

I felt cornered last night like a caged animal.

When I saw her at the club, and she was talking about kids, smiling about a normal life, I knew I was falling for her. I imagined knocking her up and being there when that miracle was born.

Yet, the idea that when this all comes crashing down, she'll hate me is a true reality. One I don't want to face.

"Hey," she whispers. Her soft, tired voice washes over me.

"Morning, baby," I say, kissing her lips.

"Did you get any sleep?" she asks, pushing up on her elbows.

I grin, running my thumb over her bottom lip. "I got enough."

She searches my face, and I know I bled out too much last night. I let feelings I didn't know I had take over. I admitted my feelings.

"How are you today?" she cautiously asks.

I avoid her question because I don't want to lie and tell her I'm fine. I'm messed up, and that's not what she wants to hear. So instead, I press a soft kiss to her lips and run my thumb down her cheek.

“I’d like to take you somewhere,” I say, keeping my eyes locked with hers.

She smiles, nodding her head. “Alright.”

I force a grin as she sits up. “It’s to meet my mom.”

She reaches over and wraps her small hand around mine. “I’d love that, Finn.”

As she gets ready, I sit at the kitchen table, staring out the front window.

I hope I’m doing the right thing here. Opening the door to my past and letting Mia see the demons up close, it’s a fucking risk. The only time I’ve been back there was when it was for the club. Which is ironic because when I walked out on my eighteenth birthday, it was to join Shattered Souls.

Walking into Souls has my heart pounding. I don’t know how any of this works, but I’m finally considered an adult, and it’s time to find out how I become like that guy that used to drive past my trailer. I’m sure he’s long gone from here now, but he’s the reason I’m here. I want to be like him. I want to inspire a kid one day to keep his shit straight just by watching me.

“Kid, you fucking lost?”

I snap out of my thoughts and realize I haven’t moved since I walked through the door. The guy staring at me raises an eyebrow, and I think I see a lip ring.

I clear my throat and take a few steps in. “No, I’m here to join Shattered Souls.”

He throws back a shot and grins. “Brooks, Enzo, Z, get the fuck out here,” he yells, keeping his eyes on me.

I swallow, shoving my hands in my pockets. They're gonna try to intimidate me. I know they are, but I can handle it. I've dealt with real monsters. I can handle this.

"This better be fucking good," an older guy says, lighting a cigarette.

The guy with the pierced lip lifts his chin toward me and grins. "Kid came in looking to join Shattered Souls."

The older guy lifts an eyebrow, moving closer to me. "How old are you, kid?"

"I'm eighteen," I say.

"Why do you want to join?"

There's not a shot in hell that I'm telling them the real reason. That's something for me.

"I want to be a part of something greater than myself. Something that makes a difference. Something that gives back as much as you put in. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to be a part of this club. Let me prove myself," I say.

I've perfected keeping my emotions off my face. Keeping my body language neutral. Even though inside I am a raging fire, outside, I appear to be relaxed and confident.

"Shit, the kid should talk us up to everyone with that little speech." I glance over, and a guy with dark hair is grinning, standing next to the one with the pierced lip.

"I'm Brooks Madden, President of Shattered Souls. This is Enzo Hynes, my VP. That is Zane Madden, my nephew and my SAA. That is Kace Chambers, he's a member and a hell of a guy." I look at each of them as Brooks introduces them. They're studying me, and I just let them. I have nothing to hide.

Brooks continues, "What's your name, kid?"

"Finn Ganley," I say, keeping my eyes trained on him.

He nods and pulls out a chair. "Let's sit down and talk about what's expected of a prospect, Finn."

"Hey," Mia says, snapping me out of my thoughts.

I look up at her and grin. A few years ago, walking into Souls, I never thought I'd end up here. "Hey, you look fucking beautiful," I say, standing and kissing her cheek.

"I want to make a good impression," she says, smiling.

I sigh, running my fingers through my hair. She's hopeful, and I hate it because she's going to be disappointed. "Mia, she's not going to remember this. She might not even be conscious when we get there. Don't get your hopes up about hearing childhood stories or seeing a smiling face. This is gonna be real and raw. Nothing you are used to seeing. Addiction takes on many forms, and my mom is the worst of the worst. Just be prepared for that," I say.

She wraps her arms around my neck and smiles up at me. "I'm not expecting anything. I'm looking forward to seeing where you grew up and being supportive of everything you've been through. Don't worry about me. I can handle it," she says.

We'll see about that.

When we pull up to my mom's trailer, I turn off my bike and stare at it. A flood of bad memories comes rushing at me, and I want to turn and leave. I fucking hate it here. The rage I feel. The disappointment that washes over me. The way my body tightens as my defenses go up. Nothing good happened here, and I hate that Mia is going to be tainted with it now.

“So, this is where you lived?” she asks, looking at the trailer.

“Yeah, come on, let’s get this over with,” I mumble, grabbing her hand.

I don’t want her here longer than necessary. I don’t want the evil to even creep close to her. This is just to prove things can be worse. Which, from her uncertain face, seems to be working.

I bang on the door and open it, sticking my head inside. “Mom,” I yell.

Christ, I hope she’s not dead. Mia doesn’t need to see that.

Something falls in the bedroom, and I pull Mia inside the small trailer. It’s just a tiny area that both of us fill up. It’s horribly messy and smells of old cigarettes and dust. There are dishes all over the tiny counter, spilling out of the sink. The floor is littered with cigarette butts and ashes. The table has a white coating over it with straws, razors, and a few mirrors.

“Mom!” I yell.

I shake my head, glancing down at Mia. Her eyes are heavy with pity, and I quickly look away. Pity is not something I want or need. This is all for her, not me.

The sheet blocking off the bedroom from the rest of this shit hole opens, and my mom steps through. She looks exactly the same as she did the last time I saw her. Hair a mess. Makeup running down her face. Her clothes were too big and falling off her ridiculously thin body. She looks awful, and when her eyes lift to mine, I grind my teeth to keep from telling her.

“Finn?”

“Yeah, it’s me.”

She fumbles around the mess, looking for a cigarette, and pulls one out of the ashtray. It’s half-smoked and who knows how old, considering the amount falling out of it. After it’s lit, she looks between us. “You get this girl knocked up?”

I step toward her, but Mia rests her hand on my stomach. “No, Ma’am, I’m not pregnant. I’m Finn’s girlfriend. It’s a pleasure to meet the mother of such a wonderful man.”

“You know, Finn will one day walk among kings,” my mom says.

She licks her finger and wipes it on the mirror, hoping to get any leftover cocaine. She’s probably waiting for someone to drop off more now.

“I think he already does,” Mia says.

“Please, don’t feed into her crazy talk,” I hiss, keeping my eyes on my mom.

She gives a bitter laugh and falls onto the couch that used to be my bed. “I’m not crazy. I see things that haven’t happened yet,” she says, staring at the cigarette burning between her fingers.

“Mom, when was the last time you ate?” I ask, ignoring her ramblings.

Her heavy eyes lift to mine, and she looks between us. “Finn, what the hell are you doing here? Who’s this?” She jumps up, running her hands down her messy hair. “You could’ve let me know we had company.”

What the fuck?

“Mom, I already told you this is Mia, my girlfriend,” I say.

She looks over at me, and I see confusion in her eyes.
“Mia?”

“Yes, Ma’am, I’m Mia Woodward. It’s a pleasure to meet you,” Mia gently says.

My mom looks between us, and her eyes widen. “Get out. Get the fuck out of here now.”

“Mom, relax. We aren’t staying long. I just thought you’d like to meet the woman I’m falling in love with,” I say.

Mia reaches for my hand and squeezes it tightly. I look down at her, and she smiles.

“No Finn. She’s bad. Get her away from me!” my mom shouts.

I stand in front of my mom and pin her with my hard eyes. “You can say whatever you want about me, but don’t you fucking talk about Mia. She’s pure and innocent. She didn’t grow up hoping she’d survive the next day. She was taught love and understanding.”

“You act like your life was so bad, but look at you now,” she says, scraping the razor on the table, hoping to gather a line.

“My life wasn’t bad. It was fucking horrific,” I whisper, grabbing the straw from her hand and throwing it.

“Finn, don’t touch that. It’s for grown-ups,” she says, shaking her head.

I look back at Mia, and her eyes are bouncing between us. “Is she normally this confused?”

“This is a good day. It’s usually worse,” I say, squeezing the back of my neck.

“Finn, why haven’t you visited?” she says, laying her head on the table.

“Because this place is worse than a nightmare, but it was my reality. I wanted Mia to meet you, and we did that, so we’re leaving, and odds are you won’t see us again,” I say, turning my back on her.

Mia rests her hand on my arm and steps around me. I try to stop her, but she squats down in front of my mom. “I’ll be back to visit sometime if that’s alright with you?”

My mom can hardly keep her eyes open, and I shake my head. “You’ll give me a fix too?”

“Fucking Christ, Mom. Mia, let’s go,” I yell.

She stands up and looks between us. “Finn has your eyes,” she whispers.

“He’s gonna fly,” my mom slurs.

I push open the door and rush Mia out the door. Once outside, I bend at the waist and try to slow down my breathing. Being in there makes me feel like a fucking ten-year-old, and I won’t do it again. I will not allow myself to get sucked back down that rabbit hole.

“Finn, take a deep breath,” Mia says, rubbing my back.

Refusing to look weak, I stand up straight and search her eyes. “There are a lot of different kinds of addicts. My mom is the worst of them. Some get help and have a wonderful life. You get that, right?”

“Of course, Finn. I’m not judging you or your mom,” she says.

She might not be, but I am. I was feeling like a weak kid and embarrassed that my mom couldn’t even remember a

conversation that just took place.

I light a cigarette and take a long drag, trying to relax the tsunami raging inside of me. This is what happens when I'm here. The rage surfaces, and I want to destroy it all.

I glance at Mia, and I remember once again why we're here, to begin with. I take another drag of my smoke and nod. "I know you aren't judging, Mia. You were unbelievably nice, considering the way she was."

She shrugs and steps toward me. "She's your mom. I know she wasn't a good one, but she still gave birth to you, and I'm fucking grateful for that."

I smirk and pull her to me, wrapping my arms around her. "I guess you have a point there."

"Thank you for bringing me here, Finn. I know it was hard for you, but I appreciate it," she says.

Yeah, let's see how you feel about that after you realize the reason I brought you.

I kiss the top of her head and pull away. "I let you into the darkest part of my life. I trust you and respect you enough to do that." She's smiling, and I clear my throat, searching her eyes. "I need you to do something now." Confusion crosses her face, but she nods. "I need you to sit down and talk to Porter. He has some things to talk to you about, and you need to hear them."

She pulls away from me, wide-eyed and angry. "You used your shitty past to guilt me into talking to Porter?" she shouts.

I remain calm, shaking my head. "No, I used my shitty past to show you things can be a hell of a lot worse. I'm proving a fucking point here, Mia. A point that you'll understand once you talk to Porter."

She shakes her head and paces in the dirt. She looks so out of place here. Her long blonde hair is perfectly styled. Her clean clothes hug her body. Her makeup makes her blue eyes pop. I want her out of here, out of the dark.

“I don’t want to talk to Porter,” she says.

I grab her shoulders and force her to stop pacing and look at me. “It’s important, Mia. You told me you’d trust me. Give me the benefit of the doubt. This is one of those times,” I say, searching her eyes.

She sighs and closes her eyes briefly. “Will you stay with me?”

“If that’s what you want,” I reply.

She yanks out of my hold and climbs onto my bike. “I’m not okay with this, just so we’re clear. This is the only time I will give you the benefit of the doubt if you’re only going to use it to push me to do something I don’t want to.”

I nod, getting onto my bike. Her arms wrap around me, and I peel out of there. I watch it all fly by and silently say goodbye.

The evil of this trailer park keeps creeping into my life, and today is the last time I’ll allow it.

Mia saw what she needed to see, and I’ve had enough vial memories that don’t need a vivid replay.

My demons are trying to surface while she is just about to discover hers.

When we pull up to Souls, she’s off the bike before I even turn it off. I hop off and grab her wrist, and she spins around.

“This isn’t a fucking punishment, Mia. I’m trying to help,” I hiss.

“I didn’t ask for your help, Finn. I was handling it,” she yells.

I let out a bitter laugh and let go of her wrist, scrubbing my face. “No, you are avoiding. Shit can’t be avoided forever, and the longer you push it aside, the bigger the explosion when it all surfaces.”

She searches my face, and her eyes soften. “Is something happening?”

I lean forward and press a kiss to the corner of her mouth. “One thing at a time, yeah?”

“Porter will tell me what I need to know?” she asks, as her eyes bounce between mine.

I force a grin and wrap a protective arm around her shoulders. “Come on. I’ll stay with you as long as you want.”

Once inside, it’s quiet. None of the girls are here. Zane and Kace are out trying to get more intel on Jim Woodward. Brooks, Enzo, Porter, and Riley sit talking quietly as we walk over.

“It’s not going down like this,” I say, looking between them all.

“Watch yourself, Finn,” Brooks hisses. “Porter and Mia will go talk in private.”

“She wants me there too,” I say.

Mia tightens her hold on me, and I kiss the top of her head.

“This is between Porter and Mia,” Brooks says, lifting an eyebrow.

Porter stands up and grabs Brooks’ shoulder. “It’s good, brother. If Mia is more comfortable with Finn there, that’s

fine.”

Porter leads the way, and I can feel Mia shaking beside me. “Baby, I’m right here. Nothing bad is gonna happen. He wants to give you some truth you should know.”

She looks up at me, sadness in her eyes. “You know?”

“It’s not my story, Mia.”

She shakes her head, letting out a soft growl. “This is bullshit.”

She’s right. It is. Everyone in this club knows her business, and that’s why I demanded this meeting happen. She deserves to know the truth.

We sit down around the table, and it’s strange to have Mia sitting in this room. She looks even smaller and more innocent against the leather chair.

I rest my hand on her thigh and squeeze, letting her know I’m right here as she stares at Porter.

“Mia, I’m sorry this is how you ended up finding out about me. I’m sorry that I wasn’t in your life, and I’m sorry that I’m going to give you truths that you probably never wanted to know,” Porter says.

He looks broken, and it’s a strange look on him. I’m in a shitty position. I feel bad for Mia and Porter. Neither of them deserves any of this.

“You’re not sorry. If you were sorry, you would’ve come looking for me,” she whispers.

Porter looks at me, and I nod. It’s time to tell her.

It’s time she learned the truth.

Mia

I'm staring at my birth father, and I feel nothing but anger. He's apologizing for shit that he could've prevented, and I hold him completely responsible for fucking up the life I thought I had.

Finn's hand squeezing my thigh is the only thing keeping me seated. I want to get up and walk out before he even says another word.

Porter clears his throat and nods. "Mia, I don't know what your mom told you," he begins.

Mia slams her fists on the table and leans over the best she can. "Don't blame my mom. I know you treated her badly. I know she had no choice but to run. She's the victim as much as I am," I growl.

I don't trust anyone anymore. I've been lied to so many times I don't know which way is up.

"Like I said, I don't know what your mom told you. But I'm not here to give you anything but the truth. You gave her the opportunity. I'm just asking for the same," he says, folding his hands on the table.

I lean back in the chair, crossing my arms. "Fine," I mumble.

Finn rubs my thigh with his thumb, and I realize he's trying to get me to relax and listen. I glance over at him, and he searches my eyes. He gives me a small nod. I'm not entirely sure if that means I can handle this or that he's right here, but I find myself looking back at Porter and waiting.

"Your mom and I dated for a while before I finally got the nerve to ask her to marry me. She was different from anyone I'd ever met before. So full of life. Wanting to take risks. Loving the adrenaline rush. She fit into this club perfectly. She was good friends with Nora, Adalyn, and Gloria." His eyes flash to Finn's, and he sighs.

"Gloria was Brooks' wife. A huge loss to the club, almost as much as her betrayal," Finn says.

"What happened?" I ask him.

Finn's eyes lift to Porter, and I hear him say, 'go ahead', and Finn looks back at me. "Gloria betrayed the club and Brooks. She lost her life because of it."

"Oh my God," I whisper, covering my mouth.

They killed her. What the fuck?

"It's been a horrible loss," Finn says.

I close my eyes and try to remember what Gillian said to me. The club killed her sister, and she was able to forgive them. I suddenly feel the need to talk to her about Gloria and see what her opinion is.

"Anyway, it was Gloria who told me to stop dragging my feet and marry her," Porter says, chuckling. "That woman was a force."

"Sure was," Finn agrees.

"Okay, so you were pushed into marrying my mom," I say.

Porter sits up straighter and drags his hand down his beard. His eyes lock with mine, and I see something flash in them. Sincerity?

“I loved your mother. I never loved a woman before her, and I never loved a woman after her. No one forced me to marry her. I had the ring for months before I was man enough to propose. I got down on one knee and promised to love her for the rest of my life. That’s a promise I’ve never broken,” Porter says.

I stare at him, shocked and maybe a little emotional about what I’ve just learned. This is not the way my mom and dad made it out. It’s the complete opposite, actually.

I glance at Finn, who hasn’t removed his hand from my leg but has no expression on his face at all. Then I look back toward Porter. He looks defeated, and it makes my heart squeeze.

“So, what happened?” I whisper.

He sighs and scrubs his face before looking straight into my eyes. At that moment, I realize we have the same eyes, and it makes me think of Finn’s mom. I just told him that I’m grateful for his mom even though she was a horrible mother to him. Maybe I should be grateful for Porter too.

“Our marriage was great. We were married just over two years when she got pregnant with you.” He looks off for a minute with a small smile on his face. His eyes slide back to mine, and that small smile gets bigger. “She came here and pushed those doors open while we were all around the table. Brooks started yelling. Enzo jumped up. Riley kicked his feet up on the table and laughed.” He laughs at the memory. “I just stared at her. I thought she lost her mind busting in here like that. But she didn’t bat an eye. She ignored everyone and

moved to stand right in front of me. I asked her what was wrong, and a huge smile spread across her face as one single tear slid down her cheek. She whispered that she was pregnant. So quietly that I wasn't sure I heard her correctly. I jumped up and grabbed her face and asked her to say it again. She started laughing and screamed, 'I'm pregnant. We're having a baby.' We both cried as the rest of the guys in the club probably stared at us like we were fucking crazy."

I look down at the table, trying to collect my emotions. It's a powerful story. You can feel the love, and it confuses me even more.

"The months leading up to your birth were amazing. We had a nursery set up, and I bought you a pink leather jacket. I still have it in the attic." He shakes his head. "The day she went into labor, it was like a comedy. I was freaking out, and while she was trying to breathe through the contractions, she was trying to calm me down." All three of us laugh at that, and I can see my caring mom doing something so natural. That's the woman I know. "I finally pulled myself together and got her to the hospital. You were born, and my fucking world flipped. You were this tiny, perfect bundle of pink. I didn't think it was possible to love someone as much as I loved your mother, but damn, did you prove me wrong."

Finn reaches over and brushes away a tear I didn't even realize was running down my cheek. "I'm right here, baby," he whispers, kissing my cheek.

"Finn, you're my brother, but I swear if you touch my daughter in front of me again, I'm gonna reach over this table and rip your fucking heart out," Porter hisses.

Finn laughs and rests his hand back on my thigh. I, on the other hand, look at Porter, uncertain of how I feel about him

calling me his daughter. I know I am, but I don't feel like it. I don't know him. But it also made me feel a sense of acceptance once again.

This is all so confusing.

“Anyway, it was great for a bit after we brought you home. Unfortunately, after that, your mom started to struggle. We didn't realize at the time it was postpartum depression. She was really having a difficult time, and I was helping as much as I could. I would stay up nights so she could sleep. I would bring you here, which you loved cause of all the attention. I did anything I could to make it easier, but nothing seemed to be working. It was hard to watch. But one day, I came home, and she was herself again. She was happy and playing with you, and I felt immediate relief. I didn't think too much about it. I thought it was a rough patch, and we'd gotten over it. Things were back to normal.” He looks down at the table and shakes his head. “I didn't pay enough attention. I didn't realize the reason she was so happy again was that she started using drugs.”

I sit up straighter, shaking my head. “My mom doesn't use drugs,” I say.

“I'm hoping she doesn't anymore, but she did, Mia. She was popping pills, and when I tried to talk to her about it, she didn't like that. It was a few weeks after that that I got the divorce papers and a note saying she took you and wasn't coming back. She threatened to go to the cops and tell them I was abusing her and you if I tried to find her. She said Jim had all the power, and if I tried, I'd end up in jail or worse.” He closes his eyes and sighs. “I made sure you were safe. I sent people to check on you over the years. But I kept my distance

because I knew her threat was real. Jim would make sure of it.”

I swallow and look between him and Finn. “I don’t believe you. My mom would never do something so awful to anyone,” I whisper in disbelief.

He pulls a few papers out of his pocket and slides them across the table. “I figured you wouldn’t.”

I open the folded papers, and I can feel how old and delicate the paper is. I see the divorce papers and push them aside for the handwritten note. My tears fall harder with each word I read. It is definitely my mom’s handwriting, and the way she spoke to Porter is heartbreaking. Not only did she threaten him, but she ripped apart the relationship they had. It doesn’t sound anything like my mom, and I can’t believe she was this malicious.

The paper falls from my hands, and I cover my face, crying harder than I probably should be. Finn wraps his arms around me, and I welcome his warmth, pressing my face against his solid chest.

“Take a breath, baby,” he whispers, rubbing my back.

“I’m sorry, Mia. I didn’t want to taint the image you have of your mom, but Jim isn’t making things easy, and it’s important you know the full story,” Porter says.

I pull away from Finn and stare at Porter. “What is he doing? Do I need to get my mom away from him?”

Porter and Finn share a long look before Porter glances back toward me.

“You should, Mia. You should call her and get her here. But you can’t tell her why. Tell her you need her or that you’re

lonely, anything you can think of that will get her away from Jim and here with you,” Porter says.

I look between both of them and decide to be honest. Porter, at the very least, deserves to know. “I thought growing up that they had this undeniable love. They were always together, never anyone but the three of us. The way he didn’t allow her to do anything, I saw it as him being protective. But when I went home, I saw a side of him I’d never seen. He wouldn’t even allow my mom to talk. There was a control I’d never noticed, and it scared me. And now you’re telling me I should get her away, so tell me what I need to do because I don’t want her in danger,” I rush out.

“That motherfucker,” Porter growls, bringing his fists down on the table.

“Baby, I’ll help you make the call. We’ll call when we get home. I’ll go get her myself if I need to,” Finn says, running his thumb down my cheek.

“No, I’ll go get her if that’s what it comes to,” Porter says.

I look at him and sigh. “You never stopped loving her. You said you loved her, but you still love her, don’t you?”

“I told you it was a promise I never broke. I always have and always will love her and you. When you’re ready, I’d love to get to know you now,” he says.

Putting all the bad shit behind me, like Gillian said, I nod. “I’d like that.”

He gets up and walks around the table, standing in front of me. “You are the best thing that has ever happened to me, Mia. You know you were named after your grandma, my mom.”

I stare up at him, and a small smile crosses my lips. “I had no idea.”

He grins and reaches forward, squeezing my shoulder. “Finn will give you my cell number. When you’re ready to get to know me, give me a call.”

With that, he walks out of the room, and I’m left with spinning thoughts. I’m staring at the seat he just vacated, thinking of all the things he just told me. If it wasn’t for the note, I wouldn’t have believed him, but I have the physical proof.

I think about her using drugs, and it’s just not my mom. She’s not an addict. I saw Finn’s mom, and she’s nothing like that. Maybe she had a problem once, but she doesn’t anymore.

“Mia, you alright?” Finn asks, breaking my thoughts.

I slide my eyes over to him and shrug. “I don’t know. That was a lot to take in,” I say, dropping my face into my hands.

He wraps his muscular arms around me and holds me close to him. “You’ve got this baby. We’re gonna get your mom here and figure it out from there.”

I pull away from him and nod. “I usually don’t get to talk to her without my stepdad on the other end. I always thought it was just because they both liked to talk to me, but I’m wrong, aren’t I? He does it to listen to what we’re both saying.”

“I don’t know for sure. From what I’ve heard, he’s not a good guy, but I don’t know what his feelings are for you and your mom,” Finn explains. He stands up and holds his hand out for me. “Let’s go home. We’ll figure it out.”

With uncertainty in my gut, I grab his hand and leave.

I still have questions, but they are ones for my mom.

Because there’s still more. I can feel it.

Finn

“Still no word from Vic?” Brooks asks, pinning me with his intense stare.

I shake my head, leaning back in the chair. “Mia called her last night and told her she wanted to meet her just outside Vegas. We thought it would look better. Vic told Mia she’d call when she was on her way. Still no call.”

Brooks slams his fists on the table and groans.

“Brooks, relax. It hasn’t even been twenty-four hours. Give Vic a chance to get her shit packed,” Z says.

There’s an unease around the table, and I can’t figure out exactly why. We’ve got a plan, and we are slowly putting it into action.

Yet, the air is thick with worry.

I look between Brooks and Enzo and lean my arms onto the table. “What the hell is going on?”

The rest of the guys look at me before focusing on Brooks. He runs his hand through his hair before resting his elbows on the table. He steepled his fingers in front of his mouth, shaking his head.

“We got word from our brothers in Cali that the feds will be paying us a visit soon. If we don’t get Vic here and get Jim to call off his fucking dogs, we’re all going down,” Brooks says.

“Fuck,” Z growls.

“Hell no,” Kace shouts.

I don’t say a word. I just stare at the table, trying to memorize every detail. The feeling of responsibility is starting to weigh heavy on me. If I didn’t get Jim involved, maybe none of this shit would be happening. I thought I was doing the right thing, trying to save Riley, but maybe I just opened the gates of hell instead.

“I’ll get her here,” Porter says, grabbing his phone out of his pocket. He glances at me and nods. “Get me her number from Mia.”

I look around, and Brooks nods. I press Mia’s number on my phone, and she answers immediately.

“Hey, can I have your mom’s number?”

“For what?” she asks, defensive.

I sigh and look around at everyone staring at me. “I’m gonna call her myself. Make sure everything is good,” I lie.

“She’ll call when she’s ready, Finn.”

I close my eyes and squeeze the phone a little harder. “Mia, give me the damn number,” I whisper.

“What the hell is going on?”

Christ, she’s making this so much harder than it needs to be.

“I told you. Just give it to me so I can get back to doing more important shit,” I say.

She gives a humorless laugh and rattles off the number. I jot it down quickly and push it across the table.

“Just so you understand, that’s not how you speak to your girlfriend. Next time you want something from me, you better hope you drop that asshole attitude,” she hisses, hanging up.

I toss my phone down and scrub my face. “I’ll be paying for that later,” I whisper.

“Poor baby boy Finn. Man up. Fuck the anger out of her,” Riley says, grinning.

“Riley shut the fuck up,” Porter growls.

Normally the room would fill with laughter, but there’s too much tension for that. The feds coming here is no joke.

Sure, our strip clubs are legit, but the things we do off paper that’s what will fuck us.

“I’ll put it on speaker phone,” Porter says, dialing the number.

I fold my hands on the table and wait to see if she answers. Everyone else seems to slightly lean over, trying to get a little closer to the phone.

“Mia?” she answers, whispering.

Porter closes his eyes and roughly scrubs his face. “No, Vic, it’s me,” he says, his voice thick with emotion.

“Porter? What the fuck? Where’s Mia?” she angrily hisses.

“Mia had some questions, and I answered them for her. She knows the truth,” he says, keeping his focus on the phone.

“You had no right,” she shouts.

His fists curl on the table as he leans closer to the phone. “Funny choice of words coming from you.”

“I did what I needed to do.”

Porter pounds his fists on the table, and Riley rests his hand on his shoulder.

“Relax, brother,” Riley whispers.

Porter runs his hand down his beard and sighs. “Mia needs you, Vic. Don’t make her wait. She needs her mom.”

“Don’t tell me what *my* daughter needs,” she hisses.

He gives a humorless laugh, shaking his head. “*Our* daughter. You might have taken her from me and tried to create a fake family, but my blood is running through her. She’s every bit a part of me as she is you.”

“I raised her, I took care of her, I protected her,” Vic begins.

“Because you gave me no fucking choice. Don’t act like I walked away. We both know damn well you were the one who walked. She’s here with me now, and that’s where she’s gonna stay. I missed out on her childhood, but no one is going to stand in the way of me being a part of her life now,” Porter says.

Brooks shakes his head, not in support of what Porter is saying. I get it, though. He’s goading her. Pushing her until she’s so pissed she rushes here without another thought.

“Fuck you, Porter. We’ll see who she chooses,” Vic angrily says.

But as she says it, we hear a car door closing, and I grin.

She’s on her way.

“We sure will. See you soon, Victoria,” Porter whispers. He hangs up and sits up straight, looking around. “She’s on her way.”

“That was risky, Porter, fuck,” Brooks says, taking a long drag of his cigarette.

“It was genius,” I say, nodding my head at Porter.

“It doesn’t matter. It worked. Once we have Vic here, Jim is sure to show up and try to claim what’s his,” Z says.

Riley leans his forearms on the table and grins. “What if Vic decides she doesn’t wanna go back with Jim? We kill him, right?”

“No one is killing anyone. Keep your goddamn trigger finger under control. He’s a prosecutor. Do you think they won’t realize he’s missing? Think smart, Riley. I know it’s difficult for you, but fucking try,” Brooks says.

I don’t know how this will play out, but I do know that Mia is going to be hurting, whatever the outcome is. It’s time for me to prove to her that protecting her is what I do best. I’ll keep her safe from the emotional fallout, and I’d never admit it around this table, but I will be fucking the anger out of her tonight.

That’s a guarantee.



“What did Porter say to her? She sounded really upset, Finn,” Mia says, pacing the living room.

I stand in her way, grabbing her shoulders. She looks up at me, and I press a soft kiss to the corner of her mouth.

“I told you, he said you needed her.”

“She was alone, right? My stepfather wasn’t on the phone?”

She keeps asking the same questions over and over. Vic called her about an hour after Porter called. She told Mia that she was on her way and would call when she was just outside Vegas. The club decided once that call came in that we needed her to have a tail. So Z and Kace are ready to move when I text them. We just need to make sure she’s alone before I point her in the direction of my house. Jim does not need to know where any of us live, especially Porter and me.

I refused to let Mia meet Vic somewhere else. I want her here, where I know she’s safe. So they finally agreed when Zane and Kace said they’d tail her to make sure she was alone.

“I told you already. She was alone,” I say, squeezing her shoulders. “Relax, baby.”

“I can’t relax,” she hisses, pulling out of my hold. “I’m tense and nervous.”

“No reason to be. We’re making sure she’s safe,” I say, crossing my arms.

Mia spins around and pins me with an angry glare. “You keep saying shit like that but can’t tell me anything else. It’s frustrating and difficult to believe. I’m on the outside looking in, and no one gives a shit. You keep demanding things from me and expect me to just do it without question. ‘Give me her number’. ‘Relax’. ‘Don’t ask questions’. It’s pissing me off,” she shouts.

I grin and take two steps forward until my chest is pressed against hers. “Everything I do is to keep you safe. The less you

know, the better it is. If you can't handle that, you need to rethink what the fuck we have going on."

She drops her head, and her gaze is focused on the ground. I sink my fingers into her silky hair, tightening my hold as I lift her head. Her stormy blue eyes connect with mine, and I hiss. Her anger is clear, and it's pissing me off.

"Is that what you want, Mia. You wanna walk away?" I growl.

"Maybe I do," she hisses, searching my eyes.

I keep one hand in her hair and grab her ass with the other, pulling her closer to me. "You want to forget how it feels when I kiss you?" I whisper, pulling her head back so I can kiss and suck on her neck. I kiss a path up to her mouth and slam my lips to hers. She doesn't fight. She lets my tongue fuck her mouth as I dig my fingers into her ass.

I break the kiss and pull off the sundress she has on, leaving her naked before me. She's breathing heavily, causing her tits to push forward. Her hard nipples brush against me, and I pull my shirt off so I can feel them on my chest.

My hands move down her sides and back up, pinching her nipples. I lean forward and suck hard as my hand moves between her legs. Her wet pussy greets me, and I drag my fingers through her wet folds.

I pull on her nipple, breathing heavily. A mix of being turned on and pissed off. "You wanna forget how it feels when I touch you?" I ask, rubbing her clit.

"Fuck," she moans, pushing against my hand.

I drop to my knees, lifting one of her legs and placing her foot on my shoulder. Her dripping pussy even with my mouth. I press my tongue against her, licking long and hard up to her

clit. My fingers dig into her ass as I pull her against my face. I attack her pussy. Biting, sucking, licking. Bringing her close to release, and once I know she's there, I drop her leg and stand up, wiping my mouth.

“You wanna forget how my mouth feels on your greedy pussy?” I ask, dropping my jeans and boxers to the floor.

“Stop fucking teasing me,” she groans, running her hands up my chest and down my arms.

I can't stop, though. I want her to understand that shit isn't always easy and you don't always get what you want. If she can't handle that, she can't handle this life.

I step out of her reach and grab my cock, stroking it as I stare at her. “You wanna forget what it feels like to have my cock buried deep inside you? What it feels like when I'm fucking you hard and fast or slow and steady, ripping your orgasm from you. You wanna forget the ache you feel after I've fucked you so many times it's difficult to sit?”

Her eyes are heavy with arousal as she looks at me. “You think teasing me is gonna make me respect you?” she says, stepping closer to me.

“No, baby, I don't,” I whisper.

She wraps her hand around mine, and we both stroke my cock. “So, fuck me,” she says.

I lift her, and she wraps her legs around my waist. Her back crashes against the wall, and I rub my thick cock against her aching pussy. “You wanna forget what it feels like to give over control to me? You wanna forget how it feels when my jealousy takes over, or my possessiveness claws its way out? You wanna quick fuck before you forget all about me? About us?”

I slam into her, and she screams in shock and relief. “Finn, please,” she groans, frustrated because I’m not moving.

She tries moving her hips, but I hold them tightly against the wall. “You can’t always have what you want. Do you understand that?” I ask, sucking on the delicate skin of her neck.

“Oh God, yes,” she moans.

I circle my hips, and she digs her nails into my back. “You can’t know club information, no matter who it’s about. You can’t question my every fucking move. You can’t second guess my decisions. You promised me you wouldn’t, or is that something you wanna forget too?”

She drags her nails down my back, and I begin to pound into her. Hard and fast, trying to fuck out the anger we’re both feeling.

“Yes, fuck, I need more,” she cries out.

I bring her to the couch and release her, turning her around. I push her over the arm and smack her ass until it glows a pale pink while she cries out. “Do you want this, Mia, or do you wanna walk away?” I ask, slamming my hard cock into her needy pussy. I wrap my fist in her hair, pulling her head back as I drive into her. I nip her ear as I rub her sensitive clit. “Tell me, baby. What do you want?”

Her moans are loud, her cries are louder, and when I smack her sore ass again, her scream is deafening. “Fuck, I want you, Finn. I don’t want to forget anything, ever,” she shouts.

I flip her around and sit her on the arm of the couch. My hand wraps around her throat, and her eyes widen slightly, but when I push my dick back inside her wet heat, she relaxes

against me. I push her back so her back is on the couch, but her ass is on the arm, her legs wide, and pussy ready for me. I keep my hand around her throat as I plow into her. The faster I go, the louder her moans echo around me.

I tighten my hold on her throat as I fuck her hard, deep, and fast. “You trust me not to cut off your ability to breathe, right?” She nods her head, and I smirk. “Your ability to breathe will always be in my hands. Do you understand? I do what I do to protect you.” I tighten my hold as I rub her clit. Her eyes close as her mouth opens, trying to get a deep breath. “Let your anger and worries go with your orgasm.”

I let go of her throat, and she takes a deep breath, snapping her eyes open when I smack her clit. “Fuck,” she cries out.

I feel her tightening on me, and I smack her sensitive bundle again before rubbing it hard and fast. “You want this, baby? You want all of it?”

“Yes, oh God, yes, Finn,” she moans.

At this point, I don’t even know if we’re talking about fucking or trust. But I know she wants both as much as I do, and that’s what matters.

“Oh, fuck Mia, you feel so good. Your greedy pussy is so hot and wet,” I groan, digging my fingers into her hips.

“I’m gonna come,” she moans, arching her back off the couch.

Her orgasm rips through her, and she’s squeezing me so tight I can’t fight mine off. It tears through me so hard and fast that I clench my teeth together as I shake with the overwhelming feeling.

When we both recover, I pull her up and wrap my muscular arms around her. I kiss the top of her head and sigh.

“Losing you isn’t something I want to face. When you get pissed about things that are out of my control, I need to find that control.”

Her hold tightens on me, and she kisses my chest. “I know, and I’m sorry. This is where I want to be. I want to be with you. I don’t want to have to remember your touch because I want it every day. I’ll stop questioning things. All I ask is that you tell me what you can. Alright?”

I pull away and tuck a piece of blonde hair behind her ear. “Deal, baby.”

She smiles at me, and it takes my fucking breath away. “That was fucking hot.”

I grin and kiss her cheek. “It’s always fucking hot with you.”

Her phone rings, and we both turn toward it. Completely naked, she rushes to the kitchen and grabs it off the counter. “It’s my mom,” she says.

I nod, grabbing my clothes off the floor and slipping them back on.

“Mom?”

She listens, nodding her head. I know I don’t know much about love but looking at her right now has my pulse racing. She looks like an angel, and that’s what she is. My angel. While she struggles to learn the life of my club, she’s guiding me toward love and acceptance.

“Okay, I’ll call you back in five minutes,” she says, hanging up.

I hand her the pale-yellow sundress I pulled off of her, and she slips it over her head.

“What did she say?” I ask.

She pulls her hair out from the dress and adjusts the thin straps. “She said she’s just crossing into Vegas now. She wants to know where to meet me.”

I pull my phone out and text Z and Kace. Once they get back to me, I’ll be able to tell her something.

“I’ll let you know in a few minutes,” I say, lighting a cigarette.

She smiles and chews her lip. I lift an eyebrow, and she says, “She sounded happy. I haven’t heard that carefree voice since everything happened.”

I wrap my arm around her and kiss her temple. “I’m so glad, angel.”

She pulls back and searches my face. “Angel?”

I shrug, taking a step back. “You’re my angel. A bright light in my darkness.”

She wipes away a tear, and I tilt my head. She laughs, shaking her head. “You just caught me off guard with how romantic you can be. One minute you’re fucking me. The next, you’re saying the most beautiful thing I’ve ever heard.”

I smash out my smoke and grin. “I’m a man of many sides, angel. And you’re the only one who gets to see them all.”

She wraps her small arms around me, and I leave a protective arm around her as I dig out my cell phone with the other. Zane says it’s all clear.

“Tell your mom to come here,” I say.

She pulls away with a huge smile on her face. “Really? She can stay here?”

“Yeah, she can.”

She kisses me quickly before calling her mom. She gives her directions, and I watch while she laughs at whatever it is her mom says. It allows me to see a side of her I’ve never seen before. A carefree side. I want to see it more.

She continues to talk as my phone rings. I grab it and grin when I see it’s Gillian.

“Hey,” I answer.

“Hey, I heard Mia’s mom is coming. Just wanted to check and see how you’re doing,” she says.

“I need a drink, but I’m doing alright,” I say, chuckling.

She laughs, and I can picture her head back as she does it. “Meeting the parents is no joke, but you already have the love and respect of Porter, so that’s huge.”

I can hear she’s at the club and a part of me wants to run there and be with them. Be around familiar things and family, but I can’t do that to Mia. So, I grab a beer out of the fridge and hope it helps a bit.

“I’ll be fine, Gillian. Go enjoy everyone,” I say, tipping my beer back.

She’s quiet for a minute, and I realize the noise level has disappeared. “Finn, I don’t know what’s going on, obviously, but I can’t go through this shit again. Not with Riley and not with you. There’s tension in the air, and I don’t fucking like it.”

Christ. We need this handled quick. All the women in my life are going to drive me fucking insane. “Gillian, we’ve got it handled. Don’t worry that gorgeous head of yours, alright?”

She sighs, clearing her throat. “I told Mia I’d be her best friend too.”

I laugh and glance over at Mia. “Oh yeah?”

“Yeah, I like her, and she needs someone. You cool with that?” she asks.

“Yeah, Gillian. I’m definitely cool with that,” I say, shaking my head.

“Good, ‘cause I was starting to feel guilty like I was going behind your back. You know ‘cause she’s gonna tell me shit you never would,” she says, laughing.

I laugh, causing Mia to look at me. I give her a wink, and she smiles. “She deserves to have that.”

“Finn, promise me things are gonna be alright?”

She’s worried and trying to hide it like all the girls do. So, I finish off my beer and turn my back to Mia. “You know I can’t promise that, but I will promise to do everything in my power to make sure it is.”

“Thanks, Finn.”

We hang up, and I sit on the couch while Mia continues to talk to her mom, giving directions and looking out the window.

This is gonna be over soon. Having Vic here will lure out Jim, and we’ll convince him to call off the feds. Things will go back to normal soon, and I can focus on my relationship with Mia.

The end is coming. I can feel it.

Mia

I'm staring out the window, waiting on my mom. Finn is sitting quietly on the couch, and I know it's because he's giving me the space he thinks I want. The thing is, I don't want space. Not from him.

The way he just fucked me. His angry words, rough hands, and possessiveness did exactly what he wanted. He wanted to prove I couldn't always get what I wanted, and all I wanted was to feel my release. The longer he held it off, the more pissed I got, but in the end, it was a relief. When he wrapped his hand around my throat, I felt fear for a second, but when I looked into his eyes, I knew I was safe. I'm always safe with him. I get it now. He needs my trust. He's proven I have his, bringing me to meet his mom and sharing with me what he can. I need to prove he has mine.

I turn away from the window, watching and looking at him. His eyes are on me as always, and I grin. "I don't want you to sit on the couch. I'd like you to be right next to me. I want my mom to meet the man I'm falling for," I say, holding out my hand.

He grins and stands up, grabbing my hand and pulling me against him. His fingers sink into my hair as his blue eyes bounce between mine. "I told you the other night I was giving

myself to you, and I meant it. I'm yours, Mia. I'll do whatever the hell it takes to make you happy."

I fight back the tears as I stare into his soft eyes. "I am happy, Finn. Being with you, a part of your world makes me happy."

He presses his lips to mine and kisses me. It's slow, soft, and deep. Possessive and protective. Just like him.

When he pulls back, he rests his forehead on mine. He searches my face and sighs. "Tell me your biggest fear," he says.

"Being alone," I whisper.

He kisses my nose and pulls back slightly, sinking his fingers into my hair. "Why?"

My brows dip in confusion, and I fist his t-shirt in my hands. "I guess because most of my life, I've been alone. Sure, I had my parents and relationships to some degree, but I never felt a connection to anyone. I went to bed feeling alone and woke up feeling alone. Ivy was my first genuine friend, and she left. I just want what all the girls in the club have. The friendships and relationships. I just didn't know that part until I was here."

A small grin hits his lips as he nods. "You're not alone now, angel. You feel that, right?"

I smile as he tightens his hold on my hair. "Yeah, Finn. I don't feel alone anymore. I feel alive, accepted, and loved."

He wraps his arms tightly around me and whispers, "Good."

When he pulls back, I grab his shirt, keeping him close to me. "Hold on. I shared mine, so it's only fair you share your

biggest fear.”

He grabs the back of his neck, a nervous habit I’ve realized, and looks down at the floor briefly before lifting his uncertain eyes to mine. He rubs the top of his head and nods. “The dark. I don’t like the dark.”

I smile, thinking what a childlike thing it is. He, however, frowns and turns to grab his cigarettes off the counter. Shit.

“Why are you scared of the dark?” I ask.

“I don’t get scared, Mia. I said I don’t like the dark. Everything bad happens in the dark. I got beat in the dark. I got locked outside in the dark. I fought men off my mom in the dark. The dark has a way of pulling you in, and once you’re in, there’s no way out,” he says, turning his gaze away as he looks out the window in the kitchen. “I think your mom is here.”

I don’t rush to the door to let her in. I slowly walk toward him and grab his hands in mine. “You told me I’m your angel, the light in your darkness.” He nods, and my heart swells. “I’ll never allow you to be in the dark again.”

He crushes out his cigarette and kisses me too quickly. “I know that. Now go let your mom in.”

This time I do rush to open the door, and just as I do, she steps onto the small porch. I smile and step out the door, wrapping my arms around her.

“Mom, I’m so happy to see you,” I say.

She holds me tight, running her hand down my hair. “Me too.” She pulls back and looks behind her before catching my eyes. “So, this is where you’re living, huh?”

I shake my head, feeling immediately defensive. “Don’t do that. Don’t act like you’re better than this. We both know that’s not the case.”

“Mia, please,” she says, moving her blonde hair off her face.

“I’m sorry, but please don’t come here judging because I’m happy. You always said I shouldn’t settle, and believe me, I haven’t. I’m in love with him, Mom,” I say, smiling.

“Christ,” she mumbles.

“No, actually, my name is Finn,” he says, standing in the doorway.

I don’t know if I’m more embarrassed he heard what my mom just said or that I admitted to her that I love him. We haven’t said it yet, just said we’re falling in love.

“Victoria Woodward,” she says, sticking her hand out.

Finn shakes it and moves to the side. “Nice to finally meet you. Please come in.”

She steps inside and doesn’t say a word as she takes it in. I can see her struggling to keep her opinions to herself, and to avoid any further embarrassment, I stand in front of her.

“We have a lot to talk about, but first, I need to know that you’re alright,” I say, looking her over.

Her brows dip, and she gives a fake laugh. “Of course, I’m alright. Why wouldn’t I be?”

I glance over at Finn, and he shakes his head. It’s slow and almost not noticeable, but I know he’s telling me I can’t say a word about my stepdad.

“Well, it was a long ride alone, and I know you don’t like traveling by yourself,” I say.

She smiles, grabbing my hand. “Oh, sweetie, I’m fine. Your father wasn’t thrilled I was coming, but he understood you need me.”

“You told him you were coming?” I whisper, widening my eyes.

My heart races, and I feel like my knees may give out.

“Of course I did. I’d never just get up and leave,” she says, walking toward the kitchen. “How long have you been a Shattered Soul, Finn?”

“Mom, what did he say?” I ask, moving to stand in front of her again.

Her focus is on Finn, though. I can see the anger in her narrowed eyes, and it is pissing me off.

“Mom,” I hiss.

Finn lights a cigarette and grins. “It’s good, angel.”

My mom laughs, shaking her head. “Angel? I guess that makes you her devil.”

“Mom, what the hell is wrong with you?” I shout.

Finn glances at me and winks. He fucking winks.

“I spent far too long trying to escape Hell to be considered a devil. But I am her guy, and I will protect her and stand up to anyone who so much as makes her feel the least bit uncomfortable.” He blows smoke up toward the ceiling and pins my mom in a stare so hard and deadly serious that a chill runs through me. “I don’t give a shit who that person is,” he finishes.

She doesn't falter, though. She stands her ground, lifting an eyebrow. "She deserves better."

"Mom, shut the hell up. You don't even know him," I yell, moving to stand in front of her.

"I don't need to know him. They're all the same," she says, moving her eyes from Finn to me. "Come home, Mia."

Finn's phone rings and he excuses himself, and I can't help the tear that runs down my cheek. The woman standing here is not the mom I know. She's cruel and cold, just like the woman who wrote that note to Porter.

"When was the last time you used?" I ask, wiping my tears.

She steps back with wide eyes. "What did you just say?"

"You heard me," I say, crossing my arms.

"Mia Woodward, I did not raise you to be so disrespectful. If you're going to believe every bullshit lie that comes out of Porter's mouth, I don't know why I'm even here," she yells.

"I don't know why you're here either. To judge me? To disrespect Finn? To continue lying to me? Why the hell did you bother to come?" I scream back.

"Enough!" Finn shouts, his booming voice echoing around us. "Vic, your daughter has questions, and she needs honest answers. You won't be welcome in this house if you're just going to continue to avoid her questions and cause her more pain. You've caused enough. Treat her like the intelligent, strong, levelheaded, loving woman she is. Stop treating her like a child."

I grin at him, and he searches my eyes. "Ask your questions quickly," he says.

Fuck. Something is going on.

“Are you leaving?” I ask.

“Of course he is. They always go running to the damn club when things get tough,” my mom says.

Finn wraps his arms around me and moves his lips against my ear. “Porter and the others are coming to get your mom. They want her at Souls since Jim knows she’s here. Ask your questions now, angel.”

I close my eyes, once again fighting back the tears. This isn’t how I expected things to go. I thought my mom and I would sit and have a long talk. I thought she’d be honest with me, and we’d begin to rebuild the relationship. But this isn’t my mom. I don’t know if she’s high or if she wants a fix or what the fuck is going on, but I’ve never in my twenty-two years seen her like this.

Now, instead of getting answers, she’s gonna be locked away at Souls, and that is not going to go well. I’m honestly not sure how I feel about any of it.

I know they say my stepdad is dangerous, but what good is any of this going to do for her?

“Angel,” Finn whispers.

My eyes slide from his to my mom, and I walk over, wrapping my arms around her. “I love you, Mom. I don’t know what’s going on with you, but I wish you’d just answer my questions.”

“I’m not high, and I haven’t been since we moved to California,” she whispers, holding me tight.

“Why did you do it? Why did you leave Porter and take me away?”

I swallow the lump in my throat as she sighs heavily on my shoulder. “I had to,” she says.

“Dad forced you?”

“No, he didn’t force me. He offered us both more. He gave us security, safety, money, and protection,” she says.

“Protection from what?”

She’s finally talking, and I’m scared if I pull away, she’s going to stop, so I hold on tighter. I hold on like I used to when I was a little girl and had a bad dream. Feeling like being close to her could protect me from anything.

“Everything, sweetheart,” she says so quietly that I can feel the pain behind the words.

“Is Dad a bad guy?” I whisper, not wanting Finn to hear.

The front door opens, and she pulls away from me before she can reply. She backs up, bumping into the fridge as she looks around at the huge, muscular, intimidating men of Shattered Souls walking in.

“What the hell is this?” she angrily asks.

“Vic,” Porter says, letting his eyes run all over her.

My mom snaps her head toward me, shaking it. “You set me up? What the fuck, Mia. I’m your mom. I raised you. I did everything for you, and this is how you repay me? Getting me killed?” she screams.

I snap my head to Finn, and he comes rushing over. “No one is killing anyone,” he says to me, pulling me away from my mom.

“Vic, stop being so dramatic. No one is getting killed. We’re here to protect you,” Porter says, taking a few cautious

steps toward her.

“Protect me?” She gives a humorless laugh. “Don’t do me any favors, Porter. I don’t need shit from you. Never have.”

Porter takes another step forward, and Riley moves in front of him, resting his large hand on Porter’s chest. His eyes slide toward my mom, and he grins.

“Vic, it’s nice to see that California hasn’t changed that sparkling personality.”

She tries to fight a smile and rolls her eyes. “Still the same smart-ass,” she says.

“Vic, you look great,” Enzo says, moving next to Porter.

She looks at them all, and the smile she was trying to fight slips out. “Probably would’ve been easier to just send Gloria,” she says, laughing.

They all look at each other, and Brooks stares at the floor. I don’t know exactly what happened, but I can see the pain on all their faces.

“Fuck, what happened?” my mom asks.

“Gloria’s gone,” Porter says.

My mom glances at me before looking back at them. “What the hell is all this? I came to see my daughter. I’m not looking to cause any problems.”

“We know you aren’t, doll. It’s Jim. He’s causing unnecessary problems that now need to be addressed,” Porter says.

She gives a bitter laugh and looks around at all of us. “And I’m your fucking bait.”

“Why do you need to be like that, Vic? It’s old friends catching up,” Riley says, wrapping his arm around her. “Let’s go have a drink.”

She pulls out of Riley’s hold and crosses her arms. I glance up at Finn, and as if he senses it, his eyes slide to mine.

“What the hell is really going on?” I whisper.

He wraps his arm around me, kissing the top of my head. “Just what Porter said. We’re gonna keep her safe.”

“Vic, just come with us to the club. Mia and Finn will drive you over. Nora and Adalyn are there. Come see your old family,” Porter gently says.

Her eyes bounce all over, uncertain of what she should do. She feels trapped, and I completely understand because right now, I feel like she is too. This wasn’t the deal. They set her up and used me to do it.

I pull away from Finn and move to stand next to my mom. I grab her hand and look at Porter. “You told me all that just so I’d get her to come here. You spilled her secrets to have an advantage. How do you expect me to trust you, or any of you for that matter?” I ask, glancing over at Finn.

Finn takes a few steps forward, but Porter holds his arm out, stopping him. “Everything I told you was to make sure you had the truth. You were the one who asked if you should get your mom here. We didn’t push that. That was your idea. Yes, we did want her here, but not for revenge or punishment. There are problems happening within the club because of Jim, and the only way to get him to man up and face us is to lure him out. You know how I feel about your mom, and I’d never do anything to put her in danger, which is why being at Souls is best. I let Jim tear apart my family once, but he’s not going

to do it again. My club, my daughter, and my old lady are going to be protected this time.”

I look up at my mom, and she has tears in her eyes as she stares at Porter. I look between them both, and I swear there is some kind of unspoken conversation happening.

“We can finish this at Souls. We need to get back,” Brooks says.

I’m still trying to process everything, but it seems I have no time. They are rushing us out as my mom is yelling that she doesn’t want to go.

Tears run down my face as I climb into the car. I feel like I’m kidnapping my own mother.

Porter gets in the back with my mom, and Finn gets in the driver’s seat of my car. It’s all too much right now. I just need a minute to myself.

“Don’t fucking touch me,” my mom hisses.

I close my eyes, holding my hands tightly on my lap. I feel Finn’s hand on my thigh, and I pull away. He knew this was a setup, and he let me believe otherwise.

“Mia, you can finish talking with your mom when we get to Souls,” Finn says.

I snap my eyes open and turn to look at him. “Do I have your permission, Finn? Thank you so much for that,” I yell, falling back into the seat.

“Christ, don’t do this. You knew we needed to get her here,” Finn says.

“For her safety, not to fucking kidnap her and drag her to Souls where I’m guessing she’ll be held hostage,” she hisses.

“That’s enough,” Porter says. “You’re pissed off. I get that. It’s an emotion that I feel more often than not. However, you’re pissed for the wrong reasons. Your mother will always be a part of this club. This isn’t kidnapping. It’s protecting. She knows it. She’s just too damn afraid to say it out loud. She’ll remember where she belongs.”

“I belong in California,” my mom says.

“I’m not forcing you to stay, doll. After Jim calls his dogs off, if you wanna leave again, I’ll hold the door open,” Porter says.

This is all too much for me right now, so when we pull up to Souls, I just get out and walk inside. Listening to Porter and my mom, dealing with how I feel about them lying to me, it’s all too much.

For the first time since everything happened, I wish it never had.

Finn

“How ya doing?” Gillian asks, squeezing my shoulder as she sits next to me.

We’ve been at Souls for over an hour, and for that hour, Mia and her mom have been crying, screaming at each other, and arguing with Porter. Mia won’t even look at me, never mind talk to me.

I glance at Mia as I point my beer bottle at them. “Great.”

“They just need to work their shit out. It doesn’t change anything with you and Mia,” she says.

I chuckle and finish off my beer. “Well, maybe it’s time for you to use that best friend’s power on her. She won’t even look at me.”

She smiles and rests her hand on mine. “She’s scared and confused. Can you blame her? She’s caught between her mom, who raised her, and Porter, who she hardly knows. Not to mention you and the rest of the club. It’s a lot for someone to take in. She might be angry, but it doesn’t change the way she feels about you. Believe me, I know all too well.”

I lean over and kiss her head. “I know you do, and I know her feelings for me haven’t changed. It’s just hard sitting here doing nothing for her.”

“So why are you?” she asks.

I glance at her and back toward them. “That is a family situation.”

“And what the hell are you?” she pushes. I lift an eyebrow, and she shrugs. “You’re Porter’s brother and Mia’s boyfriend. You should be over there supporting your girl, Finn. Let her know you’re there for her. That’s what we want.”

I grab the back of my neck and look toward them. She’s right. I shouldn’t be sitting here watching my girl. I should be right there by her side, letting her know she’s not alone.

I stand up and grin at Gillian. “You’re the best.”

A large hand clamps down on my shoulder, and I turn my head to see Riley. He raises his eyebrow and grins. “You always kissing my fiancé when I’m not around?”

“Riley, stop it,” Gillian says, laughing.

“Nah, I never know where her mouth has been,” I say, walking away.

Both Gillian and Riley’s laughter echoes behind me.

As I walk up to Mia, Vic, and Porter, they are still going at it.

“I’m twenty-two years old, for fucks sake. Stop trying to keep me in a bubble. I saw the note you left Porter, I read the awful things you said, and I’m asking again why the hell did you really leave?” Mia says, staring at her mom.

I squeeze Mia’s shoulders from behind and keep my hands there. She turns her head slightly, and I see tears swimming in her eyes, full of hurt and betrayal.

“You’re my child. I did what was best for you. I will not apologize or be made to feel guilty for giving you a life most people only dream of,” Vic says.

“I’m not asking for an apology. I’m asking for the truth,” Mia shouts.

Porter runs his hand through his hair and sighs. “This isn’t helping. Let’s take the night to clear our heads, and tomorrow we’ll have breakfast together and try again.”

I squeeze Mia’s shoulders again, and this time she reaches up and rests her hand on mine. I tighten my hold and feel myself relax.

“Fine,” Mia says, looking at her mom. “I don’t wanna fight with you.”

“I don’t either, sweetie,” she says, pulling Mia away from me to hug her.

I glance at Porter, and he shakes his head.

Women are fucking complicated.

“Vic, I can show you where you’ll be staying,” Porter says.

Before she can answer, Nora comes walking over with fire in her eyes and a grin on her face.

“Tell me I’m seeing things because there’s no way Vic Lawson is standing in Souls,” she says.

“It’s Woodward,” Vic says, crossing her arms.

Nora laughs, shaking her head. “Maybe in California with your fake bullshit of a life, but here, inside the walls of our club, you’re Vic Lawson, and you fucking know it. Now stop being an uptight bitch and give me a hug.”

Vic smirks, and they grab onto each other, hugging tightly. It makes me grin because it's like two friends that finally found each other after all these years. I glance over at Mia, and she looks equal parts sad and confused.

“Damn, I’ve missed you,” Nora says, holding onto Vic’s hands and looking her over. “How is it possible you look just as good as you did the last time I saw you?”

They both laugh, and Mia walks away, shaking her head. I turn to follow and feel a large hand on my shoulder. My head snaps around, and I find Porter staring at her retreating form.

“Give her a little bit. This has to be a lot for her to take in,” he says.

“How about a drink before you all continue whatever fucked up conversation you were just having,” Nora suggests.

Vic wraps her arm around Nora’s shoulders and nods. “I’d love a fucking drink.”

They walk off together, and I glance at Porter. “Now what?”

He shrugs and slaps me on the back. “Now we go get a damn shot.”

As we head toward the bar, I notice that everyone is here. I honestly don’t remember if they were here before I walked over to Mia, but I feel a calmness surround me as I look around. This is my family here to support me, my girl, and whatever happens with Porter and Vic. It’s a damn good feeling.

Porter and I toss back a shot before grabbing a beer. He heads to the table with everyone, but I go outside to find Mia. She’s leaning against the building with her head back and eyes closed.

“Angel?”

She snaps her eyes open, and I see the confusion weighing heavily in them.

“She’s so different here,” she whispers.

I sip my beer and stand next to her, linking my fingers with hers. “I think she’s as confused as you are. Both of you are trying to process a lot of shit right now, but you aren’t alone. I’m right here, and the entire club is inside to help you both.”

“Do you think she’s still using?” she asks, peeking over at me.

I sigh and shrug my large shoulders. “I don’t know, Mia. I hope not.”

She shakes her head and lets out a sigh. “I don’t know how to do this, Finn.”

“Do what, angel?” I ask, dipping my eyebrows.

Her fingers tighten on mine, and she turns her head to look at me. “Get past everything that has happened. The lies and the secrets. My mom, Porter, and my stepdad. I still love my stepdad, and I feel like shit for that.”

I put down my beer and stand in front of her. Her eyes search mine as I rest my hands on either side of her face. “There’s no wrong way to feel. He raised you and gave you a good fucking life. That’s not something you’ll ever forget.”

She tries to nod, but my hands prevent it from happening. “Did you notice how Porter looked at my mom?” she asks. I nod my head, and a small smile hits her lips. “He wasn’t lying. He really does still love her.” We’re both quiet for a minute, but she finally breaks the silence. “It just makes me wonder if her reason for leaving was more than what Porter thinks.”

I press my lips to hers and stand back, grabbing her hands. “What are you thinking?”

She lifts her shoulders and looks past me into the dark night. “I don’t know exactly, but I feel like there’s more to this story.”

I squeeze her hands and nod toward the door. “The only way to know is to go back inside and hopefully get the answers you’re looking for.”

The thought that Vic left for another reason is great, but I think Mia just wants it to be another reason. Porter would know best, and if that’s what he thinks, it’s more than likely it. But I won’t tell her what I think. She’s processing enough, and I will not add to that.

I grab my beer, and we walk back inside. Immediately we are hit with loud talking and laughter. I glance over at her and see a very small smile grace her full lips.

There are two empty chairs, and I pull one out for her next to her mom. I grab the other one, pulling it close to her, letting her know I’m right here.

“Remember that time the guys were out of town, and we stayed up all night drinking? You got up on stage and pushed that stripper aside, and you told her to pay attention to how to do things the right way,” Nora says, laughing.

Vic throws her head back, laughing, and points at Adalyn. “You tried pulling me off stage.”

Everyone is laughing at this point, and I glance at Porter. He has a smile on his face, staring at Vic. The love he feels for this woman is so clear in the way he looks at her. It’s almost heartbreaking to see because I have no idea how this is all going to play out.

“Mom,” Mia says with wide eyes.

“Sorry, sweetheart, but your mom used to be one badass chick,” Nora says, smiling.

Mia looks at her mom, and Vic shrugs. “I was young and dumb.”

“You were never dumb,” Porter says. “You loved life.”

Vic and Porter lock eyes, and there is some kind of silent conversation being had that causes them both to smile.

“You’ve been missed, Vic,” Brooks says, tilting his beer toward her.

Vic shakes her head as she finishes off her beer. “Yeah, I’m sure,” she says.

“Why you gotta do that, Vic? Just put that beer down and show us what you taught that stripper,” Riley says, tossing her a wink.

Once again, everyone laughs. Mia turns her head toward me and nods. She’s starting to understand the deep connection the club has, or at least I believe that’s what she meant.

I honestly don’t know where we go from here, but I feel a burning in my gut that tells me the fun and laughs we’re sharing tonight won’t last.

Something is gnawing at me.

Maybe it’s my worry about Mia and her accepting everything. Maybe it’s for Porter and Vic. Maybe it’s the hope that this is the start of our club healing.

Or maybe the gates of hell are about to open and pull us all in.

Mia

I stare out the front window as I sip my coffee sitting at the kitchen table. Finn left about an hour ago for club business, and I've been deep in thought since.

It's been a week since my mom got here, and each day it feels a little more natural. Like we both belong here. It was strange seeing my mom so comfortable with the club, but the longer we've all been together, the more I see what Finn is always talking about. It's a family.

My mom has been welcomed back with open arms. The friendship she has with Nora and Adalyn is what I've been jealous of with the younger girls. The bond is tight. It's so clear that she's missed them. Not even just Nora and Adalyn but the entire club. She's constantly joking with Riley. She's got some weird bond with Brooks and Enzo because I don't normally see those two laughing, but she seems to bring it out in them. And the way she looks at Porter when she thinks no one is looking tells me she never stopped loving him.

I've seen a spark come alive in my mother. A fire in her eyes she's never had before.

It has me believing even more that she left for another reason. I just can't figure out what it would be. If she loved

Porter and he loved her, what could my stepdad have done to break that apart? None of it makes sense, and when I ask her, she just tells me she was doing what was best.

I know she and Porter have spoken in private a great deal, but I'm not privy to those conversations. A shiver runs through me as I wonder if it is more than talking happening when they disappear.

My phone rings, causing me to jump, and I grab it off the table. "Hello?"

"Hey, Mia. I know you asked for a little time off to be with your mom, but Ivy could really use your help today," Harper says.

After seeing the bond my mother has with this club, there's no way I'm going to blow Harper off. I want to have what she had, and I'll do whatever I need to do to gain that.

"No problem at all. I can be there in twenty," I say, grinning.

"Great, see you then," she says, hanging up.

After I put my cup in the sink, I quickly change out of my sweats and fix my hair and makeup. I step back and look at myself in the mirror, and grin. With my tight jeans and high black boots, my black crop top, and dark makeup, I feel sexy.

I take a quick picture and send it to Finn with a winking face emoji.

As I step out of the bathroom, my phone alerts me, and I look down at it.

Finn: Those boots will stay on tonight when I fuck away this hard-on you've just given me.

I feel myself getting wet at the thought and give a simple reply.

Me: I'll be waiting with nothing but my boots on.

Finn: Fuck! You aren't going to be able to sit after tonight.

I laugh and shove my phone into my purse as I walk out of the house. He constantly renders me speechless, and I fucking love it.

The drive to Souls Two is quick, and once inside, I feel a smile spread across my face. I love being here. I feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. Something I've never experienced until now.

"Harper is gonna kill me if I don't get caught up on the schedule and paperwork. Alex is teething, and it's been hell," Ivy says, grabbing my arm.

I giggle, and she glances at me. "We'll get it done, don't worry."

She's every bit the sweet, loving mother as she is an old lady to Kace and the club. She'll kiss her baby and fight for her man. It suddenly has me wondering if this is what my mother was like.

We sit down in her office and get right to work. It's not difficult, there's just a lot to do, which I don't at all mind. I've been so focused on the fallout of my existence that it's a welcomed distraction.

"How's it going with your mom?" Ivy asks.

I shrug as I peek up at her. "Remember when I told you a few months ago that you were different here? That you weren't the same girl I met in California?" Ivy nods, keeping her eyes on me. "At that time, I was too self-absorbed with my

shit, but I get it now. Here you are truly happy, and you have a reason to fight for what you love.”

She smiles and rests her hand on mine. “Yes.” I nod and look down before lifting my eyes back to her. She lifts an eyebrow, tilting her head slightly. “What’s up?”

I bite my lip as I consider telling her what I’ve been thinking. She might think I’m crazy or completely dismiss my thought, but maybe it would help to talk about it.

“I see my mom here, and it’s like she’s a completely different person. She’s alive here. I see a spark in her eye that she’s never had before. I see how both she and Porter look at each other. It’s all making me wonder if she left for something bigger than what everyone thinks,” I say, shrugging.

Ivy leans back in her chair and crosses her arms. “Like what?”

“I don’t know, that’s where I get stuck,” I admit.

She nods her head, keeping her focus on me. “Have you talked to her about it?”

I explain the countless times I’ve asked her and her generic answer every time. I explain I may never know the truth, but I just feel like something is missing.

“The truth always comes out, Mia. That is something I can promise you. You will get your answers eventually,” she says, grinning.

“I hope so,” I say, focusing back on the task at hand.



“I can’t thank you enough for helping me get through all this,” Ivy says.

“It’s nice to feel wanted,” I say, looking around at the bustling club.

“You’re wanted,” Harper says, coming to stand next to us.

I turn my head toward her and smile. I used to be so intimidated by her, but now she’s like a welcoming hug.

“Thanks,” I say.

“Mia, I know you’ve got a lot of shit going on personally, but I’d really like to talk to you about finding your path here. You’ve got the motivation, and you’re a fast learner. How about next week we sit down and figure out what it is you’d really like to do,” Harper says.

It happens before I stop myself, and I wrap my arms around her. She chuckles and hugs me back. “I take that as a yes?”

I pull away, laughing. “Yes, thank you so much,” I say excitedly.

At that moment, all of our phones go off. I grab mine and see a text from Finn.

Finn: Family dinner tonight at Souls.

I look up at Ivy and Harper as they check their phones. Gillian comes out of her office smiling as she slides her phone into her back pocket.

“It’s been a long time since we had a family dinner,” Gillian says.

Harper smiles, looking at each of us. “The club is healing. It’s perfect timing.”

Sometimes I think Harper knows a little more than the rest of us. Maybe Zane shares more with her, or maybe I'm just reading too much into things. She may just know the club the best.

“Do you often do family dinners?” I ask.

I've been around a few months now, and this is the first time I'm even hearing of it. Although it's totally possible, I just wasn't invited until now.

“We haven't had one since right after Gillian and Riley got engaged. The guys like to do them as often as possible, but sometimes shit gets in the way,” Harper explains.

Interesting.

“I guess we need to head to Nora's,” Ivy says.

“Wait, what?” I ask, looking between them all.

Gillian laughs and wraps her arm around me. “Welcome to feeling completely inadequate as these women cook circles around you.”

Crap. I don't really know how to cook. I mostly order in or boil pasta. But suddenly, the idea of cooking surrounded by all these women who I now consider my friends doesn't sound like such a horrible idea.

“Actually, we'll be cooking at Souls. Nora wants Vic involved, and well, she can't leave,” Harper says, shrugging.

Thinking about going to Souls has me remember the text messages from Finn this morning. I feel myself blush and try to get control of myself before I open my mouth.

“Oh shit, where's your mind at?” Gillian asks, laughing.

They all laugh, and I feel my face burning.

“Don’t get embarrassed. We all can’t wait to be fucking around with our guys,” Harper says.

I think back to when I first had lunch with these girls, and they were talking about sex, and I was jealous of the way they seemed to be able to read each other. Now, I’m included. They can read my thoughts too.

I smile as I lift my shoulder. “Do you think I have time to go home and change before going to Souls?”

Gillian tosses me a wink and nods. “Absolutely.”

We stay for a little while longer talking before we decide to call it a day. The three of them head right to Souls, but I drive home first. Finn said he wanted me in nothing but my boots, and since I know we’ll probably end up sleeping there, I plan on making that happen still.

I rush inside and grab my black and white sundress out of the closet. I slip into it and look at myself in the mirror. It’s tight on top, showing off just enough cleavage, and flows out at the bottom, giving it a flirty feel. The boots hit just below my knees, so I’m showing just enough skin on my legs to drive Finn crazy.

A warmth spreads over me as I look at myself. I’m excited about this family dinner. I’m a part of something now, and it feels incredible. Today has been pretty damn great, and I have a feeling tonight is going to make it even better.

I slip on a light jean jacket and grab my purse. I open the door and scream.

My stepdad is standing there with his arms folded, looking well and truly pissed.

“Dad?” I ask.

My heart is hammering in my chest as my stomach flips with nerves. He's looking for my mom, and I'm gonna need to lie.

"Where is she?" he asks, looking past me.

I step into his view, and his cold eyes collide with mine. A chill runs through me, and for the first time in my life, I'm scared of him.

"She's not here," I say, trying to slip my hand into my purse to call for help.

I don't care whose number I hit as long as someone answers and realizes I may be in trouble.

It doesn't happen, though, because his eyes snap toward my hand, and he rips my purse away from me.

"Hey," I yell.

He grabs my phone out of my purse and drops it onto the ground. As I go to grab it, he brings his heel down on it, shattering it in front of me. I snap my eyes to him, and he grins.

"Now I believe I have your attention. I'm only going to ask nicely one more time, Mia. Where is your mother?"

The hardness I see on his face is something I never noticed, but now that I look, I realize it's always been there. He's trying to intimidate me, and I'm not going to let it work. I'm not a little girl anymore, and he's not even my fucking father.

"I told you, she isn't here," I say, crossing my arms.

"Wrong answer," he says, grabbing me by the throat and slamming me against the door jam. The pain is overwhelming as my head hits the edge so hard I see stars.

“Dad, stop,” I cry, clawing at his hands still around my throat.

He pushes me back inside the house, and I try to keep my balance. His eyes are crazy as he slams me into the wall, causing my head to bounce off it once again. My legs are having a hard time keeping me standing, and as I start to sink down, he grabs me by the hair, pulling me straight up.

I’m screaming in pain as I try my hardest to fight him off. He’s strong. A lot stronger than I ever realized. He smacks me across the face, and tears roll down my cheeks.

“Why are you doing this to me,” I whisper.

“Your mother belongs to me. If they want to use her as bait to draw me out. I’ll do the same,” he says, dragging me around the house, checking she really isn’t here.

“She’s not bait,” I cry out, and he slams me against the wall in the hallway.

He grabs my face, squeezing my cheeks so hard that the metallic taste dripping down my throat lets me know my cheeks are bleeding. He pushes his face an inch from mine, and I can’t stop the tears from running down my face. I’ve never been more scared in my life. My body is shaking as a sob rips out of me.

“Oh, sweetheart, I’m not the fucking fool you take me for, and it’s time for me to regain the upper hand,” he growls.

I search his face, trying to figure out exactly what he means, and he lets go of my face. For one second, I think he’s going to leave me alone until he grabs me from behind and wraps his arm around my throat.

“Do you think Porter will come rushing to save you now? What about Finn? How long do you think they’ll be enjoying

their family dinner until they realize you're missing? An hour? Three?" He laughs, tightening his hold on my neck. "We'll be long gone before they even realize you're missing. How's that feel? Knowing that no one will even miss you until it's too late?"

"Too late?" I ask, straining against his hold.

He doesn't answer me, just forces me outside. I figure I'll get in his truck, and while he goes around to get in, I'll jump out and run. This isn't happening without a fight.

When he opens the door, I scream as he shoves me inside, slamming the door behind me.

"I love a girl who fights."

I scream again, trying to push this stranger's hands off of me, but he's got a tight hold on me.

"What the fuck!" I shout.

"Language," Jim says, throwing the truck in reverse.

"Oh, I like the way it sounds when she's screaming fuck right by my ear," the disgusting guy says.

"I brought you to help me, not fuck around with my daughter," he hisses.

"I'm not your fucking daughter," I scream, throwing an elbow back against this pervert.

He shrugs and looks at me through the rearview mirror. "If that's the case, Anthony, you might just get a little treat after all."

"Fuck yeah, Prez," he says, nuzzling his nose to my ear.

What the fuck? Prez?

I'm being taken by the man who raised me. Is this how he got my mom? Was this what she was protecting me from, or was there more?

He knows there's a family dinner tonight, and it makes me wonder if maybe he's got my phone or my mom's phone bugged. How else could he know such a thing?

"Give her the shot," Jim says.

My eyes widen, and I try climbing over the seat. Anthony, as Jim called him, laughs and grabs me, holding me tightly on his lap. I try tossing my head back to hit him, but all he does is laugh. I feel a pinch in my thigh, and I look down just as he pulls the needle from my flesh.

"What the fuck is happening?" I cry out.

"As much as I'm gonna miss you fighting against me, you'll be asleep soon," Anthony says, rubbing his thumbs on my thighs.

"Don't fucking touch me," I yell, but it comes out a whisper at best.

"That's it, gorgeous. Get some rest. You're gonna need it."

I can't even open my mouth, and my eyes begin to close.

They'll never find me. Finn will never get to me in time. I don't know what my stepdad has planned, but I do know that when Finn said he wasn't a good guy, he was right. I truly don't believe I will make it out of this alive.

Before I pass out, a tear runs down my cheek.

Goodbye, Finn.

Finn

“She’s not answering her phone. Are you sure she was just going to change?” I ask, looking at Gillian and the rest of the girls.

They are busy cooking dinner, but Mia isn’t here. According to Gillian, she was going home to get changed and coming straight here. It’s been almost an hour since they got back from Souls Two, and still no Mia.

When bad shit was going to happen when I was a kid, I’d get this feeling. My stomach would start to burn, and my body would get a chill. I used to think maybe I was some kind of superhero, but now I realize it was just my gut telling me to get ready.

I have that feeling now. Something isn’t right, and no matter how much they all tell me to relax, I can’t. I know something is wrong.

“Mia tends to get lost in getting herself ready,” Vic says, smiling.

I run my hand through my hair and nod, walking out of the small kitchen. She might know a different version of her daughter than I do. Mia would never ignore my calls, no matter what she was doing.

The guys are standing around talking, and I step up, crossing my arms. “I’m going to look for Mia. Something is wrong,” I say.

Porter looks at me before glancing at Brooks. “I’ll go with you.”

“No, you stay here with Vic. Kace and I will go with him. More than likely, it’s nothing more than she fell asleep or something,” Zane says, looking in my direction.

“I have a bad feeling,” I say, squeezing the back of my neck and looking at all of them.

Zane slaps my back and grins. “That’s what happens when you’re in love. You’re always expecting the worst to happen.”

I shake my head and shove my hands into my pockets. “And the worst has happened to all of you.”

They all share a look, and now maybe I have them thinking. Each of them has gone through hell with the woman they love, and now I strongly believe it’s my turn. I don’t know exactly what is happening, but I know in my gut something is wrong.

“Go and call when you find her,” Brooks says, smashing out his cigarette.

I don’t even wait for anyone; I rush toward the door and push outside. I’ve got my bike started before Zane and Kace even climb onto theirs. I’m not waiting. Every second I waste causes this feeling to intensify.

The drive to my house is done in record time, and as soon as I pull up, I see the front door wide open. I jump off my bike and run toward the house. The burning in my stomach is tearing through me at this point. As I get to the door, I grab onto the trim and look around.

“Mia!” I yell.

I step inside, and I feel like something is holding me back. My legs are heavy as I walk around. It’s like I’m moving in slow motion, and it’s pissing me off.

“Mia!” She’s not here. “Fuck!” I scream, holding my head in my hands.

“Finn,” Zane says, rushing in behind me.

I glance over at him, and I can see the sorrow in his eyes. He knows now that I was right. Something happened to Mia. I’m not a betting man, but I would bet my life on it that Jim is behind it all.

“We found this outside,” Zane says, showing me Mia’s smashed phone.

I close my eyes, shaking my head. I didn’t even notice it there. What else am I missing?

My eyes snap open, and I rush past them.

“Finn, hold up, brother,” Kace says, grabbing my arm.

I spin around, anger radiating off of me. “What, Kace? What the fuck is wasting time trying to figure shit out here gonna do?”

“That’s not what I meant. Let’s look around before rushing out of here. Your head is fucked up right now. I get that shit. Let me and Zane take a look around. See if there’s something telling,” he says, squeezing my shoulder.

He’s right. My head is fucked up right now. The thoughts of what could be happening to my girl are tearing me apart. I was able to protect my mom as a child, but as a grown man, I couldn’t keep Mia safe.

I lift my eyes to Kace and nod. They begin looking around, and I walk outside. She was taken out of my house. Taken from the one place I deemed safe.

I sit down on the concrete step and drop my head into my hands. Mia had everything she could have ever wanted. A safe, happy life. Loving parents. Enough money that she didn't need to worry. A beautiful apartment.

A few months with me, and not only is that all just a distant memory, but now her life could ultimately be in danger. Maybe if I had just stayed away from her, none of this would be happening. Jim would've stayed busy doing his bullshit prosecutor job. Porter wouldn't have had old wounds ripped open. Vic would have continued being the perfect wife and mom.

But no, I couldn't stay away, and I pulled her into this world. I put her in danger, and while she was just coming home to change, she was taken.

Taken from her mom. From Porter. From me.

She's an angel that I lured into the depths of hell.

I'm responsible for all of this, and I will do whatever I need to do to save her. Fuck the consequences. I'll go to jail. I'll get tortured. I'll die. As long as I know she's safe, that's all that matters.

She has a hell of a lot more to offer this world than I do, anyway. I'd be leaving behind a drug-addict mother who wouldn't even shed a tear if she learned I died. Mia has Vic and Porter, who love her more than themselves.

"Finn," Zane says, grabbing my shoulder.

I scrub my face as I snap out of my thoughts and look up at him. "We need to find her, Z."

“We will, brother,” he says, nodding his head.

“It’s Jim. I know that piece of shit took her. We thought we would bait him, but he’s fucking smarter than we gave him credit for. He didn’t come looking for us. He came looking for her,” I say, standing up.

“We called Brooks. Let’s get back to Souls and come up with a plan,” Kace says, looking past me.

I head toward my bike, and they follow, staying silent. They know how I’m feeling, and there’s nothing they can say to make it better. They understand that.

Once we walk inside Souls, Vic comes running toward us. “What the hell happened? Where is she?”

I look around for Porter, but they must be waiting around the table already. Zane gives me a pointed look, letting me know not to tell her what I believe happened.

So I grab her hand, squeezing lightly. “We’re gonna figure that out.”

Tears are running down her face as she looks between all of us. She swallows roughly and locks her sad eyes with mine.

“I need to tell you all some things,” she whispers, hanging her head.

“Fuck,” Zane whispers.

Kace lets out a sigh, and I tighten my hold on her hand, leading her toward the rest of the club.

More fucking secrets.

The four of us walk in, and Brooks narrows his eyes at me. “Finn, what the fuck?”

“Vic says she has some shit we should know,” I say, leaving her standing as I take my seat.

My legs feel like they’re gonna give out, and I have a feeling whatever she’s about to say isn’t going to help.

Porter stands up and stares at her. “What is it, Vic?” he gently asks.

She slides her eyes to Porter and keeps them there as she nods. “After Mia was born and I was struggling, you know I got hooked on pills.” Porter nods, crossing his arms, and we all listen carefully. “Well, Jim was the one who gave me the pills.”

“I fucking knew it,” Porter shouts, bringing his fists down on the table.

“Relax, brother, let her finish,” Riley says, grabbing his arm.

Vic grins at Riley before focusing back on Porter. “The pills weren’t the reason I left, Porter. I stopped using when Jim promised to keep me supplied. I realized he was trying to keep me high, and I needed to stay sober to see what was really happening around me.” She shakes her head, dropping her eyes to the floor. “That’s when Jim tried making a move on me. When I told him I was happily married and not interested in him that way, he threatened me. Told me if I didn’t leave you, he would put charges on you. I told him to try, and he laughed and told me that he didn’t need to try, that he was a successful prosecutor, and that making up his evidence was simple. I was scared. I didn’t want you to end up locked up because of me. He knew exactly what he was doing with me. A desperate young mother looking to escape the troubles I was feeling. Once he thought he could control me with drugs, and I stopped, he tried his next angle.” She lifts her head and looks

around at all of us, keeping her eyes on me longer before sliding them to Porter.

“He told me that he wanted a life with me. That he would provide me with everything I ever wanted or needed. That he would take care of Mia and me. He would protect us and provide for us. I laughed and told him to shove it up his ass, but he crossed his arms and pulled out a photo of you and the rest of the club. He told me he would bring down Shattered Souls and kill you if I didn’t agree to go with him. I told him good luck, and that’s when I learned the truth.”

Porter leans over the table with his hands clenched tightly. “Vic, get to the fucking point so we can save our daughter.”

Tears roll down her cheeks as she holds back a sob. “He is a prosecutor, a dirty one, but he does hold that position. He holds it because he’s doing favors for all his friends.” She cries harder, and my patience is wearing thin.

“What the fuck is going on?” I growl.

“Jim is the President of LA Demons MC in California. They are big-time into drugs. Used to be real friendly with Kingsley,” she says, looking at Zane.

“What the fuck!” Porter shouts.

“He’s an MC president?” I whisper.

“Son of a bitch,” Brooks hisses.

There are other comments made and shouting happening, but I’m oblivious to it all. Mia is in more danger than I ever imagined. A fire burns inside me as I stand up and slam my fists onto the table. Everyone turns to look at me, and I nod.

“I don’t give a fuck who Jim is. We’re gonna put our heads together and get my girl. After that, if you all want to torture

him or kill him, I don't care. I just want Mia safe, and sitting here going down memory lane isn't doing shit." I turn my attention to Vic and feel myself shaking as I cross my arms over my chest. "Where's he set up at? Does he have any safe houses or buildings he uses for his deals?"

"That's the extent of what I know. I've never even met another member. He kept that part well hidden. He'd go for days, sometimes weeks at a time, telling me that it was because of a case, but I knew better. I'm sorry, everyone. I brought this evil to you. I tried to keep it away, and I did for nearly twenty years. I tried to protect everyone," she says, crying.

Porter walks around the table and wraps his arms around her. She cries into his chest as he rubs her back. "You caused unnecessary suffering for yourself and me. I would've killed that son of a bitch. Shot him between the eyes if I knew. You should've come to me, Vic. You shouldn't have taken this on, but now the truth is out, and we're going to handle it our way. Go talk to the girls. Tell them whatever you want them to know. Let them help you. We're gonna find Mia and take care of Jim."

I scrub my face trying to keep my temper in check, but it's impossible. "We need something! We need a location at the very least," I shout.

"Finn, sit your ass down," Porter says.

I give a bitter laugh and pick up my chair, throwing it against the wall. "Fuck you, Porter. I'm glad you got the answers you've been hoping to hear the last twenty years, but the woman I love, the only person I've ever loved, is in the hands of what we now know is an MC president who was

friends with Kingsley. Am I the only one who remembers what that piece of shit used to use Harper for?”

“Easy, Finn. You’re out of line,” Zane growls.

I shake my head and grab my chair off the floor. “Am I?”

Zane stands up, and Kace jumps up, putting his hands on Zane’s chest. “Relax, Z,” he hisses.

“Everyone shut the fuck up and sit down,” Brooks shouts. He turns his attention to Vic and nods. “Thank you, but you need to leave the room now. We’ve got club business to handle.”

She kisses Porter’s cheek and stares into his eyes. “Find our girl.”

“You can count on it,” he says.

She grabs my hand and smiles. “She’s lucky to have you, Finn. No one loves their old lady like a Shattered Soul.”

As the door closes behind her, Brooks lights a cigarette and leans back in his chair. “Call our brothers in Cali and fill them in. Find out what the fuck they know of LA Demons,” he says to Enzo.

He turns his attention to Zane. “Talk to Harper. See if she ever heard anything about them or maybe a spot in California Kingsley used to meet up. Anything at all.”

Next, he turns to Porter. “You will take Vic into one of the rooms and see if there’s anything she didn’t wanna say in front of us. I don’t give a fuck how small of a detail it is. We need something to go on.”

Lastly, his eyes land on me. “You take that anger and focus it on Jim. We’re all well aware of the shit Kingsley did and don’t need a fucking reminder. Jim raised Mia much

differently than Kingsley raised Harper. He's not going to hurt her, not right away. He wants the upper hand here, and now he's got it. Let's think clearly here."

I fucking hope he's right.

Being scared isn't something I've ever experienced. I never had time to allow it to happen. I handled whatever situation I was in and moved on. But sitting here, not knowing where Mia is. Not knowing what is happening to her. Not knowing anything.

I'm fucking scared for the first time in my life.

Mia

My eyes are heavy, but I slowly blink them open. I'm exhausted, and I can't move my arms or legs. Panic sets in, and I quickly remember what the hell is happening. I look around the room I'm in. There's a small window at the top of one wall. I can't see anything out of it because it's too high. The walls are tan, the floor is concrete, and the very uncomfortable wooden chair I'm tied to is all this room contains. There's no furniture, no other chairs, nothing.

There's not much light in here, only what the window provides. It causes tears to fill my eyes because it makes me think of Finn and his fear of the dark. I very quickly understand what he means.

I twist my head and notice a door that is closed and wonder what is going on on the other side of it. I also wonder who is out there. Remembering what Anthony had said before he injected me with that needle, my eyes widened.

My stepdad, Jim, the man who raised me, the man that provided me a very lavish life, is the president of an MC? How could that be possible? He's a prosecutor. Well, I was led to believe he was. Does my mother know? Is that why she left Porter?

Tears roll down my face at all the thoughts swimming through my head. I have no idea how long I've been gone and no idea if or when someone will find me. There's no possible way for me to know where I am or try to get help.

I'm alone.

My biggest fear comes to life.

I glance at what my feet are tied together with, and my stomach drops when I see that it's zip ties. There's no way I'll be able to get out of these.

My tears are endless as I sit here alone in this room with nothing more than my thoughts and fear of what is going to happen. I'd like to think Jim wouldn't hurt me or allow anyone to hurt me, but he's already proven that's not true. He wants my mom, and I truly hope that Finn and everyone else is keeping her safe.

The sound of the doorknob jiggling has my stomach turning. I turn my head and see Jim walk into the room. He looks unrecognizable right now. His hair is a wild mess. He has on jeans, a white t-shirt, and a leather cut. As he walks, I notice the heavy boots he has on, and I lift my eyes to him.

"You're the president of an MC?" I ask, dipping my brows.

He gives a manic laugh, and my throat goes dry. I don't even know this man. How is it possible that someone can be two completely different people?

"Oh, Mia, there's so much you don't know," he says, pacing in front of me.

"What's the plan here, Jim? Are you gonna kill the girl you raised as your own? Are you gonna make me pay for whatever sins you and my mother have?" I ask, shaking with fear.

He slaps me across the face, and I cry out in pain. With my hands tied, I can't even reach up and touch the stinging skin.

"Your mother is a saint," he hisses.

Suddenly I have a thought. It may buy me a little time from whatever it is he has planned. Finn told me I was the light to his darkness. Maybe that's how he feels about my mom. Maybe that's why he's acting this way now. He's feeling lost without her.

It's as twisted as he is, but I'll use anything I can to buy myself time.

"You're right. She is a saint. I know you miss her. She misses you too," I whisper.

He snaps his head to me and widens his crazy eyes. "She does?"

I shake my head as tears roll down my cheeks. I'm sorry, Mom, but I need to try to save us both. "Yes. She was pissed to be away from you," I lie.

She may have been at first, but now I truly believe it was more fear. I don't know if he mistreated her or punished her or what, but I'm going to try to protect her and myself like she clearly has done.

His eyes soften for a moment, and my racing heart begins to calm a bit. I'm making progress.

"I miss her, Mia. I can't be away from her any longer," he says, squatting in front of me.

I nod my head, trying to fight back more tears. Just a few short months ago, I considered myself a daddy's girl. I thought my life was like everyone else's. I thought I saw loving parents that provided for themselves and for me. There wasn't

a time I didn't feel safe or loved. But now I see it was all just lies covered up with so much bullshit it was well hidden. There was no love, only fear. The money we had was because of whatever Jim was up to with his MC. It's all so fucked up and confusing. I don't understand why any of this is happening, but I can't focus on that right now.

“Do you really think she'd like to see me tied up like this? She wouldn't like seeing us at odds,” I say.

He stands and begins to pace again, running his hands through his hair. “You think I don't know that? She would be in tears right now.”

“So, take me back. Bring me back to Finn's, and I'll call her. I'll tell her that we all need to sit down and talk about everything. We can fix this, can't we?” I ask, trying to force a smile.

He looks from me to the door and back again. I've never felt such a desperate need to have someone listen to me before. If I can just get back to Finn's, I know they will find me, and I won't need to handle this on my own.

He stares at me, and I believe I may have broken through.

Unfortunately, the door opens, and he snaps his eyes to whoever walks in.

“What the fuck did I say about interrupting me?” he growls.

“Sorry, Prez, but we've got a problem.”

Jim shakes his head and steps behind me. I want to turn my head, but I think it's safer to act as if I'm not paying attention.

“We got a call that Shattered Souls are coming. They're a lot smarter than we gave them credit for,” the man says.

My stomach swims with butterflies knowing that help is on the way.

Jim lets out a hollow laugh, and I feel his hand rest on my chair. My body stiffens, and I try not to move.

“Good, I’d much rather kill them all at once,” he says.

They both laugh, and I feel the bile rising in my throat.

“Any word on my Victoria?”

I need to clamp my mouth closed tightly as I feel like I am going to vomit. This sick infatuation he has with my mom is disgusting. I realize I don’t know everything about the relationship they’ve had over the years, but even if it had been good, after this, she would never even look at him again. He’s even crazier than I thought if he thinks otherwise.

“She’s coming too,” he says.

I can’t hold it back anymore, and I vomit onto the floor in front of me. The fear of what is going to happen is too much for me to handle.

“Christ, go grab a damn mop,” Jim says.

He pulls my chair away from the vomit and stands in front of me. “Once your mom is here, we’ll sit down and have that talk.”

He’s fucking insane, and even though it’s probably the worst time to question him, I still do.

“You’ve lied to me my entire life about everything, it seems. Why?” I ask.

“Your mother and I are meant to be. I’ve provided a life for both of you that kept you happy. It doesn’t matter why your

mom and I ended up together. We live a very happy life because of it," he says.

"Why did she leave Porter for you?" I push.

"It's not important. The important thing is she did."

I'm getting pissed, and I shake my head. "You really think after this she's just going to crawl back to you? I'm tied to a fucking chair," I whisper.

He grabs my hair and pulls my head back to look up at him. My eyes begin to water as he pulls harder, searching my face. "She belongs to me," he hisses.

"I don't even know you," I say as my salty tears wet my lips.

"Be a good girl like you always have, and I'll make sure you get out of this unharmed," he says, grinning.

I give a humorless laugh and try to pull my head out of his hold. "I'm not the girl you think I am."

He lets go of my hair and grabs my face, much like earlier, and stands above me. "What the fuck is that supposed to mean?"

I lift an eyebrow, unable to respond with his hold on me. He lets go, and I lick the blood off my bottom lip. "I have friends and a man who I love. You thought keeping me sheltered my entire life would give you control, but it didn't, did it? The only thing it got you was what was coming to you. Losing Mom and me."

I know I shouldn't be provoking him, but this anger I feel right now is uncontrollable. He expects me to be the girl I was before I knew all the secrets and lies. I'm no longer that girl. I have hate in my heart now, and I blame no one but him.

He doesn't miss a beat and pushes the chair backward. My head bounces off the concrete, and I scream out in pain. He presses his heavy boot on my chest, and it's making it difficult to breathe.

"I will never lose your mother, but losing you wouldn't deprive me of any sleep," he says, pushing his heavy boot down harder.

"Stop," I cry out, feeling the pain radiating in my head.

He kicks me in the ribs, and I scream as the pain tears through my body. "You want to act like a tough little bitch because you think you're a Shattered Soul? I'll show you exactly what the LA Demons think of Shattered Souls members."

He kicks me again, and I feel a rib crack. I cry in agony, and he laughs like a madman above me.

"Fuck you," I cry.

The door opens, and I hear several footsteps walk into the room.

"Perfect timing," Jim says, laughing. "Vic's ungrateful daughter needs to be taught a little respect."

"Fists or dicks?" someone asks.

A chill runs through me as my stomach churns. I'm in so much pain, and I'm having a hard time focusing on anything but that. But if given a choice, I'll take their fists. That's something I could possibly be able to heal from.

"Shut the fuck up," someone else hisses. "We have bigger problems right now. No disrespect Prez, but this is becoming a little too personal. When we helped years ago, it was to gain

control of the drug deals, but now the only thing we're doing is bringing attention to the fact we're still around."

I hear a gunshot and scream, closing my eyes tight.

"Anyone else have a problem with the way I'm handling things?" Jim asks.

I fight back a sob as I realize Jim just killed someone for speaking out against him. He has no heart at all. Mom and I have been lucky to survive as long as we did.

"Now as I was saying. This one needs to be taught some respect and not with your dicks. Pain is welcome, but remember she is Vic's daughter, so try not to kill her just yet."

I close my eyes and hope that if they end up killing me, it's quick.

Something hits my head, and I black out completely.

Finn

We're so close to Mia. I can feel her. It's been the longest ride of my life. Once we got in touch with our brothers in California, they did some digging and found out everything we needed to know. They were all as surprised as we were to learn that Jim was the president of LA Demons. They told us they had no idea that the club was even still around. Hux, the Cali president, said they've been quiet since Kingsley was killed. He believed after they lost their connection with him, that they just kinda faded. It's still mind-blowing that no one knew that Jim was the president. He's definitely a shady motherfucker.

After Hux told us where the LA Demons used to do a lot of their deals, we headed right out. It shouldn't have come as a surprise that it's only a few hours from us. That son of a bitch kept a close eye on us all these years.

We are literally minutes from the warehouse now. My knuckles are white from holding so tightly to the handlebars. I don't give a shit what everyone plans on doing, but I'm going right in. I'll kill anyone that gets in my way of saving my girl. Jim included.

Brooks, Porter, and the rest of the guys want to take Jim alive and get as much out of him as they can. If they get to his

first, they can have him, but if he's in my way of getting to Mia, I have no problem putting a fucking bullet in his head.

Vic insisted on coming. No one was in favor of it, but she's one feisty chick. The only way to get her to shut up was to allow it. So now Porter is driving her in the van.

The warehouse comes into sight, and my stomach tightens. I'm beyond ready to get my girl and make sure she is safe.

We don't even hide our arrival as we pull right up to the door of the warehouse. I jump off my bike and head straight for the door. Before I can grab the handle, someone is pulling me back.

"Finn, hold the fuck on. We need to be smart about this," Zane says.

I push his hand off me and grab my gun out of my waistband, cocking it back. "I'm being smart," I say, rushing toward the door.

They are all yelling my name, but I don't stop. If it was their girls in there, they'd do exactly the same. Nothing is going to stop me from getting to Mia.

As I step inside, there's very little light, but I follow the narrow hallway straight ahead. It opens up to a big room, and I'm greeted by Jim and the LA Demons.

"You've got bigger balls than I gave you credit for," Jim says, laughing.

They've all got their guns drawn on me, but I don't care. They can all take a shot after I get Mia out of here.

"Where the fuck is she?" I hiss.

He looks back at his guys before turning his attention back to me. "We'll get to that."

“Mia!” I shout, looking around.

I hear a noise and snap my head to the right. I notice a door in the far corner, and I take a step forward.

“Don’t try to be a fucking hero,” Jim says, pointing his gun at me. “No one leaves until I have my Victoria back.”

“I’m right here,” Vic says, stepping up next to me.

I turn my head and see the rest of the club standing there, guns drawn.

“Vic,” he whispers, staring at her. “Come here, baby.” He waves her over with his gun.

“Put your fucking guns down,” Zane says, moving next to me.

A hollow laugh leaves Jim as he looks over at us. “Zane Madden,” he says, shaking his head. “You realize all the trouble you’ve caused for a lot of people.”

“I didn’t cause shit,” Z growls.

I step back a few steps, allowing Porter, Kace, and Enzo to stand in front of me.

“Oh, but you did.” Jim points his gun at Zane and sighs. “You killed Kingsley and, in doing so, killed all the deals he had with a lot of people. It was bad enough with the outlaws, but you’ve pissed off a lot of feds.” He takes a step closer to Zane, and I take a step over to the right. “Everyone wants their revenge,” Jim says, smiling.

“Gonna put a bullet in me with Vic standing right here?” Zane asks.

Everyone is focused on the stand-off, which is exactly what I was hoping for. I grab Vic and hold the gun to her as I

push my way toward the door in the back corner.

“Finn!” Porter shouts.

“What the fuck!” Brooks growls.

“I’ll fucking shoot you dead,” Jim yells.

I smirk as I keep her in front of me, knowing full well they aren’t going to take a shot with Vic as my shield.

Fucked up plan? Absolutely, but I’m desperate to get to Mia.

“Mia!” I shout, reaching behind me with one hand and twisting the knob.

The door opens, and I push Vic away from me, slamming the door shut and locking it. I spin around and see my girl lying on the floor.

“Mia, fuck, no,” I scream, rushing toward her.

She’s bloody and barely conscious. Tears fill my eyes as I take in her battered body. Jim is a fucking dead man. They’re all fucking dead.

I gently wrap my arm around her and pull her to me. I’m unable to control the emotions I feel, and my tears roll down my cheeks. It’s a mix of relief that she’s alive and anguish at what she’s suffered.

“I’m here, angel. I’m so fucking sorry,” I say, pressing a soft kiss to her head.

She flinches, and I move my face close to hers. “Talk to me, Mia. Where are you hurting?” I softly ask.

“Everywhere,” she whispers.

Fuck. I feel like my heart is being torn from my chest as I take in the extent of her injuries. Her face is bleeding. Her one

eye is swelling shut. I can already see the faint bruising that is happening all over her delicate skin.

“Let’s get you out of here,” I say, picking her up and holding her against my chest. I stop at the door and look down at her. She’s looking up at me with tears running down her face. I quickly wipe away a tear that escapes my eye and grin at her.

“Shit is gonna be bad when I open this door, angel. I’m gonna bet Porter is out here waiting for you. Go with him, and I’ll be right behind you,” I lie.

When I open this door, they are all going to want my blood for my stunt, and that’s fine. They can have it. But not until Mia is safely out of here. I need to know she’s safe, and I really hope Porter or someone else is outside this door for me to hand her off to.

“Don’t leave me, Finn,” she whispers, fisting my shirt in her hands.

“I’ll never leave you, angel. I’m protecting you like I should’ve sooner. You need medical attention, and I need to handle Jim,” I say.

“He’ll kill you,” she cries.

I press a soft kiss to her bloody lips and smile. “I’ve fought off worse, Mia.”

“Please, Finn,” she pleads.

“I love you, Mia. I will always love you,” I say, opening the door.

Every head turns toward me. Vic screams as Porter comes rushing over.

“What the fuck,” he yells, taking in Mia.

“Get her and Vic the fuck out of here,” I say, handing Mia over.

She’s crying and trying to hold onto my shirt, and even though it shatters my heart, I pull her off of me. Once Porter has her, Brooks grabs Vic, and they rush down the hall. I can hear Mia’s screams, and my body sags in both relief and agony.

“You piece of shit,” I say, lifting my gun.

Tears are swimming in my eyes as I picture what these animals have done to Mia. What Jim allowed them to do. I can’t handle it, and I pull the trigger, but before I can even see if I got a hit, I hit the ground.

Pain radiates through my body, and I look down, realizing I’ve been shot in the leg. Son of a bitch it hurts.

“Go get Vic,” Jim is shouting.

His men try to move, but Zane and Kace take a few shots, and they begin to go down. I grin, hoping they feel pain ten times worse than Mia is.

“Get the hell out of here,” I yell, pointing my gun at Jim.

Kace and Z look at me, and I narrow my eyes. “Fucking go. Get Mia help!”

“Fuck,” Kace says, grabbing Zane’s arm. “Let’s go, brother.”

“I’m not leaving Finn,” Zane says.

“No one is fucking leaving,” Jim yells, pointing his gun at Zane. “Eye for an eye, that’s what they say, isn’t it?”

“It was me! I killed Kingsley. It was my way of proving I should be patched in,” I say, trying to stand up.

“Finn, shut the fuck up,” Z shouts.

I have Jim’s full attention, and I widen my eyes at Kace to get Zane out of here. Kace is the logical one, and he knows damn well one of us is dying. He’s never going to let that happen to Zane.

“You’re lying,” Jim says, shaking his head.

“I was going to let him live a little longer, but when I remembered how he beat, tortured, and used his daughter, I pulled the trigger without a second thought. A real man would never allow something so brutal to happen to someone they love, especially their daughter.” I take a painful step closer to Jim, keeping my finger on the trigger of my gun. “A real man would be disgusted that his daughter suffered at his hands.” I glance over and notice Zane and Kace have left, and I smile. “I guess you are exactly like the animal you want to seek revenge for. You allowed the woman you raised to be used as a fucking punching bag and did nothing. You aren’t a real man, Jim, because a real man would’ve taken the shot already,” I say, pulling the trigger.

He groans as the bullet hits him in the chest, and I laugh as I move closer.

“Fuck you,” he hisses, holding his hands over his bleeding chest.

“When you get to hell, tell Kingsley hi for me,” I say, shooting him several more times.

I drop my arm to my side and look around. A few of his guys are dead along with him, but it looks like most pussied out and went to go look for Vic. I don’t even need to leave this warehouse to know they are either dead too or bleeding somewhere.

I take a step, and it's fucking painful. Now that my adrenaline is starting to wear off, I am starting to feel the extent of the gunshot. I look down and see my entire leg covered in blood.

"Fuck," I hiss, trying to hold onto the wall as I make my way toward the door.

The bullet went in high up on my thigh, and with the amount of blood I was losing, plus the lightheadedness, I'm afraid he hit a major artery.

I push the door open, and when the fresh air hits me, my body gives out, and I hit the ground. I glance around and see that everyone is gone. A smile hits my lips, and I nod. The fact that I know Mia is safe and everyone else got out is all I need.

My eyes shut, and I see Axel smiling down at me.

"Watching you grow as a Shattered Soul brings me almost as much joy as seeing my son mature as a man and Shattered Soul. I saw you, Finn. I saw you each time I drove by." He looks exactly how I remember. He's wearing his cut and has a huge smile on his face.

What the fuck is happening?

"It's confusing, I know, but you did good, brother. You are now able to walk among kings," he says, looking behind him.

That's when I noticed countless Shattered Souls members. I look around, and when my eyes land back on Alex, I shake my head.

"I'm dead?" I whisper, looking up at Axel.

He smiles and wraps his arm around me.

I don't understand what's happening, but suddenly I think of my mom.

“You’re a good boy, Finn. One day you will walk among kings. You will be a part of their kingdom—their empire. You will be feared and worshipped. You will fly high and soar gracefully. You’re only a mere mortal now, but one day my boy, you will walk among kings.”

I looked around at all the great men surrounding me and realized maybe she wasn’t so crazy after all. My destiny was exactly what she said.

Walking among these kings.

Three Months Later

Mia

I walk into Souls, and a sadness I try to keep hidden hits me. It's lonely walking in here alone all the time, but at the same time, it's one of the places I feel comfort.

It's a strange combination.

"Hey, baby girl, how are you?" my mom asks, wrapping her arm around my shoulders.

"Tired, Mom. I'm so fucking tired," I say, resting my head on her.

"Of course you are. It's normal," she says, leading me to the table.

All the girls are here, and a grin hits my lips. So much has happened in the last few months, and these women have truly become my rocks.

"You look exhausted," Gillian says, smiling at me.

"Gee, thanks," I say, taking a sip of my water.

Ivy comes over and kisses my cheek before resting her hand on my belly. "That's what happens when you're

pregnant. This kid is gonna drain everything out of you.”

They all laugh, and I shake my head. “Yeah, feels like that’s what’s happening.”

“How did the doctor go?” Harper asks.

I nod, leaning back in my chair. “Good. I heard the heartbeat, and the doctor said everything is perfect.”

Finding out I was pregnant when I woke up in the hospital after just barely surviving the hell I went through was so unexpected. This baby is strong, being able to survive the beating I took. I have no doubt that is something he or she gets from Finn.

I blink back tears and try to focus on the conversation happening around me. Getting lost in my head isn’t something I care to do.

“We’re going to throw you the most amazing baby shower,” Gillian says, clapping her hands.

I smile and nod my head. “I have no doubt.”

“Mia, your father and I are going to the store, and then we’ll meet you at your house,” my mom says, smiling.

Things with Porter and my mom just kind of went back to the way they were. After Jim was killed, his club died with him. The surviving members couldn’t get out quick enough, and Hux and Kadon from the California chapter have reported that the MC is long gone. I’m so extremely thankful for those guys because I found out later that they were the reason I was found.

Now that things are beginning to go back to a new normal, it’s heartwarming seeing my real parents together. When Porter said he never stopped loving her, that was the truth.

After my mom finally felt free, she allowed her heart to heal, and Porter was the only one who could do it. I'm grateful for them both. For everything they do for me.

Like tonight, coming over and making dinner. I look forward to these very simple things.

"Thanks, Mom," I say, smiling up at her.

"You'll soon understand what it's like to have your heart living outside your body. Making dinner for you doesn't require a thank you. I need to make sure you and my grandbaby are well-fed," she says, kissing my head.

I watch her and Porter share a quick kiss before he grabs her hand, and they walk out the door.

"Hey, how you doing, sweetheart?" Brooks asks, squeezing my shoulder.

"I'm fine," I say, grinning up at him.

"You need anything. Anything at all, you call," he says.

I nod, resting my hand on his. "I will, thanks."

I'm such an emotional mess all the time, and I try to blink away the tears I feel forming. If he notices, he doesn't say anything. Just tosses me a wink and walks off toward the bar.

"Mia, are you craving anything?" Adalyn asks.

This woman wants a grandbaby so badly, and I think she feels a connection to mine because of the brief encounter Finn had with her husband as a child. It all just reminds me how tightly knit this club is. There is a bond that is unbreakable—even in death.

"Cheesecake," I say, smiling.

“You do realize you’re going to wake up to ten cheesecakes at your house, right?” Gillian says, laughing.

“You have to give the baby what it’s craving,” Adalyn says.

“The baby isn’t craving it. Mia is,” Harper says, shaking her head.

“Who cares who’s craving it. If Mia wants cheesecake, she’ll get it,” Nora says, reaching over and squeezing my hand.

“You guys don’t need to do that. I can go buy a cheesecake,” I say.

Nora shrugs and puts her phone on the table. “Or we can text your parents and tell them to grab one while at the store.”

Everyone laughs, and I look down at my phone, noticing the time.

“This visit was quick, but I need to get home,” I say, standing up.

“If you’re feeling up to it, how about we do a girls’ lunch tomorrow,” Ivy suggests.

I nod, slipping my phone into my purse. “I’d really like that.”

“I’ll pick you up around noon,” Gillian says.

We say our goodbyes, and I climb into my car. I sigh and rest my head back. I’m so tired. I rest my hand on my barely there belly, and as if by magic, I feel the baby move. I sit up straight as my eyes widen.

“Oh my God,” I whisper.

The tears are uncontrollable as I realize what an exciting moment this is, and I'm sitting here alone. I try to stop the tears, but I can't. I drive home, wiping my eyes as I try to fight the overwhelming emotions.

I park in the driveway and look up at my beautiful new home. Staying at Finn's old house had too many memories. It was time for something new. A new start for an unplanned future.

My tears have slowed down but still, a few escape as I walk in the door.

"Angel?"

I can't help the tears as they begin all over again as I walk into the living room.

"Fuck, what's wrong?" Finn asks.

I shake my head and sit down next to him. He wraps his strong arms around me, holding me tightly to him.

"Nothing. I'm just such an emotional mess all the fucking time," I say, shaking my head.

"It's the hormones, angel," he says, kissing the top of my head.

I lift my eyes to him and smile. "The baby just moved."

His eyes widen, and he pulls back, moving his hands to rest on my belly. "I fucking missed it," he whispers.

"It'll happen again," I say, looking at his hands on me.

"I'm fucking tired of sitting around," he says, lifting his eyes to me but keeping his hands on my stomach.

I lean over and press a soft kiss to his inviting lips. "The doctor said if your next visit is good, you can go back to

normal activities. Just a few more days,” I say.

“Normal activities, huh,” he says, lifting an eyebrow.

I laugh as he leans over, kissing me with a force that has my body reacting immediately. It’s been far too long since we’ve had sex. Don’t get me wrong, my man has talented fingers, but until his leg is completely healed, we’ve had to refrain from sex.

It’s killing us both.

He breaks the kiss and rests his forehead on mine. “Remember we were talking the other night about always being honest with each other?”

My brows dip, and I nod. After everything we’ve been through, I can’t imagine what he could possibly need to tell me.

“I talked to my mom today,” he whispers.

I sit up straight, pushing him off me. “How’d it go?”

“It was fine. She’s doing really good in rehab, and they said we’re allowed to visit next month. Don’t feel like you need to go, but I think I do,” he says.

When we thought we were going to lose him, I reached out to his mom. I know they didn’t have that great of a relationship, but I thought she should know. When she saw him lying in the hospital bed, she broke down. She promised to get clean if he pulled through, and she kept that promise. He’s still uncertain, but I do see the hope in his eyes.

“Of course, I’m going to go with you,” I say, smiling.

I get up and go into the kitchen to get a drink and stick my head back into the living room with a grin on my face.

“What?” he asks, chuckling.

“My parents are coming for dinner again,” I say, laughing.

He groans and drops his head back on the couch. “Oh great, another night of Porter telling me not to fuck this up.”

I sit down next to him again and rest my head on his chest. “They just want to make sure we know they’re here for us.”

He wraps an arm around me, and I sink into him. “Angel, I’ll always do what makes you happy.”

That is the truth. He laid down his life for me—literally.

“I love you, Finn,” I whisper.

“I love you more,” he says, kissing my cheek.

I don’t know about that, but I have no doubt he loves me with all he has.

When I found out my life was a lie, I never imagined it would turn out even better than it was. My mom always told me not to settle, and I didn’t. I ended up with the most incredible man, and I can’t wait to spend the rest of our lives together.

All three of us.

Note From Author

Saying goodbye to Shattered Souls Vegas MC was NOT easy for me. These characters have become a part of me and I didn't want it to end, but everything must come to an end.

As we say goodbye to Shattered Souls Vegas MC, I hope you're ready for the next chapter.

Shattered Souls Cali MC will be coming soon. A new chapter that will take you on a wild ride!

If you want to be sure not to miss a thing, join my Facebook reader group. You'll get the latest on what's happening in my world.

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

Want more of Finn and the Shattered Souls? Check out this extended epilogue and see what they're up to! You can download this final chapter for FREE by clicking RIGHT HERE! <https://dl.bookfunnel.com/cgrg1abx58>

About the Author

Heather Dahlgren is a USA Today Bestselling Author. She writes Contemporary Romance, sprinkling each book with a bit of humor, a lot of naughty and true love. She self-published her first book in 2014 and continues to do so today. Her overactive mind promises the stories are in no short supply.

Heather grew up and still resides at the Jersey shore. She loves being so close to the Atlantic Ocean and the Pine Barrens. She is surrounded by the best of both worlds.

She is married to her high school sweetheart and has three kids. There is nothing more important in the world to her than her family.

When Heather isn't writing you can find her getting lost in a great book, spending time with family, and helping her fellow authors.

Also by Heather Dahlgren

Shattered Souls Duet

ZANE (Shattered Souls Book One)

Harper (Shattered Souls Book Two)

KACE (Shattered Souls Book Three)

RILEY (Shattered Souls Book Four)

FINN (Shattered Souls Book Five)- Coming Soon

The Change Series

[Change](#)

[Commit](#)

[Conflict](#)

Sexy Series

[Behind the Lens](#)

Behind The Book

Behind The Lies

Reaching For The Gold Series

Dive

Hurdle

Straddle

Standalones

[Dancing Hearts](#)

[Renegade](#)

[Perfect Tenn](#)

Screwed By My Roommate

Puppy Love