



GRIM SINNERS
REBELS

KNIGHT

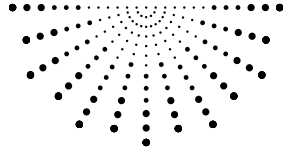
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

LEANN ASHERS

KNIGHT

GRIM SINNERS REBELS

BOOK TWO



LEANN ASHERS

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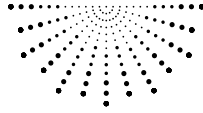
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CHAPTER ONE



Daniella

I smile to myself, my eyes still closed. I can hear the little pitter patter of tiny feet, the sound of my daughter Annie walking to my bedroom like she does every morning to ask for breakfast.

I open my eyes just a sliver so I can see her sneaking into my room, the blanket covering my mouth, so she doesn't see me smile.

She slowly eases her way over, her little bunny rabbit under her arm while wearing her little mermaid nightgown.

Her face is right in front of mine at this point. My eyes are closed and she can't see that I am peeking.

"Mommy," she whispers so cutely. I open my eyes, her little eyes are shining bright, and her little hair is mussed up from her sleeping.

God, I love her so much, I don't even think I can take it sometimes. "Hi, baby girl." I reach out and touch her hair trying not to laugh at how crazy it looks.

"I'm hungry," she says.

"Alright, want me to fix you something or get McDonald's on the way to River's?" I ask her.

Her eyes light up. "McDonald's!" she screams and claps her hands. "I'm going to get dressed." She runs out of the

room to her bedroom.

I smile, sliding to the edge of the bed trying not to think that at one time, I thought my sweet baby girl was gone. The aching pain hurts so much at times that I feel the need to place my hand over my heart to dull the ache.

The memories win and I close my eyes sinking into them. I was engaged at the age of thirteen, married at fourteen, and had my daughter at fifteen. I was raised in a cult and I didn't know that life could be different. I would see people out in town and they were so different. God, I wanted that life, to be that carefree.

To live a life where I was free, a life where I didn't have to worry about getting hurt because I didn't do my wifely duties correctly.

I was never one to completely do as I was told, I was known to be a rebel. I was married into one of the main families in the cult and they tried to control me.

I was sick with pneumonia when I was fifteen, turning almost sixteen. I was so deathly ill, I didn't think I was going to make it through.

My mother-in-law took her from me to care for her while I was sick, or so I thought that was what she was doing.

When I finally came to after a week of being so sick, they told me my baby girl had fallen ill with the same illness, but she had succumbed to it.

I just remember being so numb. I don't think I left the bed for weeks and my husband had to force-feed me every meal.

I had nothing to live for.

They thought with her gone that they could control me better, but she was the only thing I cared about, cared enough to behave so I could protect her.

But no, she was it.

Anything they did to me, to make me bend was nothing compared to the death of my baby girl.

But she wasn't dead, they lied to me. They did it to cause me pain. They thought that I was going to be a bad influence on my daughter and she wouldn't have been raised right.

They gave her to my parents.

My sister Bell came years later and saved me, took me from the cult. I thought she was dead too. That's what they told me, but everything was a lie.

My sister told me she had found my daughter, she had her and she was safe.

I couldn't believe she wasn't dead.

I left that place; I left the cabin where I was forced to spend the last three months as punishment.

I never looked back. I got my GED and got a job, but my ex-husband Arthur was spotted a few days ago. He was walking around showing my picture to people and going to schools in the area trying to find my daughter.

A member of the MC club that my brother-in-law is in rushed over to the house and told us.

God, the fear I felt was unreal. It wasn't fear for me, but it was the fear of something happening to my daughter.

I went into hiding, but it hit me that I just needed to go somewhere else and start over where no one knows me, and he can't find me.

That's why I'm moving an hour away to a small town where my niece lives with her husband, who's also the president of an MC there.

I stare at the wall, fear sending shivers down my spine. I want to forget that part of my life, but I need to protect her above all else.

I force myself to my feet, walk to my closet and put on a pair of leggings along with a sweatshirt since the air is chilly outside. My eyes wander to the suitcases on the floor, my heart aching because this has been my first home since I left that life.

But I will have my niece River, so I won't be completely alone.

THE GIRLS ARE worth more than anything in cult life. I know the lengths they would go to just to keep them.

"Mommy, I'm ready!" Annie yells from her bedroom and I hurry to slip on my clothes that I had set out.

"I'm coming, baby." I brush my teeth and pack my toothbrush, looking around the bathroom one last time to make sure that I haven't forgotten anything.

I grab my last suitcase that isn't already in my SUV. Annie is sitting in the hallway playing with her dolls. She looks up at me smiling, showing her missing front tooth.

My heart jumps at how beautiful she is. I made her and she's the best thing I have ever done in my life. At night I find myself staring at her sleeping safely in her bed. It's hard to believe that she is here.

The front door opens, and I peek over the stairs. My sister Bell and her husband Maverick walk inside the house.

Bell looks up at me and smiles, but I can see she is saddened by my leaving. I smile back at her. "Annie, Bell is here." Her head snaps up looking over the railing. She screams and runs down the stairs like she hasn't seen them in months, not just yesterday.

I laugh and follow her down the stairs, pulling my suitcase along with me. Maverick meets me halfway up the stairs taking it from me.

Bell hugs me. "Come visit me all the time?" I whisper to her, hugging her a little tighter.

She changed my life; she gave me a life and helped me through the darkest time of my life. Without her I am not sure where I would be.

She pulls back touching my cheeks. "You couldn't keep me away."

She may be my sister, but she has taken on the role of my mother, with her being so much older than me.

I laugh and turn to Maverick who is watching my sister. He's so in love with her and it makes me so happy that she has him.

Annie walks up to Maverick and lifts her arms for him to pick her up. He laughs and hugs her tightly. "You better be good for your mom, okay?"

She giggles and tugs on the ends of his hair picking on him, and in turn he tickles her sides as she reels into laughter.

"Are you ready my girl?" I ask her. We have an hour drive there.

She hugs Maverick a little tighter before he leans her over so she can hug Bell. "We will be over to see you next week." Annie nods and tucks her doll under her arm.

Maverick carries my bag out to the garage and I follow behind him with my purse on my shoulder, holding Annie's hand.

I open the back door and help Annie into her seat, making sure that she's buckled in correctly.

Maverick shuts the back, huffing. "I don't like this shit, you could move back in with us," he points out.

I laugh. "I know Maverick, but I want her to be normal as possible."

He nods but he doesn't look happy. Bell opens the door and I slide into my seat, starting the SUV.

They wave when I pull out of the garage. I feel like I am going off to college for the first time and my parents are watching me leave.

The gate opens and two prospects are waiting outside the gate to escort me to the Grim Sinners Rebels.

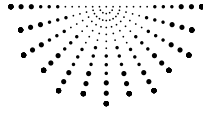
I press the button on my steering wheel so I can call River letting her know that I'm on my way.

I let out a deep breath trying to calm my nerves. Looking in the rearview mirror to check on Annie I ask her, “Ready to go, baby?”

She grins.

Yeah, everything is going to be okay.

KNIGHT



River is running around, freaking out because her aunt is moving into the house next to the clubhouse.

I try not to laugh when I see her trip over one of the guys' boots, but I look down before she notices me trying not to laugh.

"Baby slow down, everything is going to be okay," Gage tries to reassure her but it doesn't faze her.

She finally sighs and settles down. I'm in my office filling out some of the charts my assistant decided she wanted to stop doing before I fired her. I'm the club doctor but I also work at the local hospital doing emergency surgeries whenever I have the time.

I don't know anything about River's aunt besides the fact that she is coming here to hide from an ex-husband that she was forced to marry in the cult.

It fucking blows my mind that stuff like that even happens. I have seen the effects of that life on the women, including River, and it's terrible.

I sigh, sitting back into my chair, staring at the screen on the wall that shows the gates. River sticks her head into my office. "She's here. Get your ass in here so you can meet her."

I chuckle. She's the President's ol' lady, and she was made for that shit with that attitude of hers. I have fucking witnessed the bad side of her and the ones who suffered because of it.

I look at the screen on the wall and see an SUV pulling up in front of the gate with two prospects behind it.

The SUV pulls to a stop in front of me when I walk out of the clubhouse. River is jumping up and down excitedly, opening the door and hugging a woman inside.

Terror walks out of the clubhouse next to me and the prospects take off the second the gates are closed with her safe inside.

“Do you need me to help with her bags?” I ask River when she steps back, letting her aunt out.

She walks from behind the door and I almost fucking die on the spot, the air leaving my lungs when her beautiful eyes turn to look at me.

I am fucking gone.

Daniella

I AM WRACKED with nerves the whole way there. I constantly found myself searching for my ex-husband Arthur, to make sure that he hadn't followed us. The face of everyone I passed on the road had me holding my breath.

My baby girl is in her own world in the backseat, chowing down on her McDonald's and playing with the toy that came with it.

Before too long the gate of the clubhouse comes into view, the nerves hitting me full force as I'm going to be meeting a whole lot of strangers.

The house I'm staying at is close to River and behind the gate and fencing so it's the safest place.

I eye my daughter in the backseat, her eyes are glued to the window staring at everything.

“We're here,” I tell her and turn off the GPS waiting for the gate to open. The prospects behind me wait for me to pull

inside before they take off back to their town.

Okay, here we go.

I see a few men walking out of the clubhouse and then my eyes hit River who is grinning from ear to ear.

My panic eases a little, but my hands are still shaking so I grip the steering wheel to stop them.

I have PTSD. I know that not everyone is like the men I grew up with and the one I married but that fear is rooted deep into my soul.

Old habits are hard to break out of sometimes.

I stop the car and River opens my door, pulling me into a tight hug. The fear slowly eases from me and I hug her back tightly. She pulls back staring at me happily. "I am so glad you're here."

I'm just a year older than her, me at twenty-two and her at twenty-one.

"Me too." I slide out of the car stretching my legs. Gage opens the back door and lets Annie out. She squeezes his leg tightly; she loves him as much as Maverick.

I step out from behind the door smiling at them. I look at the clubhouse, it's massive, and then to the men standing in front.

All my breath leaves my lungs at the sight of the man standing before me. He is gorgeous with the most intense eyes, eyes staring right back at me.

My face burns with the power of his eyes on me. I turn around and try not to show that his stare alone has affected me.

Annie runs from behind the car and to me. "Mommy, Gage is here," she announces and points at him like I don't see him. Trust me, no one is missing Gage with how massive he is.

Gage lifts his arm and waves people over. I peek over and see the guy who is way too good-looking for his own good, making his way over.

He stops directly in front of me; his dark hair, bright blue eyes, and the scruff on his face give him a rough and ragged look, complementing his skin that's tanned from the sun.

I look at his chest, not able to meet his eyes anymore.

A few more guys walk out of the clubhouse. They are all handsome but no one compares to the one standing in front of me.

"Alright boys, this is Daniella. I mentioned her in the last meeting we had. She's moving to the house next door," Gage announces to everyone.

"I'm Terror," he tells me and offers his hand for me to shake. He is smaller than the rest of the guys, but I see a fire in his eyes that lets me know exactly why he has gotten the name Terror.

The next one is almost as big as Gage. "Andrey." He shakes my hand and settles back away from me, his eyes are intense, staring at everything around me.

Next is the beautiful man.

He smiles at me and then at Annie, who beams at being noticed. "I'm Knight, the club doctor." He lifts his hand for me to shake and with shaky hands I place my hand in his.

His hand is warm, butterflies swarm my stomach. "Daniella."

The smile reaches his eyes. I can feel River staring at me and it takes everything in me to turn away from him and look at her.

The smile on her face lets me know that I am as obvious as I thought I was. "I'm Annie," my baby announces to everyone.

The guys chuckle and Knight bends down until he is at her level. "It's very nice to meet you Annie, I'm Knight."

Her eyes get big and I know exactly why, she is obsessed with princesses. "A real knight?"

He looks at me chuckling. "I am."

Her mouth pops open. “Oh my gosh! Can I show you my princess dolls?” She jumps up and down looking back at the SUV where her toys are stored in the backseat next to her.

“Want me to get them for you?” he asks her and she runs to the backseat, opening and motioning to the container.

“Can I lead you to your house, Lady Annie?” he says in a formal tone and my heart feels like it’s going to burst.

River reaches out and takes a hold of my hand. “Girl, my ovaries could burst too,” she whispers in my ear and follows next to me as we follow behind Knight and Annie, who are talking up a storm about princesses.

We turn the corner of the building and a cute yellow house comes into view. “It’s beautiful River, thank you for letting us stay here,” I tell her.

She squeezes my hand a little tighter. “I’m glad you’re here. I want my family close and nothing is closer than next door,” she jokes and I smile at her, thankful for her lightheartedness.

I look behind me and I see Gage is in the front seat of my SUV. “Well, I should have driven over.” I’m embarrassed that I parked so far away.

Knight pushes the door to the house open and sets the box inside. “I’m going to unload the rest of your things and we can play, how’s that?” he states to Annie and she looks at him like he is hanging the moon.

Knight looks at me, I look down at the ground and hurry to my SUV so I can help take out my bags.

Before I can open the back, Knight puts his hand on the door, stopping me. “I will get your things,” he offers and I don’t want him to feel obligated but the soft look on his face has me agreeing.

“Okay, thank you.”

Gage reaches in the backseat and takes out a few boxes. I feel weird not doing anything. “Can I make you dinner as thanks?” I ask them, rubbing the back of my neck.

Gage smiles at me. “Me and River have plans but thanks, Daniella.”

I look at Knight. “I’ll be here.”

I try not to pass out at hearing him agree to come to dinner. I let out a calming breath trying to pretend it’s not a big deal.

But have you seen how good-looking this man is? It’s a big deal.

River is on the front step sitting with Annie talking about coloring books. Annie has been dying to meet Penelope as River talks about her all the time. I’m glad that she will have a friend to play with. I need a job that I can do while she’s at school.

My scalp is hurting from wearing a high bun for so long, so I reach up and tear my hair out of the bun and run my fingers through the strands making my way to River and sit next to her, leaving enough room for the guys to slide past us while they take my things inside.

I can feel River staring at me and Knight, who I am trying to ignore, while I watch Annie play. “I am so jealous of your hair, I want to cut it from your head.”

I laugh loudly. “You can sure try.” I smirk at her and she laughs. “I better be on my best behavior then, huh?” I smirk at her response as we continue to watch the guys bring in my things.

I try not to watch the way Knight’s arms are flexing when he lifts heavy weight. “I see you staring at him,” River calls me out.

My face reddens immediately and I look down at my hands. “He is quite handsome,” I confess, looking back at him.

She smiles. “He is and a very good man.” She throws that out there and I look back up at him while his back is turned to me.

“Is he?” I repeat.

She nods. “One of the best.”

I smile and look down at Annie who is rocking her baby to sleep. “I guess I need to go grocery shopping before we get settled.”

“We already did the shopping for you, you’re fully stocked.”

I shake my head. “You’ve done too much for me already, River.”

She laughs and hugs me. “Of course I wanted to make your stay here was the best and I hope you never leave. It’s my own selfish way of making sure that happens.”

I laugh loudly. “You’re insane, River.”

She shrugs her shoulders. “I think we all know that.”

Once all my things are inside, I stand up and follow the guys in. Annie is running ahead of me and straight to the couch, plopping down. “I love it.” She sighs dramatically and lays down.

I laugh at her dramatics. “Thank you for doing all of this,” I tell them all, the weight of Knight’s eyes on me is almost too much.

“What time do you want me here for dinner?” he asks, so I guess he really was serious.

“Seven?” I offer and he nods.

“I’ll be here.” They all leave, and River gives me a sly look as she is the last one to walk out the door.

The second the door shuts I fall back onto the couch, trying to calm my nerves. They already took my suitcases upstairs and I tell Annie, “I am going to unpack, sweet girl.”

She nods, her eyes glued to the TV.

I walk up the stairs to where our rooms are, this place is beautiful. It has a country farmhouse style of decor that makes it seem cozy and warm.

I sit on the floor and open my suitcase staring at all of my belongings. I look around my new bedroom thankful that I have a new home and that we are safe.

I wish that my ex would leave me alone. It's been over a year since I left and it was much longer than before that that I had seen him.

I hated him, God, how I hated him. He was so horrible to me. I was used as a whipping girl for the rest of the women. I was used to show what will happen if you disobey.

I don't want to think of those thoughts but hearing he's looking for me brings back old memories that I have tried tirelessly to forget.

I unpack all my clothes and move on to Annie's room to finish her things. I smile at the way that River has decorated her room for her in princesses.

Little footsteps are stomping their way up the stairs. I watch as she walks into her new bedroom, her eyes lighting up at the sight of her new room.

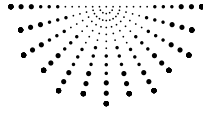
"Wow, look at the dolls." Her eyes are glued to her bed which I just now noticed is filled with brand new toys.

She is totally spoiled rotten.

"I think we are going to like it here, baby," I tell her and she grins at me.

"I think we will too, Mommy."

DANIELLA



Seven o'clock comes way too fast for my liking. Do I dress up nicely or just wear sweatpants, play it casual?

Ugh, the stress of it all.

I made lasagna and some garlic bread from scratch. In the cult we had to make everything from scratch and cooking was one of the things I enjoyed more than anything. It gave me peace.

I hear him before I see him; a motorcycle pulls up in front of the house, the light shining in the window.

I go to the door, unlocking it for him. He climbs off his bike, his jeans pulling taut around his thighs and he looks up at me staring at him from the top of the stairs.

We don't speak until he is right in front of me. I step back allowing him inside the house. "I hope you got unpacked okay," he says to me, his eyes searching my face.

I smile. "We did. I made lasagna, I hope that's okay?" I ask him.

His face softens. "That sounds great, darlin'." My back stiffens at the name he just called me, and I look to the floor trying not to show my smile.

"Annie, time for dinner, baby," I call to her from the living room and she takes off running, immediately going to the dining room table.

"Just let me grab it out of the oven."

A hand stops me from moving toward the kitchen. “Let me get it for you,” he tells me and slips past me to the kitchen.

My eyes follow him to the kitchen, shocked that he volunteered to get dinner for me. I sit down next to Annie, nervous. I rub my hands down my thighs.

He comes back with two pink oven mitts on and holding the lasagna dish, setting it in front of us in the middle of the table.

“Thank you, Knight,” I thank him and he smiles, shaking his head. I take his plate from him before he can grab it and fill his plate with a big serving and then Annie who doesn’t waste a second.

I get my food and I look at Knight to see if he approves, but he is watching me. “Is everything okay?” I ask him.

“Just waiting on you to get yours,” he tells me and I fight back the smile at his thoughtfulness.

He takes a bite and I do the same, his eyes widen looking at me with wild eyes. “Holy shiii...” He stops midway from saying the word and I burst out laughing.

“Annie has been surrounded by the Grim Sinners, trust me she has heard that and worse.”

He laughs too and looks at Annie and she’s giggling at him. “Mr. Knight almost said a bad word,” she teases him.

He chuckles. “I got to be more careful, huh,” he tells her and she giggles even more.

“It’s okay, knights can get away with it,” she tells him and I watch them both, my stomach turning at them interacting.

I am so glad that she has come such a long way. I am so thankful every day that her life wasn’t like mine, she gets to be a kid and she has a choice to be whatever she wants.

He laughs, his smile reaching his eyes as he looks at her.

“I take it you like the food?” I ask and he nods his head. “This is the best thing I have ever eaten.”

Dinner passes with Annie and Knight in their own world, she has a million questions for him.

I just stare at the both of them, mostly Knight because just the way he looks when his fork stabs into his food causes his muscles to flex.

It's around seven thirty when we finish eating. "Knight, can we play now?" she asks him.

"Let me help your mom clean up and I will be right there." She giggles and takes her plate, running into the kitchen and then to the living room where I know she is preparing.

"Thanks for the help," I tell him now that we are alone.

"I should say thank you for the amazing food." He takes my plate and his before I can grab it, then with his free hand carries the heavy lasagna dish.

Which leaves me with nothing to carry as I follow behind him and he sets everything on the counter.

He turns around suddenly and I back up shocked, just now realizing how close we are.

"Oops." I laugh.

I slide the plate toward the sink not paying attention, and it all happens in slow motion. The knife I had on the counter where I chopped garlic and onions for the sauce falls toward the floor. I try to move back from the knife but it slides down the side of my leg and lands blade down toward my foot.

"Oh fuck!" Knight yells and I fall back on my butt onto the floor. I look at my leg, and I'm sliced deeply on the side of my calf, the cut is at least three inches long and deep.

Knight gathers a clean washcloth and presses it to my leg to stop the bleeding. "Ouch," I hiss at the pressure.

If I didn't have bad luck, I wouldn't have any luck at all. He is on his knees in front of me, his eyebrows furrowed with worry.

"Can I look?" he asks me.

I nod and he takes off the towel, looking at the wound. “You are going to need stitches for sure,” he tells me, putting the towel back on and tying it in a knot around my leg so he won’t have to hold it.

I huff in annoyance. “Can you get my keys for me so I can drive myself to the hospital?” I ask him.

He looks at me in shock. “Fuck no I can’t. I will take you or I can do it myself in my office at the clubhouse.”

My mouth opens in shock. Do I really want to take Annie to the ER tonight? I clear my throat trying to ignore the throbbing in my leg. “You can do it.”

“Okay then, do you mind if I call River over so she can watch Annie while I take you over?”

I nod in agreement, as he takes out his phone and calls River while I try to stand but it’s useless. It pulls on the cut and I can feel the blood running down my leg.

I push the cloth to my wound tighter. Knight hangs up the phone and I hear Annie coming through the house toward the kitchen.

I look at Knight panicked because she will be upset when she sees me. She stops dead in her tracks at the sight of me sitting on the floor, her eyes going to the blood and my leg. “Mommy, are you okay?” She runs to me and I nod. “Yeah baby, I just cut myself a little bit. I have to get a few stitches and I will be all better.”

Not even a minute later I can hear a vehicle pulling in the yard while Annie is hovering over me. “River is here to watch you while I get these stitches, I won’t be gone long okay?” I tell her and take her little hand.

Knight runs to the front door and I hear River running through the house. She takes in the scene. “Damn Daniella, how many stitches does this make this year alone?” She laughs once she sees it’s not serious.

I laugh and wince at the sudden jostle of my leg forgetting about it for a second. “Can you help me up?” I ask her but Knight steps in front of her, bending down in front of me. I

eye him in shock when his arms slide under my body lifting me off the floor easily.

“I can walk,” I tell him when he carries me out of the kitchen. I put my arm behind his neck.

He looks down at me. “I know you can, but I wouldn’t have an excuse to hold you then, would I?”

I almost pass out and not from blood loss.

I smile. “Are you flirting with me, Knight?” I giggle and he laughs.

“Did you like it?” he asks.

I let out a deep breath when he approaches my car and switches me to one arm to pull open the door, setting me inside. “I did,” I tell him, my voice soft.

His face softens and his hand reaches out softly brushing my hair out of my face. “Good.” He backs away shutting the door.

Holy shit.

I touch my burning face. He gets in the driver’s side and hurries down the small trail to the clubhouse. The door is open and I see Terror holding it open.

I guess word has gotten out about my clumsiness. Knight walks around and opens the door lifting me back out in his arms.

Inside of the clubhouse the guys are holding the door to a room past the sitting area. The clubhouse is just like my brother-in-law’s, the couches are huge and lining the center of the room with a massive flat screen TV.

Inside the office, it looks like a doctor’s office. I’m sat on the bed with my leg propped up. Knight walks across the room and pulls out a small vial and a needle. I suck my lips in knowing that I’m going to have to get a shot.

He fills the needle and makes his way over to me, he pulls the cloth off and wipes a spot next to the wound cleaning it.

“Alright, I really don’t want to hurt you,” he grumbles, looking at me.

“It’s okay.” I turn my head and I flinch at the feeling of the needle gliding through my skin.

Not much time passes before I’m numb. I let out a deep breath feeling much better. “Better?” he asks me, his hand on my shin below the cut.

I nod. “Yeah, thanks Knight.”

“Ready?” he asks and I see the suturing kit.

“Can I lay back so I don’t have to watch?” I ask.

He helps me sit back, bringing a blanket from under the bed in a drawer and covers me, just leaving my leg out.

“What’s your favorite food?” he asks me.

I feel pressure and I sigh, glad I am not feeling anything. “Italian. Yours?”

“Your lasagna.”

I laugh. “Well, do you want me to give you some to take home later?” I ask.

“Thank God.”

I burst out laughing again, my eyes watering from all the laughing. “Deal.” A few minutes later, he places a bandage over the wound. “All done?” I ask him.

He takes my hand and helps me sit up. I look at my leg and I see all of the blood has been cleaned up. “Thank you,” I tell him.

He sits down in his chair beside me, looking at me kind of serious, which has me freaking out immediately.

My heart starts to race. “What’s the matter?” I ask him, twisting my hands in front of me.

He smiles. “Go on a date with me tomorrow night.”

I swear all the breath in my body leaves me, not expecting that. His eyes search my face, I know he is waiting for my answer.

“On a date?” I dumbly ask, kind of shocked that he asked me.

He chuckles. “Yeah darlin, on a date.”

I think on it for a moment, I think of the way he has taken care of me and I smile slightly. “Yeah, I would like that, Knight.”

It’s the truth, the way he is around my daughter and the way he took care of me when I was hurt is everything. I would be crazy not to.

The smile reaches his eyes. “Good.”

“Ready to go back home?” he asks me, and reaches out touching my forearm when I shift on the bed.

“Yeah,” I agree.

I put my foot on the floor and I hiss at the feeling of the stitches pulling on my wound.

Knight doesn’t ask, just bends down and lifts me off the floor and into his arms, carrying me once again. “You don’t have to carry me,” I tell him.

He chuckles. “Trust me, this is all purely for selfish reasons.”

I arch an eyebrow at his words, confused. “What?”

He stops walking and looks at me fully. “Darlin, I will take any excuse I can get to hold you.”

My face burns from his words and I resist the urge to hide my face in his neck. “Knight,” I whisper, smiling. “You’re sweet.”

He flashes a dimple. “Darlin, that has to be our secret now.”

He walks through the main room; Terror runs to the door holding it open for us again. “Thank you, Terror.”

They have all been so kind to me. I reach out and open my car door, so Knight doesn’t have to, and he sets me inside gently making sure to mind my leg.

My house is literally right next door so it doesn't take but a minute to get back to my house. In the living room I can see River and Annie sitting on the couch watching TV.

Knight walks around and opens the door for me. I set my leg out and I know I really need to walk myself because I have Annie to take care of.

He takes my hand and I use him to pull myself out of my seat, gritting my teeth at the horrifying feeling of the stitches and the numbness is wearing off.

"I need to try to walk," I tell him and his jaw flexes. I know that he is wanting to carry me again, but he can't carry me everywhere all night and tomorrow.

I slowly walk and put all the pressure on my opposite foot. The pain isn't bad once I get the hang of finding the right way to walk.

"You, okay?" he asks me and opens the front door for me. The steps were not fun. I may sleep downstairs on the couch tonight so I can avoid going upstairs.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Thank you for asking." I thank him and walk inside. Annie jumps off the couch and runs to me. "Mommy, are you okay?"

I swear her calling me mommy never grows old. I remember the first time she called me mommy, and I swore I could have passed out.

"I am okay baby, just a little sore from my ouchy." I pull her to me, giving her a hug. I don't like seeing my baby worried.

She takes a hold of my hand and leads me to the couch so I can sit down. River is watching Knight and then stands up. "Well I have to get home to my man." She winks at me and slips out the door.

Knight pulls out a pill bottle from his pocket. "Here are a couple pain pills if you need them tonight." He sets it on the coffee table in front of me.

“Mommy, can we pick out my outfit tonight for my new school tomorrow?” Annie asks me, excitement on her face.

I smile. “Yes baby, we will after your bath.” I run my hand down the back of her head.

“What time do you have to leave to take her to school?” Knight asks me.

“Seven thirty.” We live just a few minutes away from the school.

“I will let you girls get to it; I will see you tomorrow.” He gives me a pointed look and smiles at Annie who beams at the attention.

He steps out of the house and points for the door lock. Annie runs over and locks it for us.

“Ready to get ready for bed?” I ask her.

She jumps up and down. I slowly stand up and take the pill bottle from the counter so I can put it in my room.

She runs ahead of me, and I make my way very slowly up the stairs to our rooms. I can hear the shower running once I make it to the top of the stairs, sweating.

I throw the bottle on the bed and make my way to her room to get out her pajamas and some outfit choices for her tomorrow.

My daughter is in first grade. It’s hard to believe that my once little baby is getting so big.

I sit on the edge of her bed as she comes out of the shower and walks into her closet to put on her pajamas I picked out.

“Do you want me to French braid your hair?” I ask her, taking her hairbrush off the counter where I unpacked it earlier.

“Yes, please.” I sit back on the bed and motion for her to climb up in front of me. “You excited for your first day tomorrow?” I ask her.

“I’m scared they won’t like me,” she says softly.

My heart aches at her having any amount of fear. “Baby, they are insane if they don’t like you, you’re amazing!” I tell her.

She looks back at me smiling. “I love you, Mommy.”

I wrap my arms around her, hugging her tight. “I love you too my sweet girl.” I brush through her strands and braid her hair for her. “Want me to read you a book?”

She slides off the bed and picks out the one she wants me to read. “Cinderella, good choice.” All her books are about princesses.

I pull back the blanket and she climbs inside; I turn off the light and only leave on the lamp next to the bed. She scoots over until her head is resting on my arm so she can look at the pictures.

“Do you like your new home?” I ask her before I start the book.

She nods. “I do, I’m excited to see Penelope.” She has heard about the little girl that River babysits sometimes. “Maybe tomorrow I can arrange a playdate?”

She sits up and claps her hands in excitement. “Oh please.”

I smile and push a strand of hair out of her face, she settles back down and snuggles into me again. I lift the blanket to her shoulder.

“You know Mommy loves you?” I would give everything up for her, do whatever it takes to protect her. I just want her happy, to have the life that I never had.

She wraps her arm around my stomach hugging me. “I love you, Mommy.”

My heart aches at her words. I kiss the top of her head and close my eyes for a second, taking in the moment. I turn to the book and read it out loud.

She giggles at certain points and points to some of the pictures. I close the book and set it on the nightstand next to her. I start to tell her goodnight when I see she is asleep.

I turn on her sound machine and turn off the light making sure her nightlight is on across the room so she can see if she wakes up.

I leave her door open as I leave very slowly because my calf is starting to hurt. I rub my eyes and make my way into the shower so I can wash the day off. I make sure I leave my leg out, so the stitches don't get wet.

I'm ready to pass out by the time I finish my painstaking shower. I all but fall into bed, reach over and take my phone off the nightstand.

I see a text from a number I don't recognize. I open the text and I can't stop the smile from sliding over my lips.

Hey, this is Knight, I got your number from River. Did you make it upstairs okay?

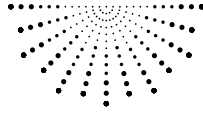
I turn off the nightstand light just leaving me in the dark with my phone. I text him back. *It was slow moving but I made it and in bed. Thanks for everything again.*

A second later the little bubble at the bottom pops up letting me know that he is typing. *Be careful okay, see you tomorrow darlin.*

Oh Lord bless me, my stomach flips at the prospect of seeing him tomorrow.

Goodnight Knight.

DANIELLA



The alarm goes off and I groan, turning it off on my phone. I slide off the bed very slowly and make my way to my closet, putting on a pair of leggings and a sweatshirt since it's fifty degrees outside.

I peek in on Annie and she's still fast asleep. I make my way downstairs.

I turn on the coffee pot and sit at the bar scrolling through my phone. I get a text from Knight, surprising me since it was so early.

You awake?

I text back, *Yeah, I just woke up.*

He doesn't text back and I rub my eyes, tired from the pain pill that I took last night. Suddenly, a light dances through the kitchen. I look out the window, and I see a huge white truck pulling up behind my SUV.

Fear strikes me, I stand up and peek out the window. My hand goes to my throat, waiting.

The door opens and I see a booted foot stepping out and then he comes into view.

Knight.

I let out a deep breath, the fear easing from me. He is carrying a huge McDonald's bag and an iced coffee.

Oh my God. Did he bring us breakfast?

I waddle over to the door, open it for him and he looks up at me smiling. “Good morning, I brought you and the little princess some breakfast.”

My heart feels like it could beat out of my chest. “Knight, that’s so nice of you.” My nose burns from the threat of the tears.

I step back and let him inside the house. “I couldn’t wait until tonight to see you so…” He opens the bag on the dining room table unpacking everything.

“Let me go wake Annie, I’ll be right back.” I start on the stairs and turn back to look at him. “Thank you for this, Knight.”

As someone who hasn’t had a lot of nice things happen to her before until I left the cult, this means a lot. This is everything because he thought of me and my baby.

I open her door and to my surprise she turns to look at me when I peek inside. “Hi, sweet girl. Knight brought your favorite.”

She throws her blanket off her. “Wait, what did he bring?” she asks excitedly. I take her hand and she practically drags me down the stairs.

She stops dead in her tracks when she sees the feast he bought for us. “Oh my gosh! McDonald’s!” she screams and I laugh at her antics.

He laughs. “I guess I made the right choice.”

I nod. “Oh yeah, she would live off McDonald’s if she had a choice.”

He pulls a seat out for her. “What do you want, sweet girl?” he asks her in a sweet tone.

I cover my mouth watching him interact with her as she points to the pancakes. He slides them over to her and hands her some syrup that he opens for her. “Do you want me to cut it up for you?”

I take a seat across from Annie, she smiles and nods. She can totally cut up her food, but she watches him happily,

loving the attention. Once he cuts her food, he turns to me. "What do you want?" he asks me.

I point to the sausage and egg biscuit. He hands it to me and a caramel frappe. "How did you know I liked these?" I take a drink and I sigh at the greatness that is coffee.

He winks at me. "I have my sources."

He sits down next to Annie and hands her a napkin when syrup drips from her fingers. He laughs and offers to help her clean them.

I look down at my plate trying to pretend that this isn't the sweetest thing ever. "Thanks for this," I say and he smiles at us both.

"I'm going to go upstairs and help her get ready," I tell him once we all finish our food.

"I will clean up."

I hesitate. "I can do it Knight, you have done enough."

He looks at me, like really? "Girl, go get your ass ready and I will do this." I gape at him and burst out laughing. "Well, yes sir," I mock him back.

"Annie, make sure you brush your teeth," I yell to her and walk into her room to take out her clothes she picked out last night before bed.

She wanted to wear a flowery dress and a huge yellow bow for her hair. She comes out of the bathroom wiping her mouth with the back of her arm. She takes her clothes and gets dressed.

"Want me to put your hair half up?" I ask her.

She nods and plops down on the bed in front of me. I brush her hair out and let the waves from the braid flow down her back. "You look beautiful, my girl." I finish her hair by adding the bow.

She turns around and touches the ends of her hair. "Thank you, Mommy."

I pull her into a hug. "Ready to go?"

“Yes!” She reaches over and takes a stuffed teddy bear off her bed stuffing it under her arm. “Can I take him with me today?”

“Of course, baby.” I take her backpack off the floor and carry it down the stairs for her. “Go get your lunchbox out of the refrigerator,” I tell her and she runs ahead.

Knight is standing at the foot of the stairs. “Woah, what a beautiful princess you are,” he says to her.

She giggles and hides her face as she runs past and I laugh at her reaction. He reaches out and takes her backpack from me.

Annie runs back with her lunchbox and we walk out of the house. “Can I take you to school this morning?” he asks Annie who is walking next to him.

“Oh, please, can he?” She turns to me, her eyes big and hopeful. I touch her little cheek. “Yes he can take us, but we need to get your seat.”

He takes my hand stopping me from walking to my SUV. “I have a seat for her, Penelope is my passenger often.”

He opens the back door for her. “Can I lift you inside, princess?” he asks her. She lifts her arms, he sets her inside and she walks to the booster seat.

“Make sure you buckle up, baby.” I watch her to make sure she is buckled in.

I start to open the passenger door, but he does it for me. “Let me help you in?” he asks.

I nod. “I was kind of worried how I was going to get in your truck,” I tell him laughing and he puts his arm under my legs and back lifting me into the seat easily. “Thank you, Knight.”

I can feel my face burning from his touch. He winks and shuts the door. Lord bless me, the way his body moves, flexes and just breathes is so attractive.

He opens the door and starts the truck. “Are you girls cold?”

“I am, Knight,” Annie pipes in and he reaches in the backseat pulling out a princess blanket, covering her gently then blasts the heat.

I just want to hug him; he is so kind to us. He backs up and puts his hand on the headrest behind me, looking out the back window.

Why is that so attractive?

I can feel my face growing hot having him so close to me. I peek up at him and he catches me.

I look out the window trying not to freak out while my stomach is doing flips. He chuckles and turns on the radio to fill the silence. “Mommy,” Annie says in a weird tone.

I turn around in my seat, looking back at her. “I’m scared. What if they’re mean to me?” Her little voice sounds so pitiful.

Knight pulls into the school and into a parking spot, then turns to look at her. “They are going to love you; you’re sweet and kind.” His face turns darker. “If they are mean to you, call me and I will settle up with their parents.”

She laughs. “You are a knight.”

I cover my mouth trying not to smile. I mouth to Knight. *Thank you.* “Ready to go in, baby?” I ask her.

She stuffs her teddy bear under her arm, giving me a little nod. Knight walks around and helps me out before lifting her out. She takes my hand and Knight carries her backpack for her.

She is eyeing all the students. “Look, there’s Penelope,” Knight says and points to a large man wearing a cut like Knight standing next to a little girl. The little girl’s eyes light up when she sees Knight. “Hi, Uncle Knight.”

“Hi, baby girl. This is Annie and it’s her first day,” he explains to her and motions to Annie, who is smiling at Penelope.

“Hi, Annie. Want to be friends?” she asks my daughter and Annie blossoms. “Yes!” she yells and takes her hand.

“Is she in first grade too?” I ask the man who I’m assuming is her father.

He nods. “Yeah.”

Knight puts his hand on the small of my back, leading me through the crowd of parents to where Penelope is leading us.

The teacher is at the door welcoming all the kids and I stop in front of her. “Mrs. James?”

“Hi! I am assuming this is Miss Annie? It’s so nice to meet you.” Annie shakes her hand. “You can put her stuff away if you like?”

Penelope has her on the floor playing. I point to Annie’s name on the little cubbies. Knight hangs her things up for her. “Annie, we have to go, sweet girl. Can I have a hug?”

She runs to me and I bend down so I can hug her tightly. “I will see you just in a few hours. Penelope will be right here with you.” She nods and looks at Knight unsure for a few seconds before face-planting in his stomach.

His face shows his shock and then the smile of pure happiness. “Pick me up later?” she asks him.

“You couldn’t stop me.”

She lets him go and goes to Penelope playing. We slip out of the classroom and the teacher shuts the door behind us since we were the last two inside.

We both peek in the small window, she sits down and looks around the room. “I think she is going to be okay,” he says out loud and his hand brushes against my hair when he puts it against the door.

I tear myself away from the door and walk out of the building. I suck in the cool air of the morning. “It never gets easier,” I tell him.

Royal is standing outside the school waiting for us. “The teacher is a good one, I didn’t like leaving Penny either the first time,” he tells me.

I smile thankfully. “Thank you, Royal, that means a lot.”

He smiles back and Knight puts his hand on the small of my back. "I'm going to go to the clubhouse, see you guys later."

Knight opens my door for me and sets me inside once again. "Thank you, Knight."

"Do you mind if I look at your leg?" He looks down at my leg.

"Yeah, that's fine."

He gently grips my leg and lifts my leggings to above my cut. He pulls back the gauze pad. "It looks good, I bet it's sore though." He gently puts the gauze pad back and pulls my leggings back down.

"It's okay."

He studies me for a moment, he shakes his head like he is in disbelief. "Do you know how beautiful you are?"

My whole body gets goosebumps, my heart in my throat. He reaches forward and touches the side of my face, his thumb stroking my cheekbone.

That little touch sets my whole entire body on edge, I can feel myself shaking. "Knight," I whisper, shocked and not knowing what else to say.

He smiles. "You are...the way you take care of Annie. You're a fucking angel." He tightens his hand on my face and I bite my lip because of his intense gaze.

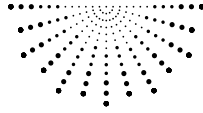
He leans over me and buckles in my seat belt. He is so close that if I just move my face a little, I would be able to kiss him.

I wring my hands into my shirt, trying to stop myself from reaching out and touching him.

He backs away and winks, shutting the door. I let out a deep breath trying to control myself.

I think I'm in big trouble.

DANIELLA



We arrive back at my place, he walks me to my door and makes sure I'm inside safely before he leaves. I watch him leave, which is thoroughly enjoying.

First thing I do is hop on the phone and give Jessica the rundown of everything that has happened since yesterday.

Unless plans have changed, I have a date tonight at seven. My stomach twists at the idea of going on a date.

I have never been on one before; I have never had a man show me attention and he is showing up for both me and Annie.

It was small, him bringing breakfast for us this morning and taking her to school but it meant a lot. I smile thinking about how Annie hugged him goodbye before we left her.

At two forty-five I get ready to leave to go get Annie when I see Knight pulling into my driveway again.

I walk out of the house and smile at him. He gets out and walks around the truck to help me in. "I made a promise to a special little girl." He winks at me and I grip my seat belt like it's my lifeline.

"Wear something casual tonight when I pick you up, okay?" he tells me.

Oh boy, he really did mean it. "Okay." My hands are shaking a tiny bit, so I stuff them under my legs so he doesn't see. I'm so nervous but I'm excited. He has proven himself to me that he is trustworthy and I know I will be ok with him.

The school pick up line is nuts. I dig into my purse and pull out the card that lets them know I am picking up Annie.

The closer we get to the front, I can see her standing just inside the doors through the glass.

I roll down the window so she can see me through the dark tinted windows. She is searching all the windows for me. The second she finally spots me, her eyes light up. My heart aches, I love her so much.

“Hi, my baby,” I call her to her when we pull to a stop. I hand my card to the teacher and they scan it to sign Annie out. I step out and she runs to me hugging me. “I missed you so much.” I squish her.

She giggles and turns to look to the side of me. Knight is standing there. “Hi sweet girl, looks like you had a good day.”

She lets me go and looks at Knight unsure if she should go to him. He bends down and she runs to him, tucking her face into the crook of his neck.

I put my hand on my chest feeling emotional seeing this. He stands up and lifts her with his arm under her butt. “Can I carry the princess into her carriage?” he jokes and she grins like this is the best thing that’s ever happened to her.

I slip her backpack off her shoulders and set it on the seat next to her car seat. He sets her inside and I make sure she buckles correctly before I get back in with Knight’s help.

“I had the best day, Mommy. Me and Penelope are the bestest of friends!” she yells and I smile, so happy that that worry is over.

“I am so happy for you, sweet girl.” I turn around to look at her and stick my hand around the back of the seat so she can hold my hand.

“How do you feel about me taking you ladies out for dinner?”

“Yes! I am starving.”

Knight looks at me waiting for my answer. Is this moving too fast? Is this wrong? I study him and I give in because I do

want to spend time with him.

I like him.

“Yeah,” I agree and he pulls off into a steakhouse that is right up the road from the school.

Knight gives me the happiest smile, it sends a thrill through me that I put that there. My stomach is a constant fit of knots around him.

He is so attractive and he’s been so kind to me and my baby girl. Annie holds my hand while walking across the parking lot to the restaurant.

She hops over the speed bumps. Knight opens the door for us and we walk under his arm inside. He tells the hostess at the front, “Three.”

I see a few guys at the table wearing Grim Sinners Rebels cuts. Knight taps their shoulders on the way to our table.

I slide into the booth with Annie and Knight is across from us. “Can I have an apple juice, please?” Annie asks the waitress without even looking at the menu.

“Sure, sweetheart.” She smiles at her, and I run my hand down the back of her head. “Can I have a water with lemon please?” I tell her and Knight orders the same thing.

“What did you do in school today?” I ask Annie.

She scoots closer and opens the little kids coloring page with the little crayons. “It was so fun. The teacher let Penny sit next to me and we had so much fun talking. We even played dolls on the playground.”

I look at Knight, happy that they’re such good friends. “I’m so happy, maybe she can come over for a sleepover soon.”

I swear you could have pushed her over with a feather. “Oh please!”

I laugh and Knight joins me. “Well, Royal is my friend so I think I can make it happen.”

If there was any doubt that Annie didn't like Knight, it is gone in a split second when he said that to her.

"Oh please!" She puts her hands in front of her body fisted together in a begging motion.

"I'll make it happen," he tells her and opens the menu. I do the same looking over the choices.

"Can I have a cheeseburger?" she asks me politely and points to it on her little menu for kids.

Before I can answer, Knight chimes in with, "You can have anything you want."

I smile and look down at my own menu, a burger does sound amazing. "Can you play with me?" Annie asks and points to tic-tac-toe.

I take a pink crayon and make my X. She sticks her little tongue out concentrating on where to put her O.

Knight

SHE DOESN'T KNOW I'm watching her, but I couldn't stop if I wanted to. She is beautiful, so fucking beautiful it hurts.

The way her life revolves around her daughter is fucking amazing. That little girl is precious. They both are.

I want to be in their lives, I want to be part of their life. I want to see Daniella when she first wakes up in the morning. I want to see the way her eyes light up when Annie calls her mommy.

I want to play fucking dolls with Annie all day.

Just if I'm there.

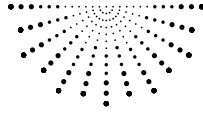
Determination hits me full force, I will be there.

She is here because someone is after her and Annie. I pray the fucker comes to find her.

I fucking pray that I can make him suffer a thousand times over for ever putting that fear in her eyes.

I fucking pray.

DANIELLA



River is over, apparently Knight had called her before I could even ask her to watch Annie.

I am not going to admit that it thrills me that he thought to make sure that Annie was safe.

It's five minutes til seven and the nerves are threatening to cause me to throw up. I'm wearing leggings, a white shirt, and a soft fuzzy plaid jacket over top. My hair is flowing down my back in waves from the braid I had it in overnight.

I wear light makeup, just foundation and mascara.

In the living room River is on the couch with Annie watching a movie. "What are you guys watching?" I ask and kiss the top of Annie's head from behind the couch.

"Frozen."

I wince internally and River is eyeing me like, please help me. "Uncle Gage is coming over to watch the movie with us." She is excited from all the attention she is getting.

I giggle. "I bet Uncle Gage is going to love that."

Lights pull up outside and I feel like I am going to pass out. "Maybe I shouldn't do this," I say to River.

She eyes me. "Girl, you would be insane not to."

I sigh, she is so right. He has been nothing but kind to me. It's already dark outside so I see the interior of the truck light come on when he opens the door.

The light from inside the house is shining through the window, the glow from inside is shining on him.

I walk to the door and pull it open; my stomach feels like it will never recover from this.

He smiles widely at me. “Ready to go?” He lifts his hand for me to take.

I lift my hand and he curl his fingers around mine, his hand enveloping mine completely. “Yeah.”

He leads me out of the house, I look back to see Annie waving bye to me. I wave back and she goes back to her movie.

He opens the door for me and helps me inside. I manage to do most of it myself, this time learning how to get in without pulling my stitches so much.

The door shuts leaving me inside alone for a second and I feel like I can’t breathe.

“Where are we going?” I ask him when he gets inside.

He winks at me. “You’ll see.”

I suck in my lips trying to stop my smile. He backs out of the driveway and moves to go further down the club property, past a bunch of massive houses.

He pulls into a massive log home type house but drives past the house to the back yard.

The sight before me has me gasping in awe. I look at Knight in shock and he is grinning at my reaction.

In the backyard, in the middle of a field, is a huge blow-up movie screen and there are fairy lights wrapped around the yard to give off a soft glow. A fireplace is in front of a blow-up couch. There is a small table to the side of the couch that is filled with popcorn and a ton of other snacks.

I grip my throat kind of emotional that he went all out like this for me. He takes my hand. “Knight, this is...” I trail off.

“Do you like it?” he asks as we walk to the couch area.

I look at him, shaking my head. “I love it! This is the most thoughtful thing anyone has ever done for me.”

He reaches out to touch me but stops himself like he is unsure of what to do. I throw all caution out the window. I split the distance between us and hug him. All the fear and stress leave my body the second his arms wrap around me.

He breathes in deep, relaxing into me, his head moving to rest on top of mine. We stand there for a few minutes, not speaking and not moving.

I finally make myself pull away from him. “What kind of movie do you have planned for us?”

He laughs. “I’ve heard you love the older scary movies, so I brought a bunch of those.”

My heart swells that he thought of me enough to ask. “That’s so sweet of you to ask.”

He leads me to the couch that he has set up with a ton of throw pillows and blankets to ease the chill of the cool fall night.

I sit down and he sits next to me, so I scoot back getting comfortable. He gathers the blanket at my feet and covers me. I swear I almost cry again that he thought to do that.

My ex never did anything like this for me. He was always cruel and he thought that it was his right to do whatever he wanted to me.

Knight? He’s so different.

He hands me a wine glass and I take it so he can pour me some. “Thank you. How did you know that this is my favorite?” I ask.

He gives me a Cheshire grin. “I have my connections.”

I laugh and pull the blanket higher on my legs. He turns on the movie and I wait for his answer. “Uh huh.” I take a drink of my wine. “You’ve put a lot of thought into this.”

He smiles and looks at the screen. “I started planning the second I saw you yesterday.”

My mouth opens in shock at his admission. “You did?”

He nods. “I knew the second I saw you; I knew that I wanted to pursue you, darlin.” He reaches around and grabs the small tray of food, setting it in front of us both. “I just knew.”

I smile at him and I can feel my face burning from his honesty, but I am happy. “The second I saw you, I liked you,” I admit to him.

I was taken by him immediately, no guy has made me look twice before. My life is devoted to my daughter and that was everything I knew I needed. Men weren’t on the radar for me.

I know I just met him, but he is different, I know that without a doubt.

He gives me a happy look at my admission. “I’m glad, darlin. It seems we are on the same page. I have full intentions of being your man someday soon and that little girl being in my life.”

That takes my breath away. My hand freezes with my wine glass halfway to my mouth. He chuckles and refills my glass, turning back to the movie and leaving me with my thoughts.

I smile into my glass then I take a deep drink. We snack on popcorn and candy while the movie plays. “Do you have any siblings?” I ask.

He shakes his head. “I don’t, my parents couldn’t have any more after me.”

I pull my legs under me. “I didn’t know I had any siblings at all. My parents told me that my sister Bell was dead. That she had died soon after she was married. My parents had me later in life, thirties for the cult was late in life.” I laugh but it’s not humorous.

He scoots closer to me, reaches out and takes my hand. “That’s fucked up,” he says bluntly.

I burst out laughing and this one is a real one. “Now that is true, that whole life was fucked up. Girls being forced into

marriage at thirteen and fourteen years old. It's never ending it seems and it's like every year they make up new rules."

His jaw clenches and he looks away from me. I know he is angry and you know what? I am too. God, I am so angry. I want to hurt the man who hurt me, who made my life hell.

"I'm just so glad that Annie will never have to worry about that, that is my only mission in life."

He turns to me, and I can see that he is hesitating to ask something. "Who is after you and her?"

I take a huge drink of my wine and set the empty glass on the tray, the movie now long forgotten.

"My ex-husband."

I watch the anger on his face turn to straight rage at my words. "We weren't technically married; I was married when I was fourteen and that is not legal. He was much older than me, in his thirties."

I turn to the TV sinking into the memories. "He told me that my daughter was dead." I stop, the pain hitting me full force. "I was not a good wife in the cult's eyes, so they took her from me to try and break me, so that I would follow them."

I look at him. "That made me angry; they told me she was dead and she was what I lived for. After that? I just didn't care. I fought them on everything." I smile thinking back at the time I let my husband have it, I hurt him.

"Bell found my daughter, my biological parents were raising her, and it came out that I was alive."

Knight is staring at me, I know he is shocked. It's honestly hard to believe that this kind of life even exists until you see it firsthand, but I lived it.

So many women suffer. I was blessed that I had someone on the outside because without that, I am not sure what would have happened to me.

"They found me in a cabin in the middle of nowhere; I was in solitary confinement for bad behavior. I left there and never looked back."

“Until he was seen in the town I was living in, passing mine and Annie’s photo around, I had to leave. I can’t bear the thought of him finding her.” I sigh, looking at the movie screen.

“He will not even breathe the same fucking air as you, I promise you that.” A finger touches the tip of my chin, he turns my face around so I am looking at him. My heart feels like it’s going to explode from his powerful and intense expression.

His eyes are dark with anger. His hand is so powerful but when his hand glides from my chin to cup my face, it’s gentle, caring, and his touch is safety. “I promise you this with every bit of my being, you will not hurt again.”

Tears form in my eyes. “Knight,” I say emotional. I have so much to say but the words do not come.

He leans forward until our foreheads are touching. I take in the moment, it’s simple but it’s literally life changing.

My life will never be the same after this.

He smiles and brushes his hand across my cheek, pushing my hair out of my face. “You’re so beautiful, darlin.”

I smile widely, closing my eyes, loving this. “Thank you.” My voice is breathless. I shiver from the cool wind and the temperature dropping.

“Can I hold you?” he asks me and I lean back, thinking on it for a moment. No one has held me before. “I would love that.”

He leans back against the back of the couch, takes my hand and gently pulls me over until my head is resting on his chest. I rest my arm across his stomach and I can feel his abs through his flannel shirt.

He lifts the blanket, tucking it above my shoulder. “Are you warm now?” he asks me, running his hand up and down my arm.

I nod. “I am.” I shift my head and look at the movie screen, another movie is starting.

“Good, darlin.”

He rests his head on top of mine, snuggling closer. This date has gone better than I ever imagined. His hand is running gently up and down my arm and I peek up at him, wanting to see him.

I smile at him and rest my forehead against his chin. I am happy.

I never dreamed that this would happen. Something pops out on the screen and scares me. I burst out laughing and Knight joins me. “That scared me.”

I sit up and scoot back, so my head is lying on his shoulder. He leans forward and adds more wood to the fire. “Want some more wine?” he asks me.

I nod and he pours me another glass. “Thank you.”

He grabs another beer and takes a long drink. “Do you have any kids?” I ask him.

He shakes his head. “I haven’t been blessed yet. We all have helped Royal raise Penelope though.”

I smile thinking of her and how happy she has made my girl. “I know Royal doesn’t know me but I know what it’s like being a single parent, so if he needs help, he can bring her over anytime.”

Knight gives me a soft look. “You’re just a fucking angel, aren’t you?”

My face burns from the compliment and he chuckles seeing my reaction. He runs his finger across my cheek. “You’re so cute when you blush.” All that accomplishes is causing me to blush harder.

My phone goes off and it scares me. I jump. I laugh and see it’s River calling me. “Hello,” I answer.

“Hey, Annie has an upset tummy. She just threw up everywhere.”

I push the blanket off my lap. “We’ll be right there.” Before River can hang up, I can hear her crying.

“What happened?” Knight asks me.

“Annie threw up; I need to get to her,” I tell him and set the blanket over the back of the couch.

Knight puts out the fire with water leftover from our water bottles. He runs over and opens my door even though I was way ahead of him.

I gnaw on my bottom lip, worried about her. Knight speeds down the road to where my house is. I’m thankful we are close.

I’m sure it’s just a bug, but I want to be there to take care of my baby. As we pull up, Gage is standing at the entrance of my house.

Knight climbs out and I go out his side so he can help me out and run up the steps. “How is she?”

“Sick,” he says simply and I walk through the door. I can hear her throwing up upstairs and hurry up the stairs as fast as I can.

I see River in Annie’s bathroom standing behind Annie who is throwing up in the toilet. “My sweet girl,” I say softly and I walk to her. I get a washcloth wetting it so I can clean her face.

“Mommy, my tummy hurts,” she cries and I pick her up, tucking her against my chest. “I’m so sorry, angel.”

I feel someone standing above us and I look up to see Knight. He bends over and picks the both of us up. “I’ll take care of them River, if you want to go home,” Knight says and I open my mouth in shock.

She gives me a secret smile and takes him up on his offer. “Call me if you need anything.” She pats Knight’s shoulder as she walks out.

“I’m going to give you a shower, sweet girl,” I say to Annie and Knight walks around us to turn on the shower for her.

“Want me to get her some pajamas?”

“Please,” I state and reach out, taking his hand for a second. I want him to know how thankful I am that he is here.

He shuts the door and I help her into the shower, she is shaking from the cold. “I’m sorry you’re sick, baby.” I peek in to check on her. There is a knock on the door, I open it a bit and Knight hands me a princess nightgown.

“Thank you.” I close the door and turn back into the bathroom. She finishes cleaning up and I turn off the water.

I help dry her off and slip on her nightgown. “Do you want to sleep in mommy’s room with me?” I ask her.

She nods and I tuck her wet hair behind her ear. I open the door and Knight is standing outside the door. “How is the princess?” he asks her and her bottom lip trembles, he looks horrified.

“I don’t feel so good,” she says and I rush her to the toilet so she can throw up. I rub her back. I hate this, I hate being so helpless.

“I wrote a prescription for her and called it in, a prospect is picking it up and some Pedialyte for her.”

I could have cried at his thoughtfulness. “Thank you,” I express to him. I clean her face and have her rinse her mouth with mouthwash.

“Want me to carry her to bed?” he asks.

She lifts her arms for him and he picks her up as she rests her head on his shoulder. “I’m going to put her in my bed until she is feeling better.” I lead the way and point to my bedroom.

I take the bathroom trashcan in case she gets sick and can’t make it to the bathroom in time.

He sets her on the bed and I pick up her blanket making sure she is tucked in. “Knight, can you watch a movie with me?” she asks him, her lips trembling from being cold.

He doesn’t hesitate, he climbs on the bed next to her and tucks her in tighter. “I’m going to turn the heat up,” I tell them and bump up the thermostat in my room a few notches.

“What do you want to watch?” he asks her and she lays her head back on the pillow.

“Can I watch *Halloweentown*?” she asks and I smile.

“Yeah baby, anything you want.”

I see the excitement in her eyes even though she is so sick. I set the trashcan on the nightstand next to the bed and slide on the other side of her, brushing her hair out of her face.

I can't stand her being sick; you never feel more helpless as a parent than when your child is sick. It's the worst.

He turns on the movie and she jerks up in bed, holding her stomach. I grab the trashcan and she throws up in it.

I rub her back as Knight walks in my bathroom and comes back with a washcloth. He is here even though this is the worst part of having a child in your life.

But he is here.

He takes the trashcan from her when she is finished and starts to go into the bathroom. “I can do that,” I tell him.

He shakes his head, smiling. “No, I got this.” He goes into the bathroom and cleans out the trashcan.

Annie falls into me and I snuggle her. The doorbell rings and Knight hands me the can then walks down the stairs.

A minute or so later he comes back up the stairs holding a couple of bags. He hands me the prescription of Zofran, nausea pills that I recognize. “Thank you for this.”

He smiles. “Darlin, there is nowhere I rather be than right here with you both.” He takes out a bottle of Pedialyte and a cup he must have gotten from the kitchen.

She takes it with shaking hands; he steadies the cup and I put my hand on her back to help her. It takes a lot out of you when you have a stomach bug.

I reach over and take the stomach meds, I open the bottle and draw out the right amount of medicine. “Here, sweet girl.” She opens her mouth and I push the plunger in, she makes a cringey face at the taste.

She settles back into bed, and I set her cup on the nightstand. “Thank you, Knight.” I am thankful that he is here and thought enough of her to get the things that she needs.

“Thank you, Knight, for the medicine,” Annie says softly, her little eyes growing heavy.

He looks at me like she is breaking his heart. He pulls the blanket further up, tucking her in.

I sigh and rub my face when I notice her breathing has evened out. “She’s asleep,” I say, thankful. “It’s so hard when they’re sick,” I whisper to Knight.

“I felt helpless,” he says and looks down at her.

“I know,” I agree. I look at the clock on the wall. “Do you want me to fix up the guest room for you?”

He nods. “I’d like that.”

I walk to my closet digging out a pair of sweatpants and a regular white t-shirt for him. I have some clothes that I brought in case Maverick and Bell came to stay unexpectedly. I motion for him to follow me to the guest room that is next to mine and I set the clothes on the bed. “Here you go, if you need an extra blanket there’s some in the closet.”

I turn around, my eyes widen seeing how close he is to me. I step back. “Oops, sorry I didn’t see you there.” I laugh it off.

He is studying me, his eyes are so intense. He reaches his hand out slowly, tucking a strand of my hair behind my ear. “You have me in awe, I’m almost afraid to fucking touch you.”

My eyes widen at his admission. “Why?” I whisper, shocked.

He growls and pulls me to him, resting his forehead against mine. “Because you’re a fucking angel and I’m a sinner.”

My hands shake as I reach out and touch his sides. “So.”

He smirks at my response. “You better get out of here unless you want me to kiss those sweet lips.”

I jump back and giggle, practically running out of the room and he laughs with me. I peek my head around the door. “Knight,” I whisper.

He walks out of the bedroom. “I had a good time tonight,” I tell him.

His face softens, staring at me. “I did too, darlin.”

I feel like I’m one smile away from a heart attack because of him. I slip into my room and change into a shirt and shorts.

Annie is still fast asleep; I hope that this is the last of it. I pull back the blankets and settle in next to her. I touch her forehead to check if she is warm and then carefully lay next to her, feeling slightly better that she’s not running a temperature.

Knight

Two Hours Later

I SIT up straight in bed when I hear Annie crying. I run across the hallway to Daniella’s room.

She is holding Annie who is bent over the trashcan. “She has a fever,” she tells me, touching her forehead.

“She may have the flu.” I walk over and touch Annie’s forehead, it is warm. “Do you have a thermometer?” I ask.

“In her bathroom cabinet,” Daniella tells me and I walk into Annie’s bathroom. I find the thermometer in the medicine cabinet, and I grab the children’s Tylenol while I am in there.

Daniella is in the bathroom when I come back and Annie looks completely pitiful. “Hi baby girl, you feel rough, huh?” I ask her, sitting on the edge of the bed next to her.

“My tummy really hurts.”

My heart fucking shatters in my chest. “Do you mind if I check your temp?”

She leans closer to me and I press the thermometer to her forehead. It beeps and I check it. “One hundred and two.”

“Can I give her some Tylenol?” I ask Daniella.

“Please.”

I pull out the dosage for her and she takes it like a champ. Daniella places a cool cloth on her forehead and sighs. She is exhausted.

I take her hand and have her look at me. “You okay?”

She nods. “I just hate when she’s sick.” She smiles at me slightly; her hair is all messed up and the cutest thing I have ever seen.

“Knight, can you hold my hand?” Annie asks me.

I find a chair in the room and scoot it next to her bed, taking her little hand in mine. Daniella climbs in bed beside her, running her fingers through her hair.

Soon Annie falls sleep with Daniella beside her. I set a timer on my phone, so I know when to give her more meds.

I stand up and pull the blanket up over Daniella who has fallen asleep too.

Sitting here watching them both sleep, I have never wanted to protect two people more in my life than in this moment.

I would fucking rip someone apart, destroy them if they dared to even look at these girls wrong.

I scoot my chair closer and close my eyes, relaxing back in the chair. I fall asleep to the sound of Annie’s breathing.

My phone blaring hours later scares the shit out of me. Daniella is sitting straight up gasping. I feel like shit, but Annie needs to take her medicine. I wince. “Sorry, I set a timer for her medicine.”

Daniella laughs and Annie is rubbing her eyes. I reach out and touch her forehead and it feels much cooler. I place the thermometer against her head. “It’s one hundred.” Daniella smiles and kisses the top of her head.

I pull the medicine for her stomach and fever. “Do you want to see if she can take some Pedialyte?”

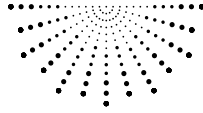
She reaches over and takes the glass, handing it to Annie who chugs it. “My tummy is feeling better.” She smiles at me and her momma.

Daniella grins at her. “I’m so happy baby but there is no school for you today. We will have a movie and couch day. How does that sound?”

Her eyes widen in delight. “Yesss,” she expresses loudly and turns to me. “Knight, can you stay?”

I take her little hand. “You couldn’t stop me if you wanted to sweetheart.”

DANIELLA



LATER IN THE DAY

When I say that I am in trouble, I mean it. The way that Knight took care of Annie last night, made sure she was okay, and slept in the chair next to her, my ovaries and heart are about to explode.

One part of me is like is this real?

I went on an amazing date last night, one that he put so much effort into and it was something that he knew I would love.

I peek around from the kitchen into the living room. I cover my mouth and try not to laugh at the sight of Knight sitting on the floor in front of Annie. “I think we need matching crowns.” She sets a tiara on his head and I turn away before she can catch me laughing.

Annie hasn’t been sick all day. Thankfully, it was a short bug. When I called the school, I was told it’s been going around.

Knight’s phone goes off and he walks into the kitchen with me. “I’ll be right over.”

My heart sinks a little, he’s leaving. He hangs up the phone and says, “It seems that Penelope has caught a bug. I’m going to go check on her and write a prescription for her.”

“Oh no, I hope she gets better. Let Royal know that I will be there if he needs help.”

He smiles at me. “You’re fucking perfect,” he exclaims, shaking his head like he is in disbelief.

He walks to me, taking my hand. "I'll be back later." I suck in a sharp breath at the intensity of his gaze looking down at me.

He moves closer to me and I stop breathing, waiting for what he is going to do. I close my eyes, my whole body relaxing the second his lips touch my forehead. I grip his sides, sinking into him.

He pulls back and I look up at him. I am a goner.

He runs his thumb across my cheekbone. I smile and he backs away. "Bye." He waves and walks out the front door. I lock it behind him and check on Annie who is glued to the TV.

If the TV is on, you can guarantee everything around her melts away.

Annie wanted homemade chicken noodle soup for dinner. I put her soup in a bowl and set it on the coffee table in front of her. It's a lazy day and that means eating in front of the TV. I make my own bowl and plop down beside her.

Annie turns to look at me, holding the spoon. "Is Penelope sick too?" she asks me.

I nod. "She is sweetheart, it seems something is going around."

She looks sad. "Can we take her some soup? I bet it will make her feel better." I run my hand down the back of her head, she is my sweet girl.

"After you finish your food, we will take it over." Royal lives next door to me. I saw Knight walk over there, and he left his truck.

My stomach twists, even though I have spent the last twenty-four hours with him, puke in my hair, on my clothes, and looking a hundred ways of rough, he stayed.

I walk into the kitchen and add the soup to some carry-out dishes for them. Annie is at the door waiting with her coat on.

I take her hand and we make the short walk across the small field to Royal's house. Annie knocks on the door softly; we can see inside the house from the huge, bright windows.

Royal looks to the door where he sees us, walks over and opens it. Knight is sitting on the couch next to Penelope, who is pale. “Hi, Annie said she wanted to bring Penny some homemade soup.”

Annie takes the bowls from me and she looks so adorable in her princess pajamas, with her hair in a bun. She sets the bowls on the coffee table. “Want me to feed you?” she asks Penny.

I smile and look at Royal. “She hasn’t eaten a thing all day long,” he says to me and moves to sit beside his daughter.

Knight makes his way over to me, his hand going to the small of my back. We stand and watch as my baby feeds her and spills it on her at the same time, but Royal is ignoring that part.

“I’m glad they’re friends,” I tell Royal.

He smiles at me. “Me too.”

“I wanted to ask if Penny could come over and spend the night one weekend? Annie has been asking since the second she heard about her.”

“Oh, please, can I Daddy?” Penny asks excitedly.

He laughs. “Yeah, baby girl, that’s fine.”

Annie tries to feed her again and it spills down her, soaking the front of her shirt. Royal hands her a cloth and Penny dries her shirt, giggling.

There is a knock at the front door. I jump and turn around looking out the window.

Knight growls and walks to the door. “Can you not knock so fucking loud, prospect?”

I suck in my lips trying not to like how much I liked that. He takes the bag from the prospect and glares at him before shutting the door.

“This should help her a lot and continue pushing fluids on her,” Knight explains to Royal and hands him the bag.

“Ready to go, sweetheart? I’d say Penny needs her rest and so do you. You had a rough night last night.” She runs over and takes my hand.

Knight holds the door for us, and we walk out and across the field to my house. Annie runs inside and I stand on the porch wondering what Knight is going to do.

I shut the door and stand before him, goosebumps breaking out across my skin, both from the night air and Knight looking at me the way he is.

“I don’t want to leave you.” He touches my chin. “But I will see you in the morning.”

I nod and smile. “In the morning.”

He moves closer to me and bends down like he is going to kiss me. I feel like I could faint. I lick my lips, my heart beating so hard, the closer he gets.

He smirks, his hand sliding along my side, to behind me and the door is pushed opened behind me.

I laugh, he tricked me. “Goodnight then, Knight.”

I back up, smiling, shutting the door in his face, then locking it. He winks at me and then backs down the steps to his truck.

“You’re happy, Mommy,” Annie says, breaking the silence.

I look at her. “I am happy. Who wouldn’t be happy with a baby girl like you?” I walk to her and pull her in for a snuggle. She giggles and hugs me back tightly.

“Let’s go get you ready for bed.” I pat her back to get her to move along up the stairs.

She takes off running; it’s amazing how kids can just bounce back from sickness like that. I know I would be out of commission for a while.

The Next Morning

I'M SITTING at my bar rubbing my eyes trying to wake up, when I see a flash of light through the window. I look out and see Knight pulling into the yard.

He gets out and is carrying breakfast once again. I shake my head and hurry to the door to meet him. "I brought breakfast."

"Thank you." I smile at him and he hands me an iced coffee. "Bless you, you're my favorite person." This time he brought us Starbucks. "I bought the baby girl a hot chocolate."

Speaking of her, she is running down the stairs dressed for school already. She stops dead at the end of the stairs. "Ohh, what did you bring me this morning?" She runs over, looking in the bag.

Her eyes light up. "Oh, you're the man." She fist bumps the hand holding the bag and runs to the table with her breakfast sandwich.

He hands me a bag and I reach inside. "Thank you, you're going to spoil us," I say and it's the truth. No one has ever done anything remotely close to this for us unless it was family.

He breathes deep, his hand moving to my cheekbone. "Darlin, I'm just getting started."

He leaves his words hanging and goes to Annie helping her open her food. "You excited for school today?" he asks her. He pulls out a chair for me and I sit down.

My mind goes to what else he has in store for me as he brushes my hair over my shoulder gently and easily, like he didn't even think twice about it.

I look down in my lap smiling. "I wish Penny was going today," she says with a slightly sad voice.

"So, I have something to ask you girls," Knight says and we both turn to look at him. "How do you both feel about going to the pumpkin patch Saturday?"

Annie gasps dramatically. “This is the best day of my life.”

I laugh at her antics; he has made her one happy little girl. “We would love to go.”

He runs his hand down the back of my head. “It’s a date.”

Annie giggles and takes a bite of her food. “Can we carve pumpkins and ride the ponies?”

“You can do whatever you want,” he tells her and she looks at him like he has hung the moon.

“Is that mine?” she asks and I scoot over her hot chocolate for her.

I look at the clock. “It’s time to get going,” I tell her and Knight takes her backpack off the back of the chair.

She runs ahead of us and straight to Knight’s truck. He opens the door for her and helps her in.

I sit back and just watch; my ovaries could literally combust. There is nothing more attractive than a man who is soft with a child, but she is my child so it’s ten times worse.

We drive to her school and park in the front. Her teacher is at the front of the school. “Hi, sweet girl. Are you feeling better?” she asks when she sees Annie through the down window.

“Much better, but I’m sad Penny won’t be here today,” she tells her and I step out, ignoring Knight’s look when he sees me doing so.

I open the door and help her out. “Want me to walk her in since I’m going that way?” the teacher asks.

I look at Annie to see if that is what she is wanting. “Can I, Mommy?” she asks me.

I nod and she turns to her teacher, taking her hand. “I’m thrilled she has such a nice teacher,” I tell Knight, who is standing next to me.

I watch them walk inside and I turn to look at Knight who is staring at me like I’m in trouble. I reach for the door handle

and he bats my hand away gently. “No way.” He shuts the door and opens it for me.

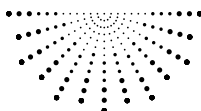
Tears fill my eyes and I burst out laughing from trying to hold it back at the ridiculousness of it all.

“Oh my God.” I hold my stomach, this is hilarious. “Knight, did you really shut the door and open it again?”

His face is completely serious. “Damn right I did, you don’t open shit around me.” He smiles.

That smile hits me hard. I repeat to myself again, I am such a goner.

DANIELLA



A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER

*K*night got called into an emergency surgery at the hospital, so he dropped me off at my home and I'm going to spend the rest of the day unpacking. I still have our clothes in some boxes.

I smile seeing a picture of Annie from a year ago, she has grown so much since then.

God, I remember the fear when I saw her for the first time in years. But nothing compares to finding out that she wasn't dead. I was so dead inside thinking she was gone forever.

I would give anything to punish those that did that to me, everyone that was involved.

My own parents, who treated me like shit. I was the token to moving up in society in the cult life.

I was their way out and they went along with taking my daughter.

My heart feels like it's going to shatter in a million pieces at the thought of never ever being in her life, to not having this chance with her.

I want her to have the life that I didn't.

On the kitchen floor, I spot a pink lunchbox. I reach down and I look at the clock, I can make it just in time for her lunch.

I take my keys and rush out of the house as fast as I can with my messed-up leg. It doesn't take but ten minutes to pull up to the school. I open the door to the front office and give it to the lady at the front desk so she can come get it.

A few minutes pass and Annie comes to the front office. The lady at the desk hands the lunchbox to her and I wave when she looks for me.

She grins and waves back before running off.

I giggle seeing her cute little braids smacking against her back.

I push the door open and the cool fall air rushes over me. I sigh and lift my head toward the sun, appreciating this; all the small things are so important especially when your whole life was a prison sentence.

I get a text from Knight letting me know that he is out of surgery and asking if I want to meet him for lunch.

I smile at my phone texting him back.

I click the key fob to unlock my SUV when I see a truck drive past me slowly while I stand in the front on the way to the driver's side.

The window slowly rolls down. I look up and connect eyes with the man who I have feared, had nightmares over.

My ex-husband.

All the air leaves my lungs, fear freezing every morsel of my body. Then it hits me, he knows where Annie is.

He comes to a stop, the tires squealing.

I turn on my heel and run straight back into the school. I yell for the ladies to let me in, and they hurry to me, opening the door.

He is running up the walkway and into the front office part that is open to the public; you must be scanned in to be let into the rest of the school.

He is staring at me, death in his eyes.

He smacks the glass and tries to pull on the door to get to me. I can hear his muffled yelling and screaming as he beats the door.

The ladies in the office are going wild behind me, talking to security on the phone. I can't move, just stare at the man who is my torturer.

He has hurt me in every way possible, it's unthinkable the things he has done to me and others too.

He is cruel.

He is the devil in the flesh.

I take out my phone and call the only person I need right now.

Knight

I SMILE at the text that Daniella sent me agreeing to lunch. I had an emergency surgery from a burst appendix.

She calls me and I lift the phone to my ear. "Hey, I will be there in a few minutes," I tell her.

In the background I can hear a man screaming at the top of his lungs and her crying. My whole fucking body freezes.

"Where are you?" I ask her.

She sobs when there is a sound of a loud crash. "I'm at Annie's school." Then she hangs up and I fucking floor it.

Fear unlike anything I have ever felt before shoots through my body.

Daniella

HE HAS a gun and is pointing at me through the glass. Everyone in the office takes cover, his eyes are glued to the phone at my ear.

He points at me and mouths, "I'm coming for you."

He backs away, watching me the whole time until he is out of sight. I fall to the ground holding my head in my hands, my legs pressed against my front.

My whole body is shaking in fear, all the ladies in the office are screaming and I'm just numb.

I am not sure how much time has passed; I know I feel a few ladies touch me trying to get me to respond to them.

But I can't.

I'm in shock and I don't know what to do. I brought her here to get away, to start over.

Nowhere is safe.

There is nowhere I can go, nothing I can do.

The door opens in front of me and I see boots in between my fingers, then hands touch mine, prying them from my face.

Knight's face is in front of mine. I burst out crying and he wraps me in his arms, lifting me off the floor into his lap.

"Can someone explain to me what the fuck is happening and why my woman is on the floor crying?" he growls at someone, and I sink into him trying to wrap my head around everything that just happened.

"There was a man following her inside the school. He pulled a gun and wanted her to come out. We don't know who he is," someone tells him.

I can feel Knight shaking as he holds me. I lean back and dry my eyes, the shock starting to wear off. "It was him, he found me. He was outside of the school driving past when he saw me. I ran inside and he followed me in." My heart drops. "He has found her, he has found us."

Fear hits me again at how close he was to her; he was just outside of her building. "Fuck," he growls. "Get Annie and bring her here now," he yells at the ladies at the front, and he stands up with me in his arms.

One of the girls runs off inside the school, Knight turns me around until I'm facing him. He cups my face. "Baby, look at

me. I will protect you; he will not hurt you or Annie. I will tear him fucking apart if he dares to ever touch you.”

“I will kill him for daring to breathe your fucking air baby, I promise you this.”

I close my eyes, his words washing over me, promising safety and so much relief. I grip his side, his shirt twisting in my hands. “I feel safe with you, I knew you would be here,” I admit to him.

He growls and presses my face against his chest. I watch through the glass for my daughter and when I see her, I stand up straight and dry my face so she doesn’t see that I was crying.

I smile at her through the glass. “Hi, sweet girl,” I call to her. “How do you feel about having a girls’ day?” I ask her.

She screams and runs to me. She takes my hand and Knight’s. “Let’s blow this popsicle stand.”

Knight is watching me closely. “Can I carry you, sweet girl?” he asks Annie and she lifts her arms for him to carry her.

With the other hand, he tucks me close into his side. The second we are outside, I look around to see if I see anyone.

Knight’s truck is parked illegally right in front of the doors, so we don’t have to walk far.

He opens the door for me and puts me inside then Annie, making sure she is buckled in. The second the door is shut it’s like I can breathe for the first time.

“Knight, what about my SUV?” I ask. I look over to it and on the side of the SUV are the letters WHORE scratched out.

His hands tighten on the steering wheel. “I will send a prospect to get it for you.” He reaches over with his free hand and takes mine, intertwining our fingers.

I hold onto his hand tightly. I just can’t believe this has happened. How did he find me so quickly?

Why after all this time?

He takes us to the clubhouse and River runs outside like she is waiting for us. “Did you tell her?” I whisper soft enough so only he hears.

He nods. “Yeah, I let them know what happened.”

He parks right up against the door; River opens the back door and helps Annie out. “I have missed my girl.” She kisses her cheek.

Knight pulls me out his side and leaves me sitting on the edge of the seat as his hand settles on my outer thighs. “Baby, it fucking kills me to see that fear in your eyes,” he whispers, drifting his hands up and down my legs, soothing me.

My lips tremble, my nerves getting the better of me. I look over and see that River has taken Annie inside the clubhouse.

My head falls forward resting on his shoulder. “I was scared because he found her, I would die if something happened to my baby,” I tell him my utmost fear.

His hand grips my outer thighs tighter, pulling me flush against his chest and then his arms wrap around me tightly.

I suck in a sharp breath, his warmth and the safety enveloping me. He is shaking while he is holding me. I can tell that he is pissed.

I am pissed but that fear at seeing him, it brought back so many old memories. I sit back and look at Knight, his eyes are hard, his jaw set. His hands drop from my back to under my back and one goes to my jaw, holding it tightly. “I will kill him.” His voice is deep, rough, and not wavering.

I know without a doubt, he will do as he says.

He leans forward and kisses the center of my forehead, my eyes drift closed, sinking into him.

“You make me feel safe,” I admit to him. I slide my hands under his shirt just slightly feeling the warm skin under his shirt and warming my cold fingers.

He smiles and rests his forehead against mine. “God, the things I would do to protect you and that little girl. It would

probably fucking terrify you.” My heart feels like it could pound out of my chest with him including Annie.

His tone is dark. I know what he is capable of; I know what I’m capable of to protect my daughter from those who would dare to harm her.

I smile. “Nothing about you could scare me, nothing.” I repeat nothing again, no one who has this fierce desire to protect me would scare me.

He puts his hands under my arms and lifts me out of his truck. “Let’s go find our girl.” He takes my hand and walks inside with us hand in hand.

The door is pushed opened and everyone inside goes to us then our hands that are intertwined.

Gage smirks and tucks River into his side while holding Annie like she is a small girl. Terror winks at me and I blush looking down at their feet.

A woman I haven’t met yet walks into the front with all of us, wearing a long-sleeved dress and her grey hair is in a bun on top of her head. “My name is Imogene and I’m the resident babysitter, and I watch kids too,” she jokes and all the guys chuckle at her practically calling them kids.

I giggle and Annie runs over. “This is Annie. If you want to watch her for a bit, I would really appreciate it.”

I know everyone here is wanting to know what happened. Reaper looks like he is barely holding himself together, the veins in his arms are huge and Andrey is hovering next to the door behind us.

The fear I had is melting away and what is left is pissed the fuck off.

How dare someone do this? What gives someone the right? I want to be happy and live my life.

“Do you have cookies?” Annie eyes the lady and she nods. “Then I will go with you,” Annie confirms and I laugh at her antics. She takes the lady’s hand and allows her to lead her to the kitchen.

The second she is out of my sight nerves hit me. “Do you think she’s okay?” I ask, fighting the urge to go after her.

Royal steps forward. “I trust Imogene with my life and with Penelope’s. She will be fine,” he tells me and I do feel a bit better about it.

I let out a deep breath. “Come on,” Gage tells everyone and we follow him into this huge room with a big table. Gage goes to the head of the table and River goes to a small desk to the side of the room behind Gage.

I’m not sure where to sit but Knight leads me to the seat directly beside him, on the right side of Gage.

All the guys in here are looking at me and then Gage, waiting for him to speak. Knight grips the side of my chair and he pulls me over until I’m directly beside him. His arm goes to the back of the chair, his palm resting just below my shoulder.

Why do I feel like he just claimed me in front of everyone?

Reaper, who doesn’t show any emotions, winks at me and has a little smile playing on his lips.

I smile shyly but look down. Terror is chuckling, and Andrey is just watching everything happening around us.

River lifts a remote and turns on a huge flat screen TV that is mounted on the wall across the room.

I hold my breath when I recognize the picture on the screen. River walks until she is standing behind me, presses play, and the scene unfolds for everyone.

You can see me stopping dead in my tracks, the horror on my face and then the truck stopping.

Knight reaches under the table and holds my hand. I sprint inside the school. You can hear him yelling and calling me names: a bitch, a slut, and a devil’s whore.

The camera changes to me running inside the school and then him running smack dab into the door, screaming and yelling at me, going freaking nuts.

“Holy fucking shit, he is insane,” River says and I nod in agreement. “I just don’t understand how he found me this quick.” That is what is confusing to me. “I don’t understand how he found me twice within a week.”

I lean forward on the table, putting my hands on my face frustrated. “It’s been a year, a whole year since I left the cult and now all of a sudden, he is back?”

Knight growls. “I am going to kill this fucker.” His voice is menacing.

I turn to look at him, not used to the tone in his voice, and his eyes are glued to the screen where it has stopped on his face.

My stomach twists and I fight the urge to throw up.

I remember the hope I had felt that maybe I could be happy, maybe that I could grow to love him and him me.

No, he is pure evil.

I have seen him do things to others that are unthinkable. He was cruel to me but he did even worse things to others, and did it in front of me to show that what would happen to me if I didn’t straighten up.

Nothing worked, I didn’t care.

I didn’t have my baby and that was all that mattered to me; I wished for death because honestly it was better than the latter.

“I think I need to move again,” I admit.

Knight growls and smacks his hand on the table. “No! Fucking no!” He shakes his head. “No.” He cups my face with his hand. “You will stay with me, no one will ever fucking touch you. I pray to God that he tries so I can put a bullet between his eyes.” He looks around the room like he is going to announce something. “She is fucking mine! Let’s fucking end this cult,” he says to everyone.

All the guys stomp their feet and smack their hands on the table. Gage nods his head. “Let’s fucking end this once and for all.”

River grins and cracks her fingers. “Let me get this shit started. “

I feel so much better and I know that Knight will protect me and keep Annie safe. I trust him, and I never thought that I would trust a man like this, but he has my full trust in him.

I never dreamt that I would find Knight.

I run my fingers up his inner forearm without thinking and run my finger along the vein that is slightly sticking out above the skin.

I want to go home and just forget that this happened. “I think I need to take Annie out of school for a while,” I state, unsure of what to do.

Gage thinks on it. “If you want, we can post prospects at every entrance of the school.”

I don’t want her life to be changed any more than it already has. She is just starting to settle in.

“I think it’s best to pretend nothing is happening, she doesn’t know what is happening and I don’t want her to know.”

They all nod. “That is the best,” Gage agrees with me.

River is typing away at the small desk in the corner. “I will find him,” she tells me and I know without a doubt she will do as she says.

I want this to end so I can live my life and not be afraid. I don’t want Annie to be touched by anything related to the cult life.

Everyone stands and files out of the room. Knight takes my hand and we go to find Annie.

She is sitting at a small kids table in the kitchen with a tall glass of milk and cookie crumbs all over her face. I burst out laughing seeing the chocolate smeared everywhere.

“I’m guessing the cookies were good?” I ask her and she nods her head. “The best,” she says between her chewing.

Knight chuckles. “How do you girls feel about some Mexican food for lunch?” I eye the clock and it’s only one a clock.

I feel like a shitty mother when I realize she skipped lunch. “Chicken, rice, and cheese please,” she says to Knight. I reach into my pocket to take out my card so he can pay for it.

He looks at me completely horrified. “What the fu...” he stops mid cuss word and looks at Annie who is in her own world, cuddling her teddy bear.

He hands me the app that is to the Mexican place. I pick out what I want to eat and put my card info in sneakily.

He takes the phone from me and I watch him erase all my card information. He eyes me and then goes on to pick out the food he wants.

I laugh and wet a paper towel so I can clean Annie’s face and hands. “Ready to go home?” I bend down and wipe the table down.

“You don’t have to do that.” Imogene walks back in the kitchen.

“I got it,” I tell her and finish cleaning off the table.

“Knight, can we go to the park?” Annie asks Knight.

I freeze thinking of her being exposed in a public place like that. “We actually have a huge playground behind the clubhouse we built last year.”

“Oh, can I see it?” she asks.

“Sure, it will take the food around thirty minutes before it’ll be ready.”

I follow him through the back door of the clubhouse and walk out to one of the biggest play areas I have ever seen. Her mouth opens in shock staring at the play area and she screams, running straight for the castle playhouse area.

Knight reaches out and takes my hand. The wind is blowing, leaves falling all around us, and I grin at the beauty of it all.

This may have been such a shitty morning, but this is what I will remember the most. The smile on her face when she sticks her head out of the small window, waving at us.

She waves for me to climb inside the castle with her, so I pull open the small little door and shut it. “Knight, be a monster,” she tells him and giggles shutting the little window.

I can see him walking around the small little building, knocking on certain parts of the house causing her to squeal.

Then the door is wrenched open and he yells. She screams and pushes herself out the other door, taking off running down to the other play area.

I follow behind her laughing because he is right on my heels chasing me. I laugh when I look back to see him within an arm’s distance of me.

“Help, Annie,” I call for her and her eyes widen when she sees I’m going to be caught.

“I will save you, Mommy!” she calls and runs back to me. She lifts her little arms and she runs smack into Knight, giggling. “I am the tickle monster!” She digs her little fingers into his sides.

He falls back dramatically like she tackled him; she doesn’t let up tickling him. “Oh, you want to play like this?”

He lifts her in the air, and she screams kicking her legs, then stands with her over his shoulder and runs with her. She lifts her arms out. “Help me!” she yells for me with the biggest smile on her face.

I laugh and follow them; I take her hands, pull her from him and we both take off running. “How about I find you and Knight?” she suggests.

Knight takes my hand and leads me to another little playhouse that is kind of hidden behind the playground.

He opens the door and we both slip inside; I’m practically sitting in his lap from how tight of a fit it is for us. We look out the window and see her looking around trying to find us.

I laugh and sit back so she doesn’t see us.

I turn to look at Knight and I see he is staring at me; my smile drops at the seriousness of his face.

He reaches his hand up, pushing a strand of my hair gently behind my ear. “Beautiful,” he says softly.

I smile and touch that little dimple in his chin. My eyes drift to his lips, they’re so thick and full.

He lets out a deep breath. “I’m going to kiss you.”

He doesn’t waste a second, kissing me, his hand holding the back of my neck pulling me tighter against him.

I gasp, feeling his lips on mine for the first time.

I scoot closer when he deepens the kiss. I’m tingling from my head to my toes. Everything around me melts away, it’s just me and him right now.

His fingers glide along my neck, burrowing into my hair. I shiver at the slight tug on my hair.

I have never felt so safe in my life than in this very moment, in his arms and completely at his mercy.

I can hear someone outside the tiny playhouse we are in. Knight pulls back and I smile. “This is my first true kiss,” I confess to him.

His lip drags along my bottom lip. Annie looks into the small window and somehow, she doesn’t see us. She takes off running and I laugh.

He turns his head, and I can tell he is angry at the information that I told him. I reach out and touch his face, bringing it back around so that he is looking at me. “Don’t be angry.”

He growls, his hands grip my hips, turning me even closer to him. “I can’t help but be angry at that fucker. Once he’s six feet under baby, I will feel better.”

I laugh at the ridiculousness of it all. “You’re crazy,” I joke.

He smiles sinisterly. “Darlin, I am fucking crazy and I can’t fucking wait to end him.”

I rest my forehead on his. “I think we need to help Annie find us,” I tell him and he laughs. “I think we do.”

He stands and helps me up. I push open the door and I see Annie standing with a Reaper.

“I can’t find them; can you help me?” she asks him and takes his hand like he isn’t terrifying.

We sneak to the side of the building and I peek around so I can watch them. He doesn’t answer her but lets her lead him wherever she wants him to go.

“Can you lift me up high to I can see better?” she requests and I look at Knight smiling and he’s smiling with me.

Reaper reaches down and lifts her, setting her on his shoulders, she is grinning ear to ear. “That’s Mr. Reaper.” She pats the top of his head and I cover my mouth trying not to laugh at his expression. He then smiles and the scars on either side of his mouth pull, making him less menacing.

Annie has the power to bring anyone out of their shell.

Reaper looks over and catches me standing there and I duck behind the building. I hear Annie giggling and I peek back over to see him running toward us. “We found you!” Annie screams.

We walk from behind the building and I laugh. “Aw man, you found us.”

She pats Reaper on the head. “I had to get the big boy here to help me.”

He sets her on the ground and my heart warms at his expression. I have a feeling that he has some awful demons, the pain that I see in his eyes is the pain I know too well.

Annie doesn’t let go of his hand. “Can you eat the food with us?” she asks him, tugging on his fingers.

“I did order extra,” Knight states.

Reaper looks down at her and then at us and nods. Speaking of food, a prospect is walking behind the clubhouse to us with a huge bag.

Knight walks over and takes it from him. “Go stand guard over there,” he tells him and he walks to the corner of the building to watch.

There is a picnic table over to the side of the building that we make our way over to and I help Knight gather all the food out of the bags.

I find the extra meal and set it in front of Reaper. He nods to me and Annie slides in next to him. “Mr. Reaper, can you open this?” She points to her plastic fork and spoon.

He opens it for her and hands it to her. “I think Reaper is trying to steal my girl,” Knight says in mock anger.

She giggles and covers her mouth as she peeks up at Reaper and Knight.

Knight reaches under the table, his hand on my knee. I can feel my face warm as I take a bite of my food trying to act cool when on the other hand, I am not cool.

The kiss is replaying over and over in my head and my heart feels like it’s going to explode.

I am very aware of how extremely attractive he is, and he apparently wants me but also, I want him.

Men have never has crossed my mind. I was so content in life with my daughter. To raise her and have her live a happy life, to break the cycle that my family had for many generations.

My sister Bell had been married for many years and the things she had went through... It was so bad, and I’d want to kill him all over again for the way he treated her if he wasn’t already dead.

Annie yawns, rubbing her eyes. “Can we go home?” she asks me, taking a bite of her salsa and chips.

“Sure, sweet girl.”

I am glad she didn’t ask why I took her out of school today. There was no way I could leave her there after what happened and honestly, I’m terrified for her to go back there.

But uprooting her life again, that's not the answer. I don't want this to faze her nor touch her. I gather our trash and place everything in the bag to throw away.

Annie moves to stand next to me and I run my hand down the back of her head, pulling her into my side and giving her a small hug.

"Mommy," she says and I bend down closer to her so I can hear what she says better. "Yeah?"

"Can I go and stay all night with Bell and Maverick this weekend after the pumpkin patch?" she asks me.

"Sure." I kiss her forehead and Knight lifts her in the air, throwing her and catching her. I jump trying to reach up to catch her and she screams with laughter.

She wraps her arms around him and hugs him tightly, his eyes are closed, hugging her back.

It seems that someone is taken with my daughter, and she with him. With his free hand, he takes mine and pulls me into his side.

Reaper waves at us and goes back inside the clubhouse.

We walk around the clubhouse and into Knight's truck. My phone chimes from inside the truck. I pick it up and jolt at the shock at the amount of text messages from an unknown number.

I twist around in my seat to make sure that Annie can't see and with shaking hands, I open the text.

You may have gotten away today bitch but this shit isn't over. You are my wife and you will be coming home.

Or else.

The other text messages are along the same lines, threatening me and Annie. I can feel Knight staring at me, so I reach over and hand him my phone.

How did he even get my number? I don't understand. I don't understand any of it. It's been a year, why the sudden aggressive activity?

Another text pops up on my phone. I lean over and I try to control myself, not wanting Annie to see. *“Just give me Annie before you ruin her.”*

I look out of the window, my teeth gritted. I reach over and take my phone out of his hand, pop off the back, taking out the battery, fighting the urge to not break it into a million pieces.

River pulls up next to us and we both get out of the truck, shutting the door so Annie doesn't hear.

River looks at us. “I don't like that look on your face.”

I hand her my phone and the battery. “Somehow, he got my number and has been texting me the last hour. He's making threats.”

Knight turns his head away from me, like he doesn't want me to see how angry he is, but if he is a quarter as mad as me then he is furious.

He doesn't deserve to even mention her name. Messing with me is one thing but my daughter is a whole different playing field.

Gage growls, “I hate that fucker.”

“Oh, me fucking too,” Knight tells Gage and they share a look with each other.

I rub my face, exhausted.

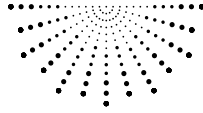
River wraps her arms around me tightly. “I will find out how he knew where to find you and how he got your number.” I nod, acknowledging her.

“I'm terrified of something happening and it affecting Annie.” That is my worst fear.

I'm taken from River's arms and into Knight's. “Darlin, nothing and no-one is going to touch you and Annie. I fucking promise, I mean it,” he promises me, his voice dark and angry from everything that has been happening.

“I will keep you updated.” River smirks at me and then pulls Gage inside the clubhouse with her.

DANIELLA



LATER THAT NIGHT

I shut Annie's door, thankful she's asleep because I need some me time. I change into a pair of boxers and a sleep shirt.

Knight got called into an emergency at the hospital. I climb into bed and bring the blanket up to my shoulder, turning on the TV.

I'm sad, so sad that this is happening.

I know that I'm safe and I have a better chance than ninety nine percent of the women that has escaped that life.

It's been a long day, the way everything happened this morning at the school, the gun and the evil on his face made it real.

Hearing that he was looking for me was one thing, but actually being face to face with him is totally different.

I turn on my back and look at the ceiling. River is going to tell Bell what is going on and why I don't have my phone until I get a new one.

I look at the clock on the nightstand and see it's ten a clock. Annie got a burst of energy earlier and wanted to talk about anything and everything.

I smile thinking of her beautiful face when she mentioned the pumpkin patch this weekend, I love how happy and carefree she is.

My life would have been so different if that was my life, if I was actually a kid. When I was her age, my lessons had

started in how to be the perfect wife.

They literally pounded it into us from the second we were old enough to comprehend.

Before I left the cult, the ability to marry was moved from fourteen to when the girls had their first cycles, they were considered women at that point.

I cover my face terrified at the idea of us being in that life. It's been a year since I left and the adjustments I had to make were a lot.

Sometimes when I wake up for a single second, I forget and think that I am back there, back in the cabin or back in the home that I had, if you could call it that.

The sound of footsteps coming from the hallway has me sitting up and before I can panic, Knight stands in front of my bedroom door with a bag and one of my spare keys that I had on the bar.

“Knight,” I breathe, relaxing and then the nerves hit me because we are all alone.

He walks over to me and cups my jaw. “I couldn't stay away.” I put my hand on his forearm. “I don't want you to,” I tell him honestly.

He smiles. “I just want to fucking hold you, I need to make sure you both are safe,” he admits to me.

I lean forward and lay my head on his chest needing him to hold me right now. Honestly, the last thing I wanted was to be alone.

I sigh and scoot over in my bed and make room for him. “I was hoping you would come.”

His face softens and he drops his bag on the floor. He is already in his sweatpants and a white t-shirt. “Nothing would have stopped me from coming to be with you.” His gaze drifts from under my jaw, to the center of my throat, gripping just enough to get my attention. “Nothing,” he repeats.

“Good,” I say breathlessly.

He is breathing hard, while staring down at me. I want him to kiss me, I just want me and him right now.

I scoot up closer to him, my hands twisting in the front of his shirt. I fight the urge to not tell him that I want those lips on me, for him to be closer to me.

His fingers smooth my hair out of my face, tucking it behind my ear. “You are so beautiful, like a fucking angel.”

I smile at his compliment. “Want to sleep with me here tonight and we can watch a movie?” I gather the courage to ask him, not wanting him to go to the guest room.

That would be torture.

He throws back the blanket dramatically and I laugh, scooting across the bed to the middle.

He reaches over and turns the light off on the nightstand.

I am leaning on my elbows, my nerves starting to peak. The braveness melting from me now that he is directly beside me.

This is so intimate, and I’m scared, but excited too.

He looks over at me and I turn my head to the TV. My heart feels like it’s seconds away from exploding.

I don’t know where to put my hands. Should I lay down? What do I do?

I can feel him still staring at me and then he chuckles. I glance over at him and he’s shaking his head, smiling at me.

“What?” I ask.

“I just feel fucking lucky that I am here with you right now,” he states, his hand gently touching my cheek.

I smile, loving the way he touches me. I can feel the power in his hands and his body.

I know he can be dangerous; I know the things he is capable of. And the things he told me he’s planning on doing to my ex-husband, it should terrify me. But the only thing I feel is safe.

Just the way he watches me, I know that is he ready at any moment to protect me and Annie.

My brain is trying to wrap around the fact that this is happening. How my life has flipped on its head in just a single moment.

“You’re so good to me.” I close my eyes and scoot closer, settling my face on the center of his chest.

All the air leaves my body at the feel of him holding me. It’s like I’m wrapped in a warm bath after being frozen all this time.

“God, I could lay here forever,” I whisper under my breath.

He growls and suddenly I am flipped on my back with him above me, my legs trapped in between us. I shift so that he is between my legs without thinking.

My eyes widen when I feel his hardness pressed against me.

His nose flares at the contact, his large arms and hands are planted into the bed on either side of my face.

I gasp when he shifts just a tiny bit and the pleasure I get from the small movement is shocking.

Sex is something that I have never been interested in. In the past, it was awful for me and painful.

But right now, I have the urge and the want for him unlike anything I have felt before.

I open my legs wider, my right leg settling over the back of his thigh, drawing him closer.

His hand shoots down and grips my thigh stopping me from drawing closer. “Darlin, this is dangerous fucking territory,” he growls.

I smile at the growl because I can feel him growing harder. “Maybe I want to be in this territory,” I whisper, my heart beating so hard I’m sure that he can feel it.

His eyes widen and I know he didn't expect me to say that. He leans forward and rests his forehead against mine. "I want you so fucking bad baby, but I didn't plan on this happening when I came here tonight."

I rest my hands on his cheeks, my eyes staring right into his and his into my soul. "I know, Knight." I shift my hands, my thumbs stroking his cheekbones. "Knight, me wanting you is something I have never experienced before."

I decide to be honest, the fear of him not wanting me anymore is real, but I need to tell him.

"I never have wanted to be with anyone, I never had the choice to choose or had the want," I tell him in a way letting him know that I was forced against my will.

I never wanted it but right now I want him.

He closes his eyes as my words hit him, I close mine afraid of the rejection. My hands start to shake waiting for him to say anything, to do something.

"That fucking kills me, baby. It fucking kills me that someone hasn't made love to you the way you deserve, taken care of you. The way I am going to kill that fucker?" He trails off growling the last part, leaving his words hanging on what he is going to do to him.

My eyes open and I stare into his. "It doesn't matter now, Knight. That part of my life is over."

He nods. "Damn right it fucking is." He kisses my forehead, pulling me into him, hugging me to him.

My arms circle him tightly, holding on like he is my only lifeline. "I was scared to tell you, that you wouldn't want someone that's been through what I've been through."

He sits back suddenly, his face showing shock at my words. "Darlin, the second I saw you get out of your car, I knew you were mine. "

His hands wrap around the front of my neck, pulling me slightly toward him, getting my full attention. "You are

fucking mine.” He growls the word mine, putting emphasis on the word.

I bite my lip trying to stop the smile. “I like that, a lot,” I admit to him, I love the idea of being his.

“Yours.” I put my hand on his wrist, holding tightly.

It’s like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Being abused, you have this fear in the back of your mind that something like this would affect the way someone feels about you.

“Fucking mine.” His voice is dark, deep and I can feel it all the way to my toes, the claiming of me being his.

God, it’s everything.

I sigh, the words coating every part of me. Every worry and doubt it gone. Living with the MC the last year, I know what the meaning of being claimed means.

It’s the real deal.

“I’m going to kiss you now,” he tells me.

I nod, his hand moving from my neck, burying into my hair and pulling my face to his, his lips covering mine.

A small gasp leaves my mouth at the feel of him, I’m aching for him. I want him to touch all of me.

I just want him.

His hand tightens in my hair, drawing me closer as he gently presses me back into my bed, kissing me deeper.

I sigh, my hands snaking their way into the back of his shirt, needing to touch him. His back flexes at my touch.

His lips leave mine, his eyes looking into mine again. I can see the need he has for me.

“ARE YOU SURE?” he asks me again.

I nod without hesitation. I’m not scared. The need for him is overpowering. He smiles and sits up, gripping the bottom of

his shirt, pulling it over his head.

My eyes go to the muscles on his chest, a small smattering of hair on the center of his chest.

I can't resist reaching out and touching him. My fingers slowly drift along and his stomach flexes when I run my finger along his abs.

I bite my lip because I can't believe this is happening right now.

His hands reach out, tugging on the ends of my shirt and I lift my arms so he can pull it over my head.

He curses, his hands fisting the blanket on either side of me. I'm not wearing a bra so when he took my shirt off it left me exposed to him, except my underwear.

His eyes look at me and I swear I can feel the heat from every little glance. "God, I am a lucky fucking bastard," he growls.

He grips my sides and lifts me further up the bed. He looks at me one last time before he grips either side of my panties and tears them from my body.

I squeal slightly in shock that he did that. I laugh, but on the inside I feel like I could pass out at any second.

He bites his bottom lip, his eyes taking in every inch of me. His lethal stare starts to make me feel self-conscious.

I start to cover myself, but his hands snap out and catch them before I can even touch myself.

"Darlin, don't do that. You're beautiful," he tells me, his voice soft. His hand slides down my side to the outside of my thigh.

Goosebumps break out across my skin. "Knight," I whisper, resting my hands on his stomach.

He feels so far away.

He slams his mouth back on mine, he changes to a gentle and toe-curling kiss and I can feel it in every part of me.

My breathing is hard and I'm shaking all over in anticipation of what's to come.

I want this so bad, but I have flashes in the back of my mind that will it hurt like I remembered? The pain was so intense at times that I felt like I was going to die.

I know that's unrealistic because I know with my whole heart that he wouldn't hurt me, but maybe there is something wrong with me?

What if he looks at me and decides that I'm not what he thought I was?

His hand cups the side of my face, turning me to look at him. I didn't even know that I spaced off, looking to the side of the wall.

"What's on your mind, sweet girl?" he inquires sweetly.

I open my mouth and then I close it, unsure of what to say to him. "Nothing, I'm just nervous," I admit honestly because it is true.

He sits up, pulling me onto his lap. "You know that I would be fine if we never had sex right? I would be fine lying my ass right next to you and just sleeping."

Some of the fear melts away with his words as I'm feeling very vulnerable right now. I kiss him, wanting to put what I am feeling into him.

The fear is real but my want for him is so much more. I want to be connected to him on this level.

"I want you, Knight. I want to be with you. I want you to show me how it's supposed to be, from someone who cares about me. Make me yours." The words pour out of me.

He sighs. "I would rather fucking die than hurt you in any single way, baby."

Tears fill my eyes at his words, words that I didn't know that I needed. They're like a balm to my soul.

I push my hair over my shoulder, the strands tickling the center of my back. "Just love me," I say breathlessly.

He presses his forehead against mine. “Darlin, you fucking undo me.” He sighs deeply.

He kisses me hard, cupping the back of my neck, pulling me tight against him. I run my hands down his stomach, loving the tightness of his stomach, the power beneath my hands, the strength.

God, he is so attractive.

His lips drift from my lips and he tugs on the ends of my hair so my head is tilted to the side. His lips suck, kissing along my neck.

I clutch his sides because I am shivering and have goosebumps all over. I know I am soaking his lap from the small bit of touching that he is doing right now.

He settles me back onto the bed with him still between my legs.

One hand is holding mine, our fingers intertwined and the other is cupping my thigh, lifting my leg higher.

His eyes stare into mine, his fingers rubbing gently, drifting along closer and closer to the part that I am dying for him to touch.

He kisses his way down the center of my chest, his hands right at the edge of where I need him.

I open my legs wider trying to get him to move closer.

He chuckles, his head right above my nipple. I look down just as his mouth closes around the nipple, pulling deep into his mouth.

I gasp at the feeling.

“Oh, God,” I moan.

He moves to the other side, doing the same thing and driving me insane. He lifts his head to look at me, his hand lifting from my inner thigh.

He watches my every expression as his thumb glides along my lips. I know I’m soaking his hand.

I bite my lip, opening my legs wider, giving the go ahead to do what I am aching for.

His thumb slides in between, pressing his thumb into my clit. I press my face into his chest at the sudden pleasure. He kisses the side of my neck, lazily. His thumb moves in small, tiny little circles.

He presses his knuckle against my opening, while moving his thumb at the same time.

My legs are shaking already and it won't take much for me to fall over the edge. I was already soaking wet for him before he even touched me.

He removes his thumb and my eyes flash open at him taking it away but I moan deeply when he sinks a finger into me and then another.

He lazily and slowly glides his finger in and out of me, driving me insane.

"Oh, God." I moan when he rubs my clit and strokes his fingers inside of me at the same time.

My legs are shaking, my body chasing the orgasm that it's craving. "God, you're so fucking tight around my fingers."

I bite his shoulder, trying not to be loud. "I'm so close."

He moves his fingers faster. "I can feel how close you are."

He removes his hands suddenly and I gasp, sitting up because I was about to come. He removes the rest of his clothing and stares down at me.

He grips my feet and pulls me to the edge of the bed and gets onto his knees on the floor. "What are you doing?" I ask him. I feel hot all over.

He throws my legs over his shoulders, placing his face right above my pussy. He licks his lips before running his tongue along my lips and spreading me open so he can suck my clit into his mouth.

My toes curl and I come instantly. I bite my hand and my eyes roll back into my head at the insane pleasure.

He doesn't stop, his fingers are deep inside me once again as his tongue tortures my clit.

I grip the bedding, trying to wrap my head around the amount of pleasure he is giving me right now.

“Oh, God! Knight!”

One second, I'm dying to push him away because it's too much and the next second I'm trying to pull him closer.

One second, I'm chasing the high and the next second I'm falling again. My whole body is shaking.

I sit forward and kiss him hard. I can taste myself on his lips and it just turns me on even more.

I reach my hand forward and cup him through his boxers. I tug on the edge of his boxers, wanting to drag them down his legs.

He stands up and I help him pull them down. I suck in a sharp breath at the sight of him, my mouth watering at how big he is.

I run my finger along the tip, loving the way he jumps at the sudden contact. “Make love to me,” I whisper emotionally.

I scoot up the bed and he follows me, crawling his way to me and my head rests on the pillow.

I fight the urge to not turn on my stomach and get into the submissive pose that I was taught in the cult.

But I want him to love me, I want to feel that with him. He grips my thigh, lifting it so that it's resting against his hip.

I sigh feeling him pressed against me, rubbing his dick along my clit. I'm so sensitive, I jolt at the sudden, intense pleasure.

I grip his back and he presses against my opening. I relax as he gathers my hands and intertwines our fingers together lifting them on either side of my face. “Ready?” he asks, his voice softer than I have heard from him before.

I nod. “Ready.”

I lift my hips and his tip slips right inside. He grips my hands tight and he slowly eases himself in. He does little pushes and pulls each time until he's fully seated inside me.

His eyes never leave mine the whole time to make sure that I'm okay. I have never felt safer and more cared for in my life.

It's a tight fit, almost painful, but the feeling of being filled by him is so intoxicating and I'm already addicted. "God, I'm so full," I moan.

I throw my head back and he kisses my exposed throat. "I could live inside of you," he whispers in my ear. I moan and lift my hips and somehow, he moves a little deeper inside of me.

I lean forward and kiss him deeply, my heart in my throat. He is letting me adjust to his size.

My hands sink into his hair, drawing him closer to me, needing his lips on me. He moves gently and I gasp at the feeling.

I never expected it to be like this. His lips kiss the gasp away from me and his hands grip my thigh, lifting it higher as he increases his tempo. The fire between my legs is growing with every little stroke.

His eyes connect with mine. I smile at him, he smiles back and he cups my face gently, tenderly. I think I'm falling for him; I can feel it right in my soul.

"God, I never dreamed I would find you, but here you are." He shakes his head and rests his forehead against mine.

Words aren't needed after this, we are eye to eye never leaving each other as he brings us closer and closer to the edge.

The feeling of him moving inside of me, the weight of his body on top of mine, is everything. I clench around him, biting my lip trying not to be loud.

I feel like I'm on fire, every part of me is on the edge, my toes are curled. "I can feel how close you are," he moans in

my ear. “The feeling of you around me...” He trails off, growling.

He puts his hand on the headboard and moves faster, harder. I hold my breath, my eyes rolling back.

I grip his arms hard, my nails digging into his biceps. I grip the pillow next to me, trying to muffle the sounds that are escaping me, but with very little success.

He covers my mouth, smirks at me and then with his free hand, he reaches between us both.

His thumb rolls my clit, that’s all it takes.

He kisses me hard, silencing the sounds. I’m shaking, my whole body is jelly. He chuckles against my lips and slips out of me, my eyes widening looking down at him.

He turns me around until I’m face down on the pillow, his large hands grip my hips, lifting me until I am hip to hip with him.

He slips back inside me and I start to sit up, coming again from the new angle. I peek back at him and clench around him seeing him with his head thrown back in pleasure.

I arch my back, pushing myself harder against him. “God,” I moan, gripping the pillow beneath my hand.

“Better hold the fuck on, I want you to feel me. I don’t want you to forget feeling me between your legs.”

I grip the headboard, throw my hair back so it’s fanning over my back, and I look back at him, watching him move slowly, his dick slipping in and out of me.

He winks right before he slams into me, hard.

I gasp, tightening my hands and that’s all it takes for him to hammer into me like this is his last moment on earth.

“Oh, God.” I moan at every slap of his skin against mine, his dick hitting my cervix with every pound.

My body isn’t mine right now, it’s at the mercy of Knight.

He runs his hand down my back until he fists my hair. My head snaps back and he slams his mouth onto mine pounding into me so hard, everything around me turns black.

The pleasure is too much for me to handle. I grit my teeth and all I can do is hold on.

He pinches my clit and my whole body jolts before my legs give out and I come again, hard.

My whole body stiffens and he comes, groaning. His front falls to my back as he comes with me.

I let out a deep breath and stuff the pillow under my neck. "I think you killed me," I joke but am I joking?

He laughs and gently slides out of me.

It gets quiet and I look over at him. "Did I hurt you?" he asks me, rubbing my back.

"You did not hurt me, that was amazing, Knight. I didn't know it could be like that," I admit honestly, what I just felt was unreal.

And I'm addicted.

I turn around and scoot closer to him, wanting to touch him. "You would never hurt me, Knight." I cup his face, loving the way he feels beneath my hand, just any part of him, I love touching him.

He closes his eyes. I pull him over and he rests his head on my chest. I bury my hands into his hair, rubbing his scalp.

"Darlin, you have me fucked," he whispers against my chest.

"Same," I joke.

He sits up and looks at me. "I am, baby. I am yours too," he admits to me.

My eyes water at the sweetness of him. "Knight," I breathe.

I kiss him deeply. "Let's go shower," he tells me and lifts me out of bed, carrying me. I wrap my legs around his waist.

He reaches in the shower, turning the water on. I wrap my arms around his neck, tucking my face in the crook of his neck. “The way you make me feel so safe, I never had that before you.” I kiss his cheek.

He sits me down onto the corner of the counter. “I would die a million fucking deaths before I let someone harm you, baby.” His voice is rough and I can feel the anger.

My eyes burn as I try not to cry again. I rest my head on his chin. “I swear sometimes I feel like I’m dreaming,” I tell him, my hands running along his back.

He tilts my head back. “Darlin,” he growls and kisses me. I pull him closer to me, opening my legs.

Then it hits me like a ton of bricks; I feel like I am going to faint. I push him away from me, my eyes wide. “What is it?” he asks me.

“We didn’t use protection.” I can feel the cum running down my leg from where he came inside of me.

“I know.” He picks me up slipping into the shower with me and sets me on the floor. He turns the spray so it’s on both of us.

“Knight, did you not understand me?” I tell him again.

He laughs. “I did.” He tilts my head back, so the water is running down the back of my hair and my back.

He smooths it over my shoulder, smoothing out a tangle. I grip his arms and kind of shake him like hello, are you okay?

He chuckles. “Darlin, I know we didn’t, and I know you’re not on birth control because I checked to see if I’d find any.”

My mouth opens in shock. “Are you trying to get me pregnant?” I step back from him so I can see him fully, the warm water smoothing over my muscles.

His eyes are bright with happiness. “Darlin, of course that is the plan.”

I swear I could fall to the ground at what he is throwing out. “What are you saying?” My voice is barely above a

whisper, my heart feels like it could stop.

He backs me up until my back is pressed against the wall, his arms on either side of my face, caging me in.

“When I said you were mine, I meant it. That means I want my ring on your finger, my patch on your back, and a baby in your stomach.” He lays it all out and it’s completely insane.

But why do I like it?

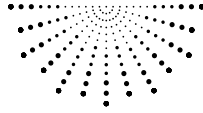
“You’re insane,” I voice. My first thought is should this bother me considering my past. With the way he is looking at me like I am hanging the moon, I can’t bring myself to care.

He smirks. “Yeah I am.” He kisses my cheek, smoothing my hair out of my face when a wet strand drifts across my face.

“But you like it.” He grips my hips, slamming me into him. His hand moves to my throat and pulls me to him, kissing me deeply, thoroughly and all fight I had about that is gone out of the window.

Well, okay then.

KNIGHT



THE NEXT MORNING

The second my eyes open, they go to Daniella's beautiful face, sleeping peacefully. My mind wanders to what happened last night and how our relationship took a big fucking leap.

I knew she was mine, but last night was the nail in the fucking coffin. The way she looked under me, the feeling of her coming around me, I won't ever forget that.

She is mine and I plan to make her mine in every single fucking way. The urge to protect her and to rip every fucker apart for even looking in her direction is strong.

I will end those that have harmed her, that is without a fucking doubt. I run the back of my finger along her cheekbone and she shifts in her sleep at my touch.

I laugh under my breath at the shock on her face when she found out I had planned to get her pregnant as soon as possible.

I look down to her stomach and rub her empty belly. I can't wait to see her pregnant with my baby but most of all, Annie would be the best big sister.

I turn on my back, fighting the urge to pull her on top of me and bury myself to the hilt inside her.

But I know she is going to be feeling what we did yesterday.

I can hear small footsteps outside of the bedroom and I know it's Annie. I smile and look over, waiting for her to walk

in.

The door barely creeps open and I see her little face turning around the corner. I smile at her trying to be quiet.

Her eyes widen in shock at me in bed with her mother. I lift my hand and wave her in.

She runs in quietly, takes my hand and I help her onto the bed. She crawls in between us, snuggling under the covers.

“Are you my mom’s boyfriend?” Annie asks me, eyeing me.

I smile. “Yeah baby, I’m dating your mom.” My stomach is filled with knots at the idea of her not liking the idea.

Before I can fucking panic she smiles at me, her eyes light. “I’m glad,” she says and moves so that she is snuggling into my chest.

I pull the blanket up over her and pull her closer to me. “Sweetheart, I’m glad you’re in my life too. You’re my girl.” I hug her a little tighter. I want her to know yes, I am with her mom but I am here for her too.

“Promise?” she asks with her wide beautiful eyes.

“I promise with my whole heart,” I tell her.

She giggles and I see her mom stirring and her beautiful eyes open. “Darlin, when did you get here?” I guess I wore her out.

Annie leaves me and turns to her mom, hugging her. “Good morning, Mommy.”

Daniella closes her eyes and smiles. “Penelope is going back to school today and Royal wanted to know if she can ride with us. She has been asking,” I tell her.

Annie practically jumps out of the bed in excitement. “Oh please! Can we get McDonald’s too?”

I have come to realize that this little girl is obsessed with McDonald’s and she can eat it every meal.

I look at her mom to make sure it's okay before I give her a nod.

She screams and runs out of the room dramatically; my guess is to hurry and get ready for school.

Daniella is watching me with a beautiful, happy look on her face. "You know we never really talked about last night and the no protection thing," she points out.

I grin, my chest warming at the fucking thought of her carrying my baby. So, I simply say, "I know."

Her mouth opens in shock. She is pretending to be upset about it but I can see the glimmer in her eyes that lets me know she is just as fucked as I am. "Darlin, you know you want to be carrying my baby, give Annie a sibling."

Her mouth opens wider in shock and she glares at me. God, she is so fucking sweet.

I smile and kiss that pout away. Happiness hits me at random times and it takes me a minute to adjust to that shit because I have never felt anything even close to resembling to what I feel when I'm around her.

She sighs and gives in to the kiss, kissing me back. I smile against her lips, my heart fucking warm. "I'm so fucking happy," I growl, admitting it to her.

Her eyes open and I can see them filling with tears at my words which is a shot to my fucking soul because any number of tears good or bad is fucking awful.

She breathes deep and I shift her until she is sitting in my lap. She relaxes into me as I hold her tight.

I pray for the fucker that ever tries to hurt her.

I kiss her temple and then her cheek. "I'm happy too, Knight," she says, and I close my eyes.

Daniella

THE SECOND I see the school when we pull up, the nerves hit me hard. I search the parking lot just waiting for the moment for him to show his face.

Then I start to recognize people in the parking lot: Gage, Terror, Andrey, and Reaper. Reaper is standing at the entrance of the school, watching us pull in. Royal is behind us on his bike.

I try not to cry because they are doing this to make sure Annie can get into school safely.

I reach over and touch Knight's hand, overwhelmed. "Knight." I nod my head in the direction of the guys.

He looks way too good in his cut right now, his hair is gelled slightly to the side and the side of his hair is cut shorter, and there is scruff on his face since he didn't shave this morning.

Lord save me.

He follows my gaze and smiles. "When I say you were mine baby, that meant everyone in the club is going to protect you and Annie with their life."

Knight pulls to a stop and from the window, I see Royal is walking to the side of the truck, opening the back door to help the girls out.

Knight pulls me out his side and we walk hand in hand around the front of the truck, his body tense and he is looking around us. I know he is looking for Arthur.

A shiver runs down my spine at the possibility of Annie even catching a glimpse of him.

Annie runs to Knight. He picks her up and pulls her to the front of his body like he is trying to protect her, and Royal does the same thing.

Knight pulls me into him with his free arm and we walk inside of the school. Annie's teacher is standing outside the classroom, she smiles at another little girl walking into the classroom and then turns to look at us. "Hi," I tell her and her smile drops giving me a disgusted look before she smiles at

me again. She bends down to the girls. “Good morning, did you have a good morning?” They nod and run inside of the room.

We don’t enter inside the classroom. I wave to Annie and she waves back before going to play with Penny.

I wonder if the teacher is upset with what happened yesterday.

“Thanks so much for taking such great care of Annie, she loves school,” I tell her.

She smiles at me, but it doesn’t reach her eyes. “Thank you so much, I love those girls.”

I smile and I look to my girl one more time before we walk out of school. She opens one of the books inside of the classroom with Penny.

Reaper walks with us to the truck waiting for us to leave before he does himself. Prospects move to the front of the school to stand guard.

I feel better knowing that there is extra security for her.

But the teacher acting funny is bothering me. I know it’s my fault that Arthur came to school but I don’t want her to take it out on Annie. She is so innocent in all of this.

I stare at the school, fighting the urge to run back in and take her away from here.

Knight puts his hand on my thigh. “What’s the matter?” he asks me when he pulls out of the parking spot and onto the main highway.

“The teacher was weird today; I wonder if she was upset over what happened yesterday?” I comment, gnawing on my bottom lip.

I don’t care if someone is upset with me over something like that, but I am protective over my daughter. I won’t have her made to feel uncomfortable.

He pulls over into a diner because we skipped breakfast with the girls so we could get food after. “What are you

saying?”

I rub my eyes. “I could tell something was off with her today, I have bad vibes. She gave me a look like she was disgusted by me. I don’t care if she has issues with me, but I don’t want her to treat Annie differently.”

Knight growls, pulling me into his lap. “Darlin, that shit pisses me off. It’s not your fault that he came to the fucking school, none of it is. You didn’t choose that life. Do not ever feel guilty for the shit that’s not your fault.”

I breathe deep. “I know, but it would piss me off if she treated Annie differently. I would not be a nice person,” I confess.

He chuckles. “Darlin, seeing the momma bear in you come out is the hottest thing I have ever fucking seen.”

I relax and laugh with him. “I’m not someone who is a fighter or loves the drama, but all bets are off when it comes to her.”

“God, you’re fucking hot,” he groans and kisses me hard.

I kiss him back with just as much passion, loving the way he is touching me so freely. A car honks around us, causing me to jump and he laughs while fixing my shirt that he was snaking his hand under. “Let’s go get you fed.”

We are seated quickly and I say, “I kind of want to go eat lunch with Annie at school.” I know it would make me feel better.

“Yeah, we can bring her and Penny some lunch,” he agrees. I have made it my mission in life for her life to be one hundred percent different than mine. I want her to be a kid, to be happy and have every advantage in life.

When I was her age, I was in training to be a future housewife. I was done with school because I learned how to read, and that’s all the women were allowed to learn.

Because we were taught that our place was to raise kids and take care of the home, that was it.

It's so depressing to even think that some people are still in that life; some girls are being forced into marriage and suffering.

I wish I could take them all away from there.

KNIGHT PULLS UP in front of the mall, takes my hand, and we walk hand-in-hand.

I can see women looking at him as he passes and I don't blame them, he is gorgeous. But he's here with me. I lift my head a little higher smiling back at him kind of gloating.

"Darlin, can I get Annie a trampoline? I heard her mention she loves them," Knight states and points to a toy store.

My heart is exploding that he heard her and listened to her. "Knight, how did we get so lucky?" I whisper, wrapping my arms around his front, hugging him slightly.

He kisses the top of my head, before tilting my head back with a touch of his finger under my chin. "I am the lucky one."

He smiles and kisses me before we walk into the store and grab a buggy. I have a feeling that Annie is about to get spoiled.

An hour later with a buggy full of a ton of toys and a trampoline to be delivered, I was correct.

"I know she had to leave a lot of her stuff at your old home," he tells me and I start to protest when he slides in his card without a second thought.

He has me a mess. I press my face into his back, hugging him and I breathe deep, his scent is intoxicating.

He leaves the items for a prospect to pick up later and pulls me into Victoria's Secret. I try not to laugh knowing exactly why we are here.

I see a few guys sitting outside of the store on this little couch, I'm assuming waiting for their women.

“Knight, why ever are we here?” I joke and he smirks.

“I have a dream of seeing you in something like this.” He points to a red lingerie set.

I laugh. “Want me to try it on right now to see if it fits?”

His mouth opens. “Fuck yeah I do.”

He literally picks up one of everything and pulls me into a dressing room, leaning against the door.

“Fuck,” he groans when I start to peel off my clothes oh so slowly, watching his expression.

The second I’m completely naked, he takes a step toward me like he is going to touch me but stops himself at the last second.

I slip on a green bra that is completely see-through with a matching see-through thong.

“Turn.” He wiggles his finger.

I slowly turn around, making sure that he can see every part of me.

Before I can turn back around, his hands are on my hips. I peek around and his eyes are dark with need.

“You have to be quiet,” he growls to me. He presses his hand against my mouth, sets me down in the chair, pulling my ass to the edge of the seat.

He kisses me and I suck in a sharp breath the second he pulls his lips from mine, dragging them all the way down my body, stopping right above my panties.

He smirks, tightening his hand on my mouth as he grips the panties and rips them off me.

I gasp in his hand in shock at his strength. “God, I could feast on you forever,” he whispers to me before ducking his head, licking me deeply, sucking my clit deep into his mouth.

My eyes roll back in my head, my legs shaking instantly. My right leg falls to the floor. “Don’t move.” He lifts his head and I tuck my hands under my ass, so I don’t move.

His eyes darken at my movement. “Good girl,” he whispers huskily.

I bite my lip in anticipation, but insecurity starts to bother me the longer he stares at me. My stretchmarks are on full display from where I had Annie and gained weight.

He drags his nose along the sides of my thighs, breathing deep. I clench, waiting in anticipation.

He licks his lips and I lean my head back the second his mouth touches me and I let out a small gasp.

I’m on fire, shaking all the way down to my toes at the feeling of him pleasuring me.

No matter how good his tongue feels on me, nothing compares to the way that he feels filling me to the brim.

“Fuck me,” I moan the second his fingers fill me, making me want him even more.

He stands up and I’m bent over the chair, my ass in the air.

“Beg me,” he demands, gripping the bottom of my hair, getting my full attention.

I wiggle my ass rubbing his dick through his pants. He growls and pulls himself away from me.

I should be afraid of him, the way he is overpowering me, but it has me drenched. “Please,” I say, breathlessly.

I can hear someone walking into the dressing room going into a stall close to us. I suck my lips together realizing that we can easily get caught.

I hear him unbuckle his pants and I grip the back of the chair holding on tight. I feel him rubbing against my clit before slamming into me. “It’s not going to be gentle,” he grunts in my ear.

I nod and lay my head down on the back of the chair as he slams home. My back arches. “Oh, God,” I say out loud without thinking.

His hand comes around and slams onto my mouth gently. “Quiet, I’d hate to kill a fucker for listening to you come

around my dick. It's for my ears only." He kisses my cheek gently, so different than the way his dick is slamming inside of me.

I lay my head back down, pressing my hand against my arm covering my mouth. His thumb moves around and touches my clit, pinching it.

I jump almost pulling him out of me. He pulls me back onto him feeling me come apart on his dick, his hands so tight on my hips, I'm sure they'll cause bruises.

I tighten on him and he falls apart. I try to sit up without falling out of the chair. My body is not currently my own.

He sighs and slips out of me. I breathe deep and turn around in the seat. He chuckles seeing me so frazzled. He finds my torn underwear, that is not yet paid for, and cleans me up. He tears the tag off and stuffs the underwear in his pocket. "Can't forget to pay for these."

I laugh and he helps me put on my clothes since my legs aren't working just yet. He fixes my hair, kissing my forehead. "You're so fucking beautiful."

He walks to the door and opens it. "We'll take all of this." He picks it up, stuffing it under his arm. I giggle and notice the weird looks people give us as we pass.

At the checkout, Knight hands her the tag from my torn underwear that is in his pocket. She gives him a weird look. "Where are the panties?"

He smirks. "I don't think you want to see," he says to her and her face turns red, mine too at his admission.

I bury my face in the back of his shirt, hiding my red face that is noticeable to everyone around us.

When he is done paying, I all but run out of the mall and I can see the girls talking behind us.

We have been caught and I laugh.

"Well, I think I love those dressing rooms," he states and I laugh louder, I can't believe we just did that.

WE GRAB the girls lunch at a drive-thru. When we arrive at the school, I flash my card and give them my ID to keep and Knight's too.

I'm really excited to see my girl.

We enter the lunchroom and I look around the room to see if I can spot Annie. I spot Penny and she looks really sad.

I touch Knight's arm not liking the look on that little girl's face. She keeps looking behind her to a room to the side of the lunchroom.

I make my way over to Penny. I bend down next to her and I still don't see Annie anywhere. "Hey, what's wrong?" I ask her, touching her tiny hand.

She bursts out crying and face-plants into my chest. I look at Knight sharply, not liking this. He is already on his phone and my guess is he is calling Royal.

"She was mean to Annie." She sits back and sniffs.

"Who was?" I ask her and push her wet hair from her face because of her tears, drying her face.

"Our teacher, she made Annie sit by herself in that room." She looks to the room that she was staring at earlier.

I suck in a sharp breath at that. "Why?"

She shrugs. "All day she has been mean."

Speaking of the fucking teacher I see her on the phone in the corner of the room, not looking at her students. I can tell she is angry.

She has not seen fucking angry.

Knight takes Penny, lifting her off the seat and into his arms. I run over to the room where Annie is supposed to be.

My heart literally crashes to the floor at the sight of her. She is sitting at a desk with her face to the wall, her back to

the door, no food in sight.

Oh my God.

“Sweet girl,” I call for her and she turns around crying. “Mommy,” she cries and runs to me.

I pick her up, tucking her into me. I am murderous. “Let’s get out of here,” I tell Knight. He is pissed off too.

I walk back into the lunchroom, shocked that this happened. Her teacher drops her phone looking at us.

She runs over. “What is the meaning of this?” she asks me, her tone awful. Annie flinches and fire runs through my veins.

“We are leaving. We will discuss this later and not in front of these kids.”

Her eyes widen. “You can’t just take them,” she screeches and starts to reach for Annie and Penny.

I reach out and catch her hand before she can grab a hold of them. “You do not dare touch them,” I snap.

I slam her hand back to her; Knight took Annie from me the second she reached for Annie.

I stand in front of the girls, dying for her to try something else.

Not even a minute later the door slams open, in walks Royal and he takes in the scene, taking his daughter from Knight.

“Let’s go,” I tell them. Knight pulls me in front of him, away from her. I am pissed off.

“You can’t do this,” she yells and I turn around. “I can and will and she will not be back. You’re lucky we are at school,” I say the last part quietly, I have never been so mad in my life.

She did this to hurt my daughter. Her mouths open in shock. “Are you threatening me?”

I smile. “It’s not a threat sweetheart, it’s a promise. Someone who treats babies like this? It’s a promise.” I pat her hand and leave her gaping at us.

“I will not let her back into this school,” I tell Royal and Knight.

Gage walks in. “That fucking bitch,” he snarls and I burst out laughing. The girls’ eyes widen in shock at his tone.

“Sorry girls,” he apologizes.

“I think it’s time we turn a part of the clubhouse into a school room and hire a teacher, none of this shit is to be tolerated,” he tells us and I let out a sigh of relief.

I feel regret that I left her here.

“I don’t have to go back?” Annie asks.

Gage shakes his head. “No, you don’t have to go back,” he tells her, his voice soft but I can see that he is pissed off.

He may be pissed off but I am furious.

I am so mad.

She runs after us, and I grit my teeth trying not to make a scene in front of the girls. “You cannot do this!” she screams loudly and I turn around to face her head on.

I do not understand why she is acting like this.

I look at Knight and he hands Annie off to Royal who takes the girls out of the school. Annie is looking at me over his shoulder, but I am so over this teacher.

“Why not?” I ask her, my hands on my hips.

I turn around once again to make sure the girls are gone.

Her eyes widen looking over my shoulder seeing the girls are gone. “You just can’t,” she tells me, her eyes widen like she is panicking.

I sigh in aggravation at her and Knight wraps his arms around my waist pulling me closer to him. “Well, why not?” I repeat.

She looks at her phone and she drops it onto the floor, causing it to shatter. “Please forgive me,” she whispers and looks behind her horrified. “He made me let him in,” she tells me and runs away.

My heart sinks. “What did she mean he made her?”

I run after her and grip her arm, catching her before she can slip away from me. I slam her into the wall, causing her head to smack slightly against the brick. “What did you mean?” I demand from her.

Tears fills her eyes. “Please, I had no choice, he threatened me,” she tells me again and I want to shake her.

“WHO?” I scream at her, my control slipping.

She looks over my shoulder and I turn around to see who it is and almost fall to the floor.

Arthur.

My ex-husband.

He is staring at me like he is shocked that I’m standing here.

Knight pulls me from the teacher and behind his back, his hand pressing into the small of my back pushing me tightly against him.

“Oh my God, please don’t kill me,” she pleads with him and then takes off running, straight out of the school.

Everything in me died at the realization of what she had planned, what he had planned.

Oh my God, he was here to take my daughter. If I hadn’t come for lunch... The thought trails off in my head at the thought of something like that happening.

I cover my mouth, gripping the back of Knight’s shirt.

“Well, I guess that whore is smarter than I thought she was,” Arthur says. I can’t see him.

I close my eyes at hearing his voice, shaking. I can’t resist the urge to peek around the side of Knight’s arm.

First thing I see is him standing in front of us, carrying a gun, pointing it at Knight. Oh my God.

Knight doesn’t move. “There she is, my lovely bride,” he gloats and laughs at me. “Oh the things I will do to you when I

get you back.”

“You mean the things I will fucking do with you.” Knight growls, stepping further in front of me. “I will kill you; I will make you suffer a hundred times over.”

Knight moves to charge him when the bell rings and the hallway is filled with students, and I watch as Arthur disappears right before my eyes.

Knight gathers me into him and sprints with me out of the school. I’m numb, my head is not able to wrap around what just happened.

He just came to steal my daughter and that fucking teacher was going to help him. I do not care that she was threatened, nothing will get me to put someone in harm, especially not a fucking baby.

Knight throws open the door and I sigh in relief seeing Annie in the back of Royal’s truck. Gage and Royal are standing outside of the truck. “Get the fuck on the road, he was here to get Annie,” Knight tells them and Royal jumps inside his truck, flying out of the parking lot, taking her out of here.

I could fall to the ground with relief, knowing she is getting away from this school. Knight lifts me into the truck, gets in on his side and slams the door shut.

He slams his hands on the steering wheel. “FUCK!” He hits the steering wheel one last time.

“I want to fucking destroy him. If we weren’t around all of those kids...” he yells and I flinch knowing that he was there for Annie

I reach over and touch his forearm, stopping him from hitting the wheel again. “I know, baby.” I lean over and rest my head on his shoulder as he starts the truck.

He is shaking so hard. “I know,” I repeat wanting him to know that this was out of his control.

“He was here for Annie,” I whisper, the horror and how sick I feel. “I knew something was off with her today, I knew

something was wrong.” I rest my hands on my face, so pissed off.

“I want to hurt that fucking teacher; I left my baby with her to watch and teach her. And she does this?”

Knight’s jaw is clenched. “I want to make her pay.” I’m mad unlike never before. My face is completely serious and my heart is in my throat with fear of the what if.

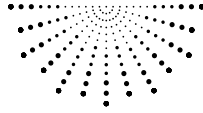
He turns to look at me, like is seeing me differently and what shocks me is that he smiles, it’s not a smile that is reserved. “You can.”

My heart twists at the darkness of his words. “I will find her.” We are filled with silence in the truck.

It’s not much, but it will be worth it. If he had taken my daughter because of her? I would have ended her. I would have taken her life without a second thought.

I lost Annie once and I will be damned if it happens again.

DANIELLA



HOURS LATER

*P*enny and Annie are giggling, playing in the living room in my house. I was terrified to face Annie. I was afraid of how today's incident would affect her.

Knight hasn't sat down since we've been home, his eyes not leaving Annie for a second.

I know what happened has affected him and it affected me too, along with Royal because it touched his daughter since she was around when it all happened.

God, that teacher.

I know that Arthur is evil, but I never dreamed that the teacher would be involved. She said she was threatened. But the way she looked at me this morning, I don't think she was threatened that badly.

He totally ignored her and I'm pretty sure she has been texting him the whole day. I rub my eyes so frustrated with all of this.

Lips touch the top of my head. I open my eyes and look at Knight who is looking at me concerned.

River walks into the house and winks at me. I eye Knight knowing exactly what we are going to do.

We are going to track down that teacher and get all the information we can. I just want it to end.

If I must rip every strand of hair from her head, I will get it.

“How do you girls feel about having a sleepover at my house?” River asks and the girls jump up, excited.

“Can we go right now?” Penny asks.

River nods at them smiling. “We sure can.”

Annie runs straight to me, and I hug her tightly and a little longer than usual. I love her so much.

I kiss her cheek. “Mommy loves you so much. I will see you in the morning.” I hug her one last time before I let her go.

She moves to Knight, and he lifts her off the floor, tossing her a little before pulling her into a hug. “Be a mean girl for River.”

My mouth opens and she bursts out laughing. “Knight, you will get me in trouble,” she scolds him.

He sets her down and laughs. “Well, have a good time.”

She smiles and runs to Penny, holding her hand. River waves at us and glares at Knight before leaving.

Leaving me, Royal, Reaper, Terror, Andrey, and Gage in the room. “Let’s get this shit done,” Gage tells everyone.

Knight takes my hand; he didn’t even want me to go but this is one thing I won’t sit out on.

We follow behind the guys, walking right past his truck to his bike. I smile while he helps me on the back of it. He opens his saddle bag, pulling out a leather jacket and a helmet. He puts the leather jacket on me, buckling the buckle of the helmet under my chin.

He chuckles. “Darlin, you’re so fucking cute.” He kisses my barely exposed cheek, swinging his leg over to sit in front of me.

Reaper nods at me. He was pissed when he found out what happened today. He has taken a liking to Annie when she made him play with her.

Gage lifts his hand and they all take off behind him. On the open road I notice that we are put into the middle with others riding in front, to the side and the back of us.

They're protecting us.

I drop the top of my head, leaning my head on his back. His hand grips my calf and pulls me tighter to him when they speed up and enter traffic in town.

The teacher lives on the other side of town, slightly on the outskirts. I hope that she is home.

It doesn't take but fifteen minutes to get through town to her small little house. It is cute I must give her that.

In the front of the house, I can see two figures standing inside the house. There is a truck and car sitting in front of the house.

Andrey takes off ahead of everyone and runs to the back of the house in case she runs out the back.

No matter how mad I am at her, I don't want to hurt her. I just want to know what she knows so that we can somehow, somehow make this end.

Knight takes off my helmet. He takes my hand I walk to the front door with him making sure that I am staying slightly behind him.

I love how protective he is.

Standing outside of the house, I can hear two people arguing inside. One voice I know without a doubt because it's in my nightmares.

"Arthur is here," I whisper-yell to Knight; my heart is in my throat knowing that he is just on the other side of the door.

Knight's eyes flash with anger and he steps back two steps, lifting his leg and kicking the door in.

Their eyes look onto us standing outside the door. She screams and Arthur is shocked that we are here.

Knight is through the door in a split second, the others slipping past me to follow him leaving me standing at the doorway, in shock that this is happening, that he is just across the room.

Arthur tries to back away, lifting his hands in front of him, trying to stop Knight, looking around to see if there is a way out.

But there is no stopping Knight.

I stop breathing as Knight tackles Arthur to the floor. He falls back onto the coffee table that is glass and it breaks all around him.

Blood is pouring from his back and arms. Arthur's face is horrified, he lifts his hands to cover his face and uses his feet, trying to push himself away from Knight.

But it's no use.

Knight grabs his feet, dragging him down, the glass breaking and scraping along his back and arms.

Arthur screams, his face red in pain. His wild eyes turn to me, like he is begging for me to help. He lifts his hand out for me, like he is reaching for me. I take a step back, further onto the porch, not liking him looking at me and my stomach twists with sickness.

Knight growls and looks at me, his face dark, showing his anger, then back at Arthur who is trying to mouth something to me.

Knight grips the hand that is reaching out to me and slowly breaks his hand, until it's completely resting against the back of his hand. "You don't look at her, don't even fucking speak to her, you useless piece of shit," Knight screams at him, pulling on his wrist, causing him more pain, pulling his face away from looking at me.

The teacher is screaming at the top of her lungs, watching the scene unfold. My eyes widen, but I can't move, I can't do anything but watch it all play out.

"She is a fucking whore, enjoy my sloppy seconds. Even if you kill me, it's not over, it will never be over," Arthur tells Knight.

I want to throw up at his disgusting words. I cover my mouth, tears filling my eyes at the way he just spoke about me

to Knight.

Knight stiffens and punches him straight into the mouth. Arthur looks at Knight in shock, like he can't believe he just did that.

He looks at me. "You will pay for this, you wretched fucking whore," he spits toward me, trying to push Knight off him to get to me.

I'm shaking so hard, trying to fight back all the horrible memories that his voice and face bring back to me.

Knight roars in his face. "You're fucking dead, you piece of shit." He grips him by his hair, dragging him until he is out my eyesight.

I can see Knight's face though, if I didn't know him, I would be so terrified of him.

Knight straddles Arthur, lifting his arm and punches him over and over in the face. Arthur screams, the blood in his throat making him sound like he is drowning.

Arthur tries to fight back, push him off, but Knight is too powerful. He coughs, blood spraying out of his mouth, choking on it.

His head hits the floor with a God-awful thump, his eyes rolling into the back of his head.

But all I hear is her voice screaming louder and louder with every hit.

His hand smacks against Knight, each hit, the movements get weaker and weaker until he is not moving.

He didn't stand a chance.

Knight doesn't stop, he hits him over and over and over.

Blood is spilling from his face, teeth are falling out from where Knight has knocked them out, and he's drowning in the blood that is coming from his nose and going down the back of his throat.

I break out of my shock, stepping inside the house. The teacher is staring at Knight and then she turns to look at me.

Her face transforms to fear as she tries to run down the hallway to the back of the house. I reach out and grab her hair before she can leave. I pull with all my might, dragging her down onto the floor. “I don’t think so,” I tell her, standing over her so that she doesn’t get up. She hits my leg trying to pull herself free.

Reaper steps up next to me. “Better not do that,” he tells her and she stops, her face paling with fear.

Knight is screaming, his body shaking from anger. “How does it fucking feel, bitch?” he roars in Arthur’s face, daring him to say something, to move, anything.

But he doesn’t.

I eye his chest waiting for his chest to move, to do anything, but it doesn’t. Knight reaches for a huge piece of glass to the side of him, he looks back at me. “Turn around baby,” he tells me, his voice soft and tender, so different than what it was a second ago to Arthur.

I turn around and I hear a god-awful sound. I peek around and I see that Knight has stabbed him right through his eye with a huge piece of glass.

He is dead.

I stare at his chest waiting for the movement, waiting for him to jump up and be like “*you can’t kill me, bitch*”.

But he doesn’t.

I let go of the teacher, shock filling every part of me. I fall to the ground, my legs giving out. “It’s over,” I whisper.

“It’s over.” Those words pour over and over in my head; she will never have to face him, the nightmares, the fear of him hurting me again, nothing.

It’s all over.

Boots come into view in front of me. Before I can look up to see who it is, Knight bends down, his hands are bloody, his knuckles are cracked, bleeding from him punching Arthur.

His entire front is covered in blood, even on the front of his leather cut. I look from the front of his shirt to Arthur; his chest is still not moving.

“He’s dead,” I say out loud to Knight, the realization starting to hit me.

He nods and reaches out to touch me but stops before he can like he is afraid. “It’s over,” I repeat, breathless.

He nods again, his eyes searching my face like he is unsure of what I am going to say. “You saved us,” I tell him emotionally. This man has tortured me since I was fourteen years old, taken my daughter from me and said she was dead, put me through absolute hell.

He has taken so much of my life from me and now he can’t do anything like that again. “Annie will never have to worry,” I voice to him, tears falling from my eyes.

The burden that I have carried for so long on my shoulders is gone. She will never have to be afraid that he is going to snap and be afraid that he is going to hurt her, she will never be forced to marry.

It’s over.

He shakes his head. “Never.” I smile and drop my head, the tears finally rolling down my face.

He finally touches me, lifting me off the floor and into his arms. I wrap myself around him tightly, ignoring the teacher behind me screaming, holding her face, staring at Arthur.

“I told you I would kill him,” he tells me.

I nod. “You did.” He kept his word to me.

He kisses the top of my head. The teacher screams again, and I turn around to see her crawling toward Arthur.

My first instinct is that she is going to hurt him for threatening her, but no, she is holding him like he is the love her life.

My eyes widen in shock at what I am seeing. “You killed him!” she screams at the top of her lungs, crying.

What is going on?

“What are you talking about? I thought he threatened you!” I tell her and she laughs. “Bitch, you are dumb as fuck. He came to me, said that we could raise Annie together! He promised me we could be a family; he came to me after he came to the school that day. I was blacklisted from the church but if I gave him her then I would be back in my family’s life again to be rid of this sinner life I’m living.”

I am shocked, floored.

Knight is as shocked as I am at this. “Wait, what?” I am so confused.

I cover my mouth, staring at the woman and kind of feeling sorry for her that she is this messed up in her life that she would be willing to do something like this.

“Listen, this man was a horrible person. He was just using you,” I tell her softly. I move closer to her, wanting to help her somehow.

She screams right in my face, her eyes wide and I know that she is lost, there is no hope for her.

I bend down to her level. “Listen, you’re a teacher, you left the church. You have a chance that so many girls wished that they had,” I tell her this softly. “Do you want me to take you somewhere? To a place where you can get help?”

She looks down at Arthur, where she was gripping the front of his shirt then back to me. She swallows hard, her voice rough as she speaks to me. “You can’t help me.” She glares at me. “You have ruined everything!” She screams and pushes me.

Knight picks her up and away from me, and carries her screaming out of her house, literally throwing her outside. “She is lucky I don’t fucking hit women,” he growls and helps me off the floor.

I look down at Arthur one last time. “Rest in hell, fucker,” I say, my voice void of all emotions.

Knight takes my hand as I look back one last time. “I have some prospects on the way to take care of this,” Gage tells us.

Knight looks at his hands and I take them in mine, staring at the cuts on the back of them. “Are you hurt?” I ask him, turning them over.

He chuckles. “No, but I can’t say the same for him.”

Never did I imagine that when we got here that he would be here. I have wished him dead for so long, so long and it’s finally happened.

“Ready to go home?” I ask him.

His nose flares at the mention of us going home. “Yeah.” His voice is deep and I know that my words have affected him.

Reaper touches my shoulder. I turn around and hug all the guys because they have taken such good care of me, they were ready to fight for me.

The door is pushed open and in the front of the house, she is lying on the ground, on her back staring at the sky, crying.

I give the guys the side-eye, she really has lost all her mind.

We walk past her and she screams when she sees us. She tries to reach out and grab my leg, trying to stop me.

Knight kicks her hand away from me. She hisses and clutches her hands to her chest. Her eyes are filled with evil and I sigh.

Knight eyes her like he is dying for her to try something. I came here thinking I was going to beat her ass but seeing how she is just messed up in the head, I think she is suffering every day.

She watches us leave, the prospects pulling in behind us taking our parking spot where we just left.

I feel her eyes on us long after we leave.

I close my eyes and just think of everything that has happened in the last hour. I never dreamed that this would have happened.

Soon the clubhouse comes into view with its bright lights. I'm glad that my daughter is at Royal's considering the way that Knight looks right now.

I wave to the guys when we all part ways. The second Knight cuts off the bike, we are surrounded by silence.

He is staring at me.

"It's really over," I repeat once again, just waiting for it to fully sink in.

I PULL him with me into the shower, turning it on. He's silent, just watching me, not touching me at all.

It's like he is afraid to.

He did this for me. If I had any doubts on how he felt about me, they're gone; he killed for me and for Annie.

I grip his cut, slowly pulling it down his arms, tossing it on the floor. I pull his shirt over his head, dragging my hands down his huge chest, to his abs that run down his stomach.

I bite my lip, loving the feel of him beneath my hands.

He sucks in a sharp breath when I touch the top of his pants. I lick my lips and unbutton them, dragging them down his legs and onto the floor.

I bend down until I'm on my knees in front of him. I look up at him, my eyes connected with his and take him in my hand.

He hisses and backs against the counter to brace himself. "Hmm," I moan, taking him in my mouth slowly, licking gently around the tip.

His hand clenches onto the edge of the counter, his head thrown back. I am soaked immediately from the way he is coming undone with just me barely touching him.

I take him as deep as I can, gagging slightly when he touches the back of my throat, but that doesn't stop me from

sucking him further down my throat.

“Fuck,” he moans.

I brace my hand against his thigh, moaning, when I sneak my hand in my pants, feeling how wet I am for him.

His head snaps down, looking at me with his cock in my mouth and my hand down my pants.

He pulls out of my mouth, lifting me off the floor and bending me over the counter. Our eyes connecting in the mirror, he grips the top of my shirt and pulls, ripping it down my body.

“Hmm.” He kisses the side of my neck, the blood is still on him from Arthur, but I don’t care.

I need him.

I pull my bra off and bend further over the counter. “Fuck me,” I beg him, my eyes never straying from his in the mirror.

“Nothing could stop me.”

He slides into me in one single push. I arch my back, wanting him deeper. “God,” I moan, putting my hands on the glass in front of me.

I’m ready to come already.

The way he looks standing behind me, the size difference between us and me being completely at his mercy, has me going wild.

I gasp when he slaps me on the ass with his hand and I flood his dick. “God, you’re so fucking tight,” he groans and then he lets go, slamming into me over and over again, dragging me across the counter with every push and pull.

I hold my breath, my orgasm has me on the edge. “Fuck,” I grit between my teeth, my eyes rolling into the back of my head and I clench down hard on him.

His finger presses against my ass and my eyes fly open at the sudden different feeling and the pleasure. I scream, coming hard around him and he joins me, groaning.

My whole body is shaking, twitching. He pulls out of me and gently turns me around so I'm facing him. He pulls me into the shower, the blood running down his body and onto the white floor of the shower. I eye the blood as it goes down the drain.

His whole demeanor turning softer, he cups my face, turning my eyes from the blood. "Darlin, you okay?" he asks me. I nod. "I'm more than okay." I sigh and rest my head on his shoulder. "I just can't believe that it's over."

He hugs me to him and I hug him back as tightly as I can. "I have been afraid for so long, afraid that he would take Annie away from me." I almost choke on the last part; that's a living nightmare.

I lift my head so I can look at him. "No more." I know murder isn't good, I get that, but I don't have an ounce of care in my body that he killed him.

I am so glad.

"You promised to keep us safe and you did that."

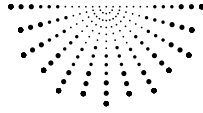
He growls, cupping my face hard. "I wish I could bring him back to do it over and over again."

I close my eyes, smiling. "Kiss me," I ask him softly, needing that connection.

He smiles and kisses me so softly, deeply, it has my toes curling.

Life is just beginning.

A MONTH LATER



DANIELLA

“Shh,” I tell Annie, trying to get her to be quiet when she has dropped the pan for the fifth time.

It’s Knight’s birthday and he’s still asleep. He didn’t get home until late in the morning from an emergency surgery at the hospital.

Annie cracks the eggs into the bowl for some French toast, eggshells landing inside the bowl.

The second she turns away I fish them out with a fork. I give her the vanilla, helping her pour some into the bowl.

“Mommy, do you think he will like it?” she asks me.

I kiss the top of her head. “Baby, he will more than love it,” I tell her, handing her a whisk so she can mix the mixture.

This last month has been the best. Knight has pretty much moved in with us and Annie loves that he is here. I’m not going to deny that I love that he is here too.

I love him. I have not told him that yet.

Every day I have fallen for him. The way that he covers me up at night when I fall asleep, the sweet kiss he plants on my forehead.

The way he carries Annie to bed when she falls asleep on the couch, the way he gets down on her level and plays with her.

We finish up the breakfast and I line it all up on a tray, enough for all of us so that we can eat with him.

She starts giggling when we reach the top of the stairs. I smile and peek into the bedroom door; he opens one eye and then closes it.

He totally caught us.

Annie walks in front of me, holding a coffee cup for him. She sets it on the nightstand next to him.

I hold my breath wondering how she is going to wake him up.

She looks at me, with happy eyes and a content smile on her face. She kisses his cheek and then pats the top of his head. “Knight, wake up,” she whispers into his ear and his eyes open. “Good morning, baby.”

His arm bands around her and hugs her to him. “Good morning, Knighty poo.” She giggles and hugs him back.

“Sit up, we have a surprise for you,” she tells him.

He scoots up in bed and my eyes go to his chest. He’s shirtless and in a pair of sweatpants.

Lord help me.

My need for him hasn’t diminished, if anything, it’s gotten more and more powerful. I don’t think I would ever be satisfied until I could crawl inside his body.

“Woah, is this for me?” he asks her.

She nods. “We made you breakfast. Happy Birthday!” she tells him and I smile watching them together.

He smiles and then looks at me and back to her, his eyes soft. Knight never had a family; he grew up in foster care, he never even had a birthday party before.

That breaks my heart because he deserves all of that and more. I walk over and lift the tray onto the bed beside him.

He pulls me to him, hugging me. I kiss his cheek. “Happy birthday, my love,” I tell him, smiling.

His eyes grow soft and he touches my cheek. “Thank you, baby.”

I smile and help Annie onto the bed. I get in on the other side, he pulls the blanket over my legs and hands Annie a throw blanket since she is sitting on top of the blanket.

He doesn't start eating himself, but hands us both a plate and makes our plates before he does his own, even on his birthday.

"Need me to cut it for you?" he asks her.

I cover my mouth trying not to smile. She is totally capable and has been able to cut her own food for years, but she loves his attention. "Sure, I'm tired," she tells him, blowing her bangs out of her face dramatically.

I chuckle and he makes sure to cut her French toast in little bitty pieces that is suitable for a toddler and she just smiles.

"There," he says to her, handing her plate back. "She doesn't choke on strawberries, right?" I notice that she has some on her plate. She is obsessed with them and will eat them with every meal.

She shakes her head. "I'm fine," she tells him and he watches her take a bite, then reaches over and cuts them in half with a butterknife.

I snort, the laughter spilling out of me. She giggles but continues to eat her food. He does this with every meal, making sure that nothing happens.

He isn't fazed by her and I laughing, he just eats the food that we made. He has the most content and happy look on his face, it makes me happy that I somehow had a part in that.

Bliss is what it's like being with him, utter happiness.

I never dreamed that I would have that; I never dreamed that this would be my life and that I would be this happy with someone.

He has truly taken over my life in the best way possible and for Annie too.

I didn't know where my life would have gone. I was fine with just me and Annie, but now that I have him, nothing is better than this.

I have a family, a family that I dreamed about but never thought was achievable.

But Knight, he just moved his ass in and hasn't left since. I haven't had a nightmare since Knight killed Arthur.

It's like for the first time I can breathe and not feel like I am drowning underwater. I rest my head on his shoulder, listening to him and Annie talk about Barbies that she is wanting for Christmas.

Thanksgiving is next week. Knight and I have made plans to go Black Friday shopping for her and she has had her eyes on the Barbie Dreamhouse.

I'm excited to spend Christmas with Knight this year. Last year was the best because I got to spend it with Annie for the first time.

I remember the years I sat alone in my bedroom, torn to bits because I thought she was gone.

Anger hits me like a tidal wave, and once again I am so glad that that fucker is dead. "Me and Penny want matching dreamhouses." She sighs and I see that she is daydreaming about the days they can play together with it.

I chuckle and mess up her hair, she glares at me and bats my hand away. We finish our food and I pile the plates on the tray so I can take it downstairs and can clean them later. "Can I go get them now?" Annie asks me.

I nod.

She takes off running and gets his gifts that we have picked out for him. "You girls are doing too much," he gushes, pulling me to him and kissing me deeply before Annie comes back.

I shake my head, breaking the kiss. "That is impossible, you do so much for us, Knight."

He rolls his eyes. "Darlin," he growls, knowing that we are going to start arguing once again about him paying for all the bills.

"What?" I ask.

Annie runs back, holding the bags with the gifts. He sits up and helps her lift them onto the bed, then helps her up.

She is so excited; she hands him the smallest gift first. I sit back and smile, watching his face so I can see his reaction.

He opens the small little bag, taking out a piece of white paper. He looks over the back before slowly opening it.

“Daddy, daughter dance” is in big letters at the top.

I offered to take her, but she was adamant that she wanted to ask Knight to take her. It means that she is starting to view him in that role in her life, that he has a place in her life.

He swallows hard, reading the words over and over, then looks up at me and then at her. “Annie, what are you asking me?” I know that he isn’t going to get his hopes up.

I wait for Annie to ask him. The dance is tonight, she kept it hidden until last night because she was afraid to ask him.

“Will you take me to the dance tonight?” she asks him, her little voice unsure of what he is going to say.

His eyes are misty, I can see that he is trying to hold back emotions. “I would love nothing more than to take you, sweet girl.”

She smiles so beautifully and jumps straight into his arms, hugging him so tightly. “I am so excited!” she exclaims.

He looks at me and I kiss his cheek, loving how happy he is by her asking him. “I am too.”

I smile, watching them, she sits back and hands him another gift which is from me. It’s a dog tag that has a picture of all three of us together so that he can wear it. “This is the best.” He kisses my cheek, then hers.

She giggles and rubs her cheek where he kissed her cheek.

He laughs at her reaction and I hand him the last gift: it’s a weekend away at the beach for us both on Christmas break.

“Thank you for the gifts, I love them all so much,” he tells us and hugs us one more time.

There is a loud knock on the front door. I look at Knight, confused as to who it could be at ten am.

He gets out of bed. “Baby, go get dressed so we can go shopping.” Annie jumps out of the bed, running to her room.

I’m already dressed for the day as I have been up for hours since I heard Annie downstairs in the kitchen tossing pots and pans around.

I follow Knight downstairs to see who it is. I stop dead in my tracks to see Reaper standing at the door, holding a woman over his shoulder who is trying to be put down.

I look at Knight, like what in the world is happening.

He runs to the door, pulling it open. Reaper walks inside and growls, setting her on the couch.

She tries to get up, but he pushes her back down very gently by the top of her head. She is looking at me and Knight like she is shocked, honestly so am I.

“What is going on?” I ask. Knight is staring at Reaper like he has lost his mind.

“He kidnapped me from a grocery store.” She points at Reaper.

I eye him. “WHAT?” I ask.

He sighs. “Her mom was mean to her, I wasn’t going to let her go back with them,” he explains, saying more in a sentence that I have ever heard from him before.

“So, you just took her?” He looks at me weirdly.

“Of course, I did.” He says it in a tone like it’s the most normal thing in the world.

She lifts her hand, like uhm hello see.

I suck in my lips. “I want you guys to tell her that I am not going to hurt her,” Reaper tells us.

I sit on the couch beside her. “Start from the beginning,” I request.

She looks at Reaper like she is waiting for him to just snatch her up again. “I’m my mother’s caretaker, and yes, she is a mean, horrible woman. She hit me, called me names.” She looks to Reaper. “He literally just picked me up, left her there in the wheelchair and carried me out of the store.”

I can just picture her just standing there and getting snatched off the ground by Reaper.

If I didn’t know him, I would have been terrified too. “First off, I don’t think he meant to scare you. Reaper is just Reaper,” I say simply and he nods in agreement. “Reaper just wanted to keep you safe,” I trail off, looking at Reaper for confirmation, he nods again.

“So, he kidnapped me,” she states and looks at Reaper. He nods, smiling.

She shakes her head and then looks at me, then at Knight then back to Reaper. “Why?”

“Because no one should be mean to you.”

I know why. She is beautiful, like take your breath away beautiful. She has blonde hair, green eyes, eyes so large, she seems so innocent and sweet.

Annie runs down the stairs and she gets excited when she sees Reaper. “Uncle Reaper.” He scoops her up and she snuggles into his chest.

Her eyes widen, taking in the scene. “He is not a bad guy, he is just like my man, practically a caveman,” I point out to her and she laughs. Reaper’s head snaps to her and looks at her.

I bite my lip.

“Well, let’s go home.” He sets Annie down by Knight who picks her up, he has been silent the whole time just watching everything.

“Wait,” she says but he doesn’t listen. He winks at me and picks her up, throwing her back over his shoulder carrying her out of the house.

This time she isn’t fighting, but actually smiling at us.

I don't think you can kidnap someone who wants it.

Knight follows them to the door, watching him put her on the back of his bike and drive off.

“Well, that's different,” I point out, laughing.

Knight shakes his head. “You both look beautiful.”

“We need to get me a dress for the dance tonight,” she tells him and hugs him one last time before she runs to me. “I will be bringing lunch back for all of us.”

Knight does not know but tomorrow we are having a surprise birthday dinner at his favorite restaurant. I can't wait to see his face when everyone yells “Surprise.”

He is such a huge part of everyone's life, and they were more than willing to drive an hour to the restaurant to spend time with him.

But tonight, I can't wait to see the photos of them at the dance. She had a dance at her last school and Maverick took her. She was happy to go but this time her asking Knight, I could tell meant a lot to her.

Knight walks over to me, kissing me. “Be careful,” he whispers to me, before kissing my temple and letting me go.

I pull the door shut behind me looking back one last time. I'm not scared to leave anymore since Arthur is dead, but Knight insists I take a prospect with us just in case something does happen.

Driving past the clubhouse, I spot a prospect and wave for him to follow me. He hops on his bike and speeds to catch up.

“What color dress do you want?” I ask her when we get on the open road.

Knight

I WATCH THEM LEAVE, my whole fucking heart going with them. Annie's face when she was asking me to take her to the

daddy daughter dance, the fear of me rejecting her, it about crushed me.

I just love that she thought of me enough to ask me. I smile and get dressed for the day; I need go shopping for clothes myself.

I take a detour to see if Reaper is still alive after he kidnapped that girl. He's sitting on the porch drinking a beer while she's standing inside the house in front of the glass door.

I chuckle as she runs outside and tries to slip past him, but he catches her hand, pulling her down onto the seat next to him so she can't run off.

But in the end she wants to be there because she could have gotten away, and I would have taken her if she was truly terrified.

Reaper nods at me as I pass and she waves at me, then stops like she caught herself breaking character.

I turn away shaking my head, in the end she may be as crazy as Reaper. He needs that, his life has been absolute shit. His family was so abusive to him; he was homeless when he was twelve years old and somehow, he kept himself alive until he joined the army when he was eighteen.

I burst out laughing again at the hilarity of it.

Daniella

I PUT the finishing touches on Annie's hair, she had me curl it for her. She is in a light blue princess type dress that resembles Cinderella.

After what happened with the teacher, she was fired and another amazing teacher took her place, Annie loves her.

I was scared to let her go back to school but I'm glad I did. I felt much better once I met her new teacher.

The other teacher dropped off the face of the earth; we don't know where she went, she packed all her things, and she was just gone.

I was going to see if she wanted to go to therapy to deal with the life she was dealt; I know if you're involved with the cult/church nothing good ever comes out of it.

But it's out of my hands. I am still pissed about her treatment toward Annie but I kind of felt sorry for her. I feel horrific to think of those who are still in the cult, forced into that life.

Some of the messages the pastors told us about such as the outside life is just sin, that everyone is going to die in the pits of hell, we are the only ones that are going to save the world with our pureness, our life of no sin.

But once I got out and sat down to read the Bible, I realized they took small parts of the Bible and twisted it to their benefit, nothing about them is honest.

They are the sinners, the abusers, they are the ones that will suffer in the pits of hell. I do know that Etta, she is with a member of the Grim Sinners Originals, they have made a huge dent into the cult, causing issues and she has a bounty on her head to this day. I remember when I was in the cult, they still talked about her all the time.

I wish I could help somehow to end it, but it's so huge. It's in every state in the US and they blend in like normal people, it's just never ending.

From Etta's work, I would love to foster some kids until they have their forever home or teenagers to help prepare them for the world.

I might ask Etta about it.

When I first stepped out of the cult, the world was so strange and different than I thought it would be. The freedom to literally go and get food anytime you want was insane, to go shopping and buy things we needed, it just all boggled my mind.

The women in the cult aren't allowed to have any money in case they use it to escape, they aren't permitted to read most of the time, it's the husband's decision if their wives are allowed to have any sort of education.

Our engagements tend to be set up when we are very young in age and the men tend to be much older. We are groomed, we are forced to live a life that really isn't our own, it's to satisfy sick men who want us to be slaves.

"Mommy, I look so beautiful," Annie says and I break myself out of my depressing thoughts. It's just something that I can't change no matter how much I want to, that's why I have sympathy for her.

"Wow, my angel, you are beautiful." I stand her back and have her twirl for me.

She beams at the compliment. "Do you know how much mommy loves you?" I ask her, taking her hand in mine tighter.

She nods. "To the moon and back."

I smile. "To the moon and back again and again." I tickle her sides and she giggles.

"Are you ready for the dance?" I ask her.

She nods. "I'm so excited." She clasps her hands in front of her.

We hear a knock at the front door and walk down the stairs. Outside the door is Knight, holding flowers.

My eyes fill with tears instantly. She gasps in shock and runs to the door pulling it open. "Knight, you look like a knight!" He's in a suit and looking way too good.

"You look like a princess," he tells her and bends down in front of her. He hands her flowers and a small little teddy bear. "For the princess." She hugs him tight, before sniffing the flowers. "These are beautiful," she tells him and I take them from her.

"Can I get a picture?" I ask, taking out my phone.

He picks her up and puts her on his hip, both of them smiling into the camera. "Beautiful." My voice is cracking with all the emotions I'm feeling.

I move to them and hug them both tightly. "You have the best time." Knight with his free arm, pulls me to him, so he

can kiss me deeply. “I will call you when we’re on our way home.”

Home.

God, him calling it our home is insane to me, it’s the best feeling.

He may call this place our home, but he is our home. This place was new to us, we were starting over but he came along and made this a home for us.

He has changed our lives in such a short amount of time.

“Okay,” I say softly. I smile and watch as they slip out the door, he puts her in the back in her seat, and waits until she is buckled in before he waves to me and backs out of the driveway.

Royal pulls up behind him and follows as he’s taking Penny.

I shut the door and lock it, watching their headlights disappear.

I get started on dinner, one of Knight’s favorite meals: steak and potatoes, and I have his first of two cakes hidden in the garage refrigerator.

I get started, counting down the minutes until they come home. I made Royal promise to sneak pictures of them tonight.

Knight

PENNY AND ANNIE are dancing in the middle of the floor. Me and Royal have been in fucking tears over the dance moves these kids have.

“Did Reaper really kidnap that girl?” Royal asks me, laughing.

“Fuck yeah he did, right out of Walmart, just carried her out.” I laugh just picturing her face, and Royal laughs with me.

“Maybe that’s what you need to do, Royal,” I joke with him.

He chuckles. “Yeah, I think that’s what I need to do,” he jokes backs with me, but what do I know maybe he isn’t joking.

The DJ changes the music. “Alright dads, gather your daughters close!” he says through the microphone.

My heart feels like it’s going to burst through my chest. None of the dads hesitate and pick up their daughters.

Penny runs to Royal and pulls him out onto the floor.

Annie looks unsure at me; I lift my hand for her and she smiles. I pick her up and kiss her cheek, she smiles and hugs me tight while I move us side to side, she doesn’t budge the whole entire song.

I want to be her dad, I want it to be legal on paper, she’s my baby girl. She has been mine since the second she asked me to play dolls with her.

“You know, Annie, I love you,” I tell her. I have been wanting to tell her for a long time.

She sits back with tears in her eyes. “You love me?” she questions.

I nod. “I sure do, baby girl.”

“I love you, too.” She hugs me again so tight and I close my eyes. She loves me too, a fear I didn’t even think I had disappears.

She sits back and looks at me. “I may not be your biological dad baby, but I want to be your dad, to be that role for you in your life if you want me to.”

I have mentioned it to Daniella, that I want to take that role in her life. It’s been on my mind.

She bursts out crying and panic hits me hard. “What’s the matter?” I ask her, scared that she is upset that I mentioned this to her.

I carry her to the corner of the room, sitting her in a chair with me kneeling in front of her, so I can speak to her.

She sniffs and I dry her tears from her face. “I want you to be my daddy, Knight.” Her little voice is shaking as she tells me.

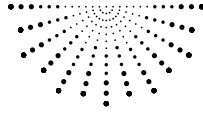
My heart feels like it’s going to fucking fall out of my chest at her admission. I hug her. “I’m glad baby, this is the best birthday I will ever have.”

She hugs me back just as tight; this is a moment that is changing my life forever. I know that I haven’t known her long, but it doesn’t matter, she is my daughter. I knew she was mine from the moment I met her.

She smiles at me, pulling back. I finish wiping the tears from her face, she giggles and pokes me in the chest. “I bet I can out dance you, Knight.”

She takes off running and I follow her, laughing.

DANIELLA



I stare at the picture Royal sent me of Knight and Annie for the tenth time in the last hour. It's a picture of Knight and Annie dancing; I'm going to get it framed.

Knight and Annie are on their way home.

I put everything on the dining room table, so they can just come in and eat.

I walk to the door and hold it open waiting for them. Annie waves at me from the back of the truck from where the light is shining on her.

Knight smiles and helps her out where she runs straight to me. I bend down and hug her. "Did you have the best time?" I ask her, fixing her messy hair. I guess she danced too hard.

She nods enthusiastically. "Knight told me that he wanted to be my daddy and I said yes!" she says loud and proud.

I look at Knight who looks like he is a big pile of mess. I knew that he wanted to talk to her about it.

He stepped into the role without a second thought, and I knew it was coming when he mentioned it to me.

He has become such a huge part of both of our lives.

"Did he really? Are you happy?" I ask her, wanting to make sure that she is okay with him.

"Yes." She runs back to hug Knight one last time.

"I'm happy then, baby."

She grins and lets him go. "I smell food," she says.

"Dinner is on the table," I tell her and she runs past us into the house, toward the direction of the food.

I stand back and wait for Knight to stand before me. "I think you made that little girl happy."

He kisses my forehead, pulling me into a hug. "She made me fucking happy. I love her so much, she is my heart." I smile loving that he loves her like that.

I love him too.

He pulls back, staring down at me, his face completely serious. "You know I love you too, right?" he whispers to me and cups my face in his hands. "I fucking love you so much, I think it hurts me sometimes that I have gone years without you in my life."

I gasp in shock at his admission. "Baby, I love you too." I jump and kiss him, my legs going around his waist wanting to be as close to him as possible.

I do love him. I never believed in love at first sight until I met him. I was taken with him from the first moment I saw him. He is my person, he is the person I am meant to be with. I don't have any questions about that.

He kisses me back with the same amount of passion. I can feel the kiss all the way down to my toes; this is a moment I will never forget.

"Happy birthday," I whisper against his lips, hugging him one last time before he sets me down on the floor, the cool night air making me shiver.

He pulls me inside the house and out of the cold. "Ready to eat?" I ask, having him follow me to the dining room.

He stops at the meal I have prepared and set out. "About time," Annie says and we laugh at her impatient tone. "The dancing has made me starving." She sighs and eyes her steak.

Knight laughs. "This little girl can dance; her and Penny danced the whole time." He reaches into his pocket and pulls

out his phone, showing me a video of her and Penny dancing around to the hokey pokey.

“Mommy, can I join the dance class at school?” she asks.

“When does the classes start?” I ask her and place salad on her plate.

“Next week,” she tells me and I smile.

“Of course. Do you need me to sign anything?”

She shakes her head. “I think you fill it out at the front office.”

I eye the dance moves she has on camera, and I try not to laugh. It’s too cute with her arms flying everywhere, the kicks. Knight is watching the video, smiling. “I think Penny is going to do the classes too.”

I still seriously love how close they are, to have a friend that she is so close to and grow up with.

“Let’s eat,” I encourage everyone and they all dig in.

“Want me to cut your steak, Annie?” he asks and she looks at me then to him. She scoots her plate over to him and he cuts it in little pieces.

She watches with a happy expression and I shake my head. I don’t try to let him know that she can do it herself, she is liking the attention from him.

“Now.” He pushes the plate back and she thanks him. “Thank you, Knight.” She bats her eyes at him happily.

I try not to laugh again, she so has him wrapped around his finger. “Thank you for dinner,” Knight thanks me, kissing me on the cheek.

I smile and rest my head on his shoulder for a second. “There is one last thing.” I walk to the garage and get out the birthday cake. I carry it back in and grab the candles along the way.

I start singing Happy Birthday to him.

He smiles widely when I put the cake in front of him with the candles. I light them and back away. "Make a wish," I tell him.

He lifts my hand, kissing the back of it. "My wish has already come true," he tells us and I try not to cry at how unbelievably sweet that is.

Annie runs over. "Blow them out," she tells him.

He does and we both clap, and he pulls me into his lap. "How big of a piece do you want?" I ask, taking a knife to cut into it.

He motions to the size of the piece he wants. "Want to go watch a movie and eat cake?" he asks.

Annie takes off running, you never have to tell her twice about watching TV, it's an addiction.

The second she is out of earshot, he says, "Save the rest. I want to see if that icing tastes just as great on you."

He takes his cake smirking, leaving me in the dining room alone with my very naughty thoughts.

I take a piece with the most icing and place it to the side, I guess we're going to find out.

Annie is on the couch on one side of Knight and I take the other spot, and he pulls the blanket over our legs.

I take in the moment, this is a moment you won't forget; it's simple, easy, and it's everything you could ever ask for.

He kisses my forehead and I lay my head on his shoulder, and when he turns on a kid's movie, she scoots up seeing that he has put on *Mulan*.

As much as Knight and I pretend that we don't like children's shows and movies, we both end up not being able to look away.

I notice Annie's eyes are growing heavy. "Come on sweet girl, let's get you cleaned up and ready for bed," I tell her and she runs ahead of me to her bathroom to shower.

Knight follows me up the stairs and goes into our bedroom to shower. I try not to think about the warm water running down his muscular body.

I bite my lip and try to clear my mind.

“Mommy, can you get me a towel? I forgot!” I take a towel out of the linen closet and set it on the rack next to the shower for her.

I get out her pajamas and set them on the counter for her. Her hairbrush is on the vanity with her detangler.

I sneak out of her bedroom and into mine and Knight’s. I open the door and peek inside to see him standing naked in front of the shower. Lord help me.

He turns around catching me and I take off running, laughing. He sticks his head out of the door. “I caught you,” he yells and I hide in Annie’s room. I pick out a book for me to read her.

A few minutes later she comes out of the bathroom in her Cinderella nightgown, she has one of every character at this point.

“How do you want your hair?” I ask her.

She studies me for a moment. “Do you think Knight can braid my hair for me?” she asks.

“Sure, want me to ask him?” I ask her.

She nods and hops into bed, pulling the blankets over her legs. “Knight, Annie wants to know if you can braid her hair?”

He hurries to put his clothes on, and I smile at his reaction. I climb to the end of her bed and grab her book; I can read to her as he fixes her hair.

He sits down and she crawls in front of him. He smiles at me over his shoulder and runs the brush through her strands.

“Do you want a single braid or double?” he asks her.

She thinks on it for a moment. “I think I want a double.”

He gently brushes her hair free of all the knots, spraying the detangler. “Your hair is getting long,” I tell her and she reaches around and touches the bottom of her hair.

I get started on her book, this one is about Beauty and the Beast.

After he finishes her hair, I expect her to just lie down but she doesn't, she turns around and snuggles into Knight, wanting him to hold her.

I duck my head and continue reading the book. Knight looks like he's floating on top of the world that she did that without asking.

I remember the first time that she reached out for me and not for Bell.

I am forever grateful that Bell took her in and later found me.

It took a long time for Annie to understand that I was her mom and she was taken from me. The pain I went through when I thought she was dead, all those years still haunt me.

I thank God every day that she is here with me, she is safe, healthy, and most of all happy.

The way that kids should be. My childhood was nowhere near what hers is. I didn't get to do anything; I was too busy in the kitchen learning to be a wife.

But we are breaking the cycle of that, she is going to have the best life and I'm going to make sure of it, come hell or die trying.

As I get older, the less sympathetic I am for those that let their children be taken in a marriage when they're a child.

I have a baby; I would have literally done anything to change their fate.

Honestly, no one wants to be forced into marriage, I have never spoken to anyone personally that has been happy in their marriage. Who the fuck wants to be married to someone that is their grandparents' age?

Yeah, that's not it.

I look up from my reading and see that they're both asleep.

My heart feels like it could burst. I take out my phone and snap a picture, making it my home screen.

I tug on Knight's toe, waking him up. His eyes open slowly and he looks down at Annie.

His expression is one of pure bliss.

He gently lies her down in the bed, tucking her in. I set the book on her bookshelf, shutting her door behind us.

"Where is that icing?" he asks me.

"In the refrigerator."

His nose flares. "I want your ass naked by the time I get back from the kitchen." He starts down the stairs, not leaving room for argument.

Oh, hell yes.

I hurry to my room, stripping completely naked and laying chest down with my hands perched under my face, waiting for him.

It's completely silent so the second I hear his footsteps coming back up the stairs, I try to play it cool.

But I'm anything but cool. The promises he made have been running on a loop through my mind.

The door is pushed open, and I look at the bowl in his hand. "I just got the icing, since you're the cake." He winks at me, shutting and locking the door behind him.

Oh boy.

He strips slowly, my eyes glued to every new piece of flesh he's showing when he takes a new piece off.

How in the world did I get so lucky to call this man mine?

He smirks when he notices me totally staring at him without shame.

"See something you like?"

I nod like a freaking bobble head. “Oh, you know that I like what I see.” I sit back and let him see exactly how I feel about seeing him naked between my legs.

He hisses, his eyes darkening, taking me in.

I never thought that I would be so comfortable with someone the way I am with him right now.

He is my person, when you find your person, all bets are off.

He crawls on the bed, carrying the bowl and he dips his finger in, dragging it along my leg.

He bends his head. My eyes close at the feeling of his tongue dragging along my shin.

Placing kisses all the way up to my knee, I suck in a sharp breath when he adds the icing just above my knee, on my inner thigh.

I prop my head up on the pillow, my eyes glued to him.

He looks up. “Don’t move, just feel.” My eyes drift closed, sinking into the bed and relaxing my whole body.

I fist the sheets so I don’t move. “God, I could fucking worship you every second, every day,” he growls, opening my thigh, licking from my knee all the way down to my pussy.

Oh God.

I try not to move my hips, because I am aching for him to be there.

I open my eyes, just as he buries his head between my thighs.

He grips my legs, throwing them over his shoulders and his arms come around from under them, cupping my inner thighs, basically locking me in from moving.

“I want to touch you, too,” I tell him, but he ignores me, content on driving me crazy with need.

It doesn’t take but a minute for me to come and come hard.

I bite my lip so I don’t scream and be loud.

I breathe deep through my nose and my whole entire body trembles.

He turns me around on my belly, my face pushed down and my ass in the air.

A sharp sting on my ass has me hissing, and I turn around and I see that he has bitten me on the ass.

“Ouch,” I say, jokingly.

He laughs and bites the other cheek. He sits up and my eyes go to his magnificent cock.

God, how I love that thing.

He moves until he is straddling my upper thighs, holds his dick and slowly sinks into me.

“Holy shit.” I moan, he feels so deep.

I feel him press against my ass, him fully seated inside me.

“Fuck.” He moans deep, not moving, just letting me adjust.

I throw my head back and look at Knight, loving that I can make him this way.

He pulls all the way out until his tip is just seated inside me, then slams back in, the headboard slamming into the wall.

He grabs a pillow and puts it behind the headboard so it doesn't create so much noise hitting the wall.

I close my eyes and just hang on for the fucking ride; every thrust is deeper, faster, harder.

I can't even move, my body is not my own right now. No, it's Knight's.

Smack! His hand lands on my ass, my eyes roll back, and I clench down on him hard, falling over.

He pushes my face into the bed to stop my screams that burst out of me.

He comes with me, falling onto my back.

I turn my head to the side and breathe deep, my whole body is burning.

“I think it’s your mission to kill me.” I groan when he slips out of me, not wearing protection once again.

Honestly, I could be pregnant right now; that thought hits me hard.

I bought a few tests the other day, even if I’m pregnant I’m not very far along at all.

It’s been over a month since we started having unprotected sex.

He wants a baby; he has told me so and would I be lying if I didn’t want to have a baby with his beautiful eyes. Annie would be so obsessed with the baby.

Knight slips out of bed and goes into the bathroom.

Do I take a test? It’s way too early, isn’t it? He reaches into the cabinet and I freeze knowing that he’s going to see the boxes.

I don’t hear the water for a long time, it’s complete and utter torture.

He walks out of the bathroom, and he stares at me for a moment before he pulls out a pregnancy test.

“What’s this?”

I laugh. “We aren’t having any protected sex and if you keep fucking me like the way you have, it will happen.”

He grabs my foot pulling me down to the foot of the bed, opening my legs and cleans me.

“I hope you are,” he admits with a smirk. “I don’t give a fuck if people think it’s too soon. I want you to have a big belly, waddling in my kitchen.”

I laugh at the image he has put in my head. “Well, like I said, if you keep it up, it’ll happen.” I lean up and kiss him softly.

But I don’t care either. I don’t care if it’s too soon or anything like that.

If you know, you know.

“Want to go take a test?” he asks me and fear hits me because it could be negative.

I nod and he takes my hand, opens the test and prepares it for me. I sit to pee and he just stands there, watching me.

“Uhhh...” I eye the door and he rolls his eyes. “I was just face-first in your pussy, trust me when I say I don’t give a fuck if I see you pee or not.”

I shake my head and cover my face. “Knight.” I groan and he lifts his hands backing out the door.

I pee on the stick and set it on the counter, popping the cap back on the pregnancy test.

He comes back into the bathroom as I shut the back of the toilet and sit down, waiting.

He brings me a t-shirt and I slip my arms through the arms and then he hands me a pair of shorts.

I smile and take them from him, my heart heavy from him just being so thoughtful and caring, he takes such good care of me.

He does things without a thought; he’s the best. “I love you,” I whisper to him, lifting my head back. He smiles, before bending down to kiss me.

I rest my face on his stomach, his hand on the back of my head, counting down the minutes until the test reads if I’m pregnant or not.

The waiting is torture.

A few minutes pass with him standing in front of me, rubbing my back, holding me.

“I think it’s time to look,” I tell him and he picks it up looking at it. I hold my breath.

“Wait,” he says and turns the test toward the light.

I move onto my tippy toes and look over to see if I see anything.

I gasp when I see it. It's very faint but it's there. "Oh my God, is that a line, Knight?" I ask him, peering closer.

He throws the test in the sink and lifts me off the ground. I wrap my legs around him. "Fuck, yes it is!" I laugh and hug him. "We're having a baby," I whisper as it starts to sink in.

He laughs, resting his forehead against mine. "Annie will be a big sister."

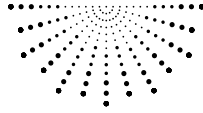
"Tomorrow I'll get a blood test, if that's okay, to make sure?"

"We can get you started on prenatal vitamins." I nod and stare into his eyes. I can't believe it, a baby. Honestly, in the back of my mind I thought that it would take a long time, but I guess the way that Knight has been fucking me on every surface in the house it was bound to happen.

"Okay," I say breathlessly.

It's happening, it's really happening.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN



Daniella

*K*night is completely clueless about the fact that we have a surprise planned for him. If it wasn't for River and Bell, it would be impossible to pull off. They lugged everything to the restaurant to get it set up for me.

He's either completely clueless or a great pretender. I got Annie to tell him that she is craving his favorite restaurant and ask if he would take her. She did it with a completely straight face.

We are now two minutes from the restaurant. River texted me and let me know that everyone is there. I made sure they hid their vehicles so that Knight doesn't catch on.

He takes care of everyone; if something is wrong, he is the first person that everyone runs to and I wanted to do something special for him

I reach over and take his hand in mine. I peek behind me to Annie who is trying to play it cool. She covers her mouth, hiding her giggles.

He looks amazing in his flannel shirt, rolled up to his forearms, showing his bright and beautiful tattoos.

He pulls in front of the restaurant and Annie unbuckles her seat, climbing to the front seat in her excitement. She is holding the ear of her bunny rabbit, tucking it under her arm.

“What’s the hurry, baby girl?” He chuckles and lifts her out of the truck, taking her hand. She looks beautiful wearing a white and light blue flowered dress. She looks at me wide-eyed. “Just hungry.”

I start to get out of the truck but Knight walks over and helps me out. His eyes go to my stomach for a moment before showing me that blinding smile.

I know the test showed a very faint line last night, but I’m trying not to get my hopes up that I actually am pregnant.

I touch his face for a moment, pulling it from my stomach. Until we know one hundred percent for sure, we aren’t going to tell anyone.

I take Annie’s other hand and we walk hand in hand into the restaurant. Knight tells the lady at the front that we need a table for three.

I try not to smile because he doesn’t know anything.

She leads us to the back of the restaurant, stops outside the door to their private room, and it’s completely pitch black in there.

I move closer, pulling him closer to the door and at the same time the hostess turns on the light.

Everyone jumps up and yells, “SURPRISE!”

Knight jumps back in shock, his eyes wide taking in everyone that he cares about here for him. There is a sign in the back of the room that says “Happy Birthday, Knight”.

He looks at me, like he can’t believe I planned this.

“Happy Birthday, baby.” I lean up and kiss him on the cheek. He pulls me and Annie into a hug. I pull him into the room where everyone comes up to hug him and wish him Happy Birthday.

I stand back and let everyone come up to him. Annie is running straight to Penny who hugs her. “Happy Birthday, Uncle Knight,” Penny yells to him, slipping from Annie to hug him.

I stand back and watch how happy he is.

River walks over and hugs me; I smile and hug her back. “You did such a good job, thank you so much,” I thank her.

She pulls back and studies me. “The happiness on you is beautiful. Knight is such a lucky man.”

Tears fill my eyes and I hug her tighter, she has seen me at my very worst. For her to see how happy I am, how happy that he has made me and even Annie, it means a lot. Annie has truly blossomed since we moved here.

“Did you plan this?” Knight comes over and asks me. I let go of River, tugging him to me. “Yes, I did.” I smirk loving that I pulled it off.

He chuckles. “You are sneaky.” He bends down and kisses my cheek. I smile and hug him, running my hands along his back, he looks so good tonight.

If I happen to not be pregnant, then I will for sure be after tonight with the plans I have for him and the special outfit that I know he is going to die over.

I smack him on the ass slightly. “Now, go have fun with your brothers,” I encourage him to go over and spend time with them.

The door opens and in comes Reaper and the girl he kidnapped. He is holding her hand and she waves at me when she sees me.

I guess she is liking the kidnapped life; I try not to laugh and walk over to them. “Hi, welcome.” I reach out to hug her and she hugs me back.

She truly is the opposite of Reaper; he is dark and dangerous. She is a blonde-haired little fairy.

Reaper is watching us both. “I think we need a girls’ night,” I tell her and she nods.

“Please let’s do this weekend coming up?” she asks me.

“Deal!” I squeeze her hand and let them drift through the room so he can introduce her to the others.

This is the most at ease I have seen Reaper, usually the darkness is at the forefront of his mind, you can see it all over his face.

But right now it's settled, he is calm.

Knight makes his way back over to me, tugging me to his side. "He looks happy," he tells me.

I nod. "He seems to be."

He kisses the top of my head and I rest my head on his chest. I look to Annie who is being held on one hip while Penny is on the other side of Gage.

They are spoiled rotten; they have all these men completely wrapped around their fingers.

Terror takes Annie from Gage and they just stand there, all talking with the girls just smiling contently.

I love the family that we have made here. I never dreamed that when I left my other town and came here, I'd find my home, my true home where I know my place fully, completely.

A couple of hours later, I'm helping Knight place all of his birthday gifts in the backseat of the truck.

Annie is asleep on her feet. Knight lifts her into the truck and sets her in her seat.

She yawns happily and looks around the truck. "Are we going home?" she asks.

"We are."

I wave to the others who drive past us, heading back home.

Reaper drives past with his girl, Julia. She waves to me and I wave back. She rests her head on Reaper's back since it's so cold outside, snuggling close to him.

I get in the truck, blasting the heat since it's chilly. "Knight, I forgot my bunny." Annie cries out and he lifts her out of the truck, where she was about to jump out. "I'm going to run her inside," he says and I nod.

I sit back in the seat, watching them walk inside. Annie is talking her head off to Knight who is just smiling and listening to her.

They slip inside the restaurant, the lights inside turning dark because it's close to closing time.

I hoped that Bell and Maverick would have come tonight but they're on a cruise right now.

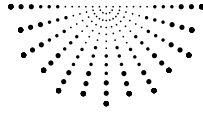
Annie misses them so much; they're the ones that will be babysitting her when Knight and I go on the vacation I booked for us.

I look down at my phone staring at the texts I've received and Annie's teacher asking if we can bring snacks in for a movie they have planned for Monday morning.

Suddenly, my door is wrenched open and I turn to see if it's Knight trying to scare me.

But no, it's a gun pointed right in my face.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



I gasp in shock; it's my brother-in-law. He's glaring at me, like I'm the devil in the flesh.

"Get the fuck out of the truck, bitch!" he yells at me but I don't move, I'm completely frozen in fear and shock.

"What are you doing here, Ryan?" I ask him, gripping the seat like he's going to pull me out of the truck.

"You know exactly why, you killed my brother," he hisses and reaches inside the truck, grabbing my hair in his fist.

I scream and take a hold of him. "Stop! I didn't kill him!" It's technically not a lie.

He laughs in my face. "Listen bitch, we have an eyewitness. You either are coming with me or I'm going to kill that sweet little angel of yours." Then he smirks. "Actually, I can think of other things I can do to her that doesn't involve killing her."

I feel like I die on the spot with him threatening Annie. Tears fill my eyes and roll down my face knowing what I have to do to keep her safe.

"Okay." My voice cracks as I mutter the single word that shatters my heart into a million pieces.

A van pulls up and I step inside, the gun still trained on me the whole time.

Ryan is just staring at me, gloating, thrilled that he has me in his custody.

Ryan has always scared me. His wife died from him beating her to death. She lived a literal nightmare. I went to her funeral and he was laughing, trying to find his next wife, who was a twelve year old.

I thanked God every day that I wasn't the one that was forced into marrying him. Arthur was horrible too but it was nothing compared to Ryan.

Ryan is just evil, pure evil.

He doesn't have a soul.

"What is the sentence for killing your husband?" he asks me, like he's thrilled at the prospect of what I have to say to him.

One part of me wants to ignore him and not answer, but another part of me knows what could happen if I don't. I breathe deep, fear rocking me to my core.

"Death by a thousand lashings," I say, not able to stop the tremor in my voice.

He chuckles darkly. "DING DING DING!" he says, dramatically.

Knight

IT TOOK A WHILE, but we finally managed to find Annie's bunny; it was under the table where she and Penny made a play fort for them using the tablecloths.

They lock the door behind us since it's closing time.

I was shocked that Daniella did all of this for me. I'm fucking so in love with her and this little girl, who is holding my hand and putting her trust in me.

I look at the truck and see that the passenger door is wide open, with the light on. She must be in the back messing around with the gifts; it all barely fit in the back.

The closer I get, an awful feeling sinks in my fucking gut.

I pick up Annie and move closer to the truck, peering in the backseat then the front, she is nowhere to be found.

“Where’s Mommy?” Annie asks and every part of me freezes with fear, my heart sinking all the way to the fucking ground.

I sit her in the front seat, shutting the door. “Daniella!” I yell out into the dark parking lot like I’m trying to find hope that she is just hiding from us, trying to push back the fear.

But she doesn’t answer back.

I grip the back of the truck; I can’t fucking breathe. Someone has taken her. I do the only thing I can do, take out my phone and hit SOS, letting all my brothers know that I need them asap.

Annie’s little face is pressed against the window, I can tell that she is terrified. I open the door, taking her in my arms. “Where is Mommy?”

What do I fucking say? I don’t say anything, I stand there. I can’t leave Annie to go look for her, she needs to be taken somewhere safe so I can find her mom.

It doesn’t take but a few minutes when I hear them. Reaper roars into the parking lot, pulling to a stop in front of me. I set Annie inside my truck and shut the door so she can’t hear what is going on.

I can feel her staring at me.

“She is fucking gone! I went back inside to find Annie’s bunny with her and I came back to her fucking gone!” I rush out in a fucking panic; I feel like my body is burning alive in fear.

Reaper growls and grabs Julia. “Can you stay with her?” I ask Julia and she nods and gets in the passenger seat, holding Annie.

“Who would fucking take her?” I rub my face thinking on it and then I spot a camera on all corners of the restaurant. “Cameras!” I tell Reaper and we take off running for the front door.

Reaper bangs his fist onto the glass door and one of the waitress's scared face looks at us before letting us in.

I hear the others pulling in and I know they will come inside. I rush through the doors to where the office is, close to the bathrooms. I have seen it there before so I know where it is.

“What is going on?” one of the workers asks me, taking us in.

“My woman was taken; I need to see the fucking camera feed,” I tell him and he moves out of the way letting us pass. I would have fucking taken him out if he didn't move in another second.

I throw open the door and spot the worker. “Fucking pull it up,” I tell him and he runs in, running the feedback. “About twenty minutes ago,” I tell him and he rolls it back.

I can see that Daniella is in the truck, then a man literally rips open my fucking door with a gun pointed at my woman's head.

Fuck.

I run my hands through my hair. Who the fuck is this?

The door is pushed open and River is here. “What the fuck happened?”

I explain what happened and she takes over the feed. “Fuck! She has a GPS on her phone, I bet that she still has it turned on.”

I feel fucking hope for the first time since all of this happened. “It's not your fault,” River tells me, trying to help me feel better.

But it doesn't do shit for me.

I feel fucking sorry for the person who dared to take her, to hurt her, the way he drug her out of the truck by hair.

The fucking pain this person is going to suffer is going to be unimaginable, I can't fucking wait.

River jumps up out of the seat. “Fuck, she is still moving,” she tells me and shows me a GPS that is leading outside of town in the middle of fucking nowhere.

I take her phone and run out of the building. “I will take care of Annie,” River tells me and I nod, thankful that she is here and she will protect my daughter.

Gage is standing in front of my truck; I know that he is guarding my girl. “We need to fucking go,” I tell him and he runs to his truck. I get in the passenger seat leaving my truck for River and Julia.

I can’t even fucking look at Annie right now. I will fall apart if I see her fear.

I set the phone in the holster, Gage looks at it and roars out of the parking lot toward Daniella.

We are on our way baby; we are fucking coming. The drive there is literal torture; all I can fucking do is pray that someone doesn’t hurt her.

I take my gun out of the back of my pants, checking to make sure that it is loaded. “Let’s get this shit done, I have some fuckers to fucking kill.”

Rage is filled in every piece of me, I am fucking coming, baby.

I will destroy them.

Daniella

EVERY MINUTE IN THIS TRUCK, I wish that we were hours from our location because the closer we get, the sooner that they’re going to lash me to death.

I have witnessed once before a woman getting lashed, it was the worst thing I have ever seen.

She said that her husband died in his sleep, but they claimed she poisoned him, and they killed her for it.

Soon the vehicle stops, and I weep inside. I won’t give them the satisfaction of seeing me break.

He grips me by my hair once again and drags me out of the truck. I hiss at the pain in my scalp, the reaction coming out before I could stop it.

He laughs and pulls me across the gravel, loving every second of causing me pain.

There is a cross in the middle of the field and I spot the faces of the men that are the elders of the church. They are all here, all of them.

Fuck.

This is not good.

They are dressed in white, the same clothes they wear to a funeral and today that funeral is mine.

My poor angel Annie and the baby that might be in my stomach, it hurts me, fucking destroys me to think about them.

I don't want Annie to be fazed by this, I don't want her to know the truth of my dying. She has been through so much in her little life, I just want her to have a good life.

Oh God, Knight. This will kill him because he is so protective. My heart breaks for Annie and Knight because I love them most in the world.

I will never get to see Annie fall in love, meet her person, and see her walk down the aisle.

I'll never get to see Knight holding our newborn baby, to see Annie's excited face over being a sibling for the first time.

All the hopes and dreams that I have are crashing down all around me.

They lead me to the cross, my face is pressed into the wood, my arms tied in front of me, leaving me hugging the wood.

I look behind me and see all the men are watching me intensely. These are the men that are responsible for the hell so many people have gone through, the ones that started all of this.

Who the fuck gave these men all this power? Anger fills me, empowers me, and I stiffen my back. I won't give them the satisfaction of seeing me scared.

Even though my heart is utterly breaking.

There's a scream behind me, it sounds like a woman. I try to see who it is but I can't look any further than just barely over my shoulder.

"Please don't do this! I helped you," she cries and the realization of who the voice belongs to, hits me when I see her.

The fucking teacher.

Is she the cause of this? They set her up next to me on the other cross. "Why are you doing this?" she sobs and rests her head against the wood.

I can't bring myself to feel sorry for her.

Ryan walks up to her and I tense, just waiting to see what he is going to do to her. "Because you didn't stop him from being murdered, you're just as guilty," he explains to her and backs away.

He looks at the both of us, gleeful, seeing us tied up and completely at their mercy. She is staring at me. This is all her fault, she did this, she ran to these people and ran her mouth.

Now look what is happening.

I am fucking bitter because of her. I will never get to see my daughter grow up because she wants to be back into the cult.

I turn away from her. "Please don't hurt me, I will do anything, I will marry you!" she pleads to Ryan. I am disgusted that anyone would ever offer herself up to him.

He bursts out laughing and all the elders join in. I turn to her and see her face is red with embarrassment.

I would rather die than be married to that awful fucker.

He bends over after he is finished laughing. "Do you think I would marry someone like you? You can't have kids which is why you were forced to leave in the first place, wench."

I close my eyes at the realization that she was married, and she couldn't have kids. So, they didn't have any use for her anymore but in their ignorant brains they don't understand that the man could be the problem too.

I stay silent. This is not my battle; I can't help her no matter if I tried. Ryan looks at me. "Unlike this cunt here, she can have kids." He walks over and runs his hand down the back of my head.

I fight the urge to throw up because his hands are on me.

But I don't make a sound, I don't move, I just shut myself down. Ryan taps the top of my head and walks back over to her. "So, how should we kill you?" he asks her and her eyes widen in horror, it's sinking in that there is no way out for her.

I clasp my lips together, this is my end too and I doubt her death will be worse than mine, a death of a thousand lashings.

No one ever makes it to the end, but do you think they stop until there's absolutely nothing left of you?

I remember the silence when I had to witness this when I was younger. The women were quiet, but the men were cheering with every lash.

We never said a word, just prayed that it didn't happen to us.

Now I am here, it's going to happen to me. My insides are shaking with fear, the anticipation of what's to come.

Ryan lifts his gun. "Honestly, I don't even think you're worth this bullet," he tells her.

She starts screaming at the top of her lungs, trying to break free from the restraints. In amazement, I notice that her ropes are starting to loosen. I hold my breath waiting to see what happens to her.

He places the gun right to the back of her head and she stops moving, she has run out of time.

She looks at me, and in this moment, I stare back at her. I see the resignation in her eyes.

I let out a deep breath. I don't want her death to come while she looks into the eyes of the men that did this to her.

They caused her to be like this; the cult is destroying people's lives, ruining them. I decide to give her peace even though in the end she doesn't deserve it. But she is human, everyone deserves peace in their own way.

I mouth to her, *I forgive you*. I don't want to die and hold onto the anger I feel for her.

She sinks into the wood of the cross. I nod to her, and she gives me a brief smile before the gun goes off, the bullet sinking into the back of her head.

I watch as the life leaves her eyes. I try not to throw up, the horror of what I just witnessed has me going into a panic attack.

I let my head hang, as they start laughing at her. "Shit, she didn't even twitch like when an animal dies," one of the men says. "I wonder has anyone ever fucked a dead body before?" another asks.

I try not to throw up at what they're suggesting, these men are evil. They must not have one single good thought in their whole head.

"Shit, should we try it?" another voice asks and I don't dare to look over.

A hand wraps around my face, pulling it over so I am looking at what they're doing. One of the elders is behind me, grips the back of her head so she is forced to look up at him, then he lets her go and her head rolls. They all laugh at her; I hope that she can have peace in the afterlife, something she didn't have here.

Her life is just gone, just like that.

Tears roll down my face at this, this is so terrible.

They're all laughing like they didn't just take her life because she didn't stop Knight from killing Arthur.

"Aww, it seems that she is sad," Ryan says and I feel him approaching me. I don't move or speak.

He grips the back of my hair, jerking my head back hard, causing me to internally wince at the pain he just caused me.

He gives me a pouting look. “What? Aren’t you having a good time?” he asks me.

I don’t reply.

His eyes start to narrow on me. One thing I will have at the end of this is my dignity. There is no fucking way I am going to give in to him in any single way. He is not worth the effort.

A hand slams on the wood directly above my head and I just stare at him. “Answer me bitch or I swear to God I will make your suffering ten times worse.”

I really don’t know how a thousand lashings could be topped, so I don’t speak, kind of liking the way he is becoming unhinged.

His hand lashes out suddenly, smacking me hard across the cheek. My head hits the side of the wood from the impact of the smack.

Ryan chuckles. “Not so tough now, huh.” He grips my face hard, pulling me toward him even though I can’t move since I’m tied to the pole.

“If you say so, Ryan,” I deadpan, my voice void of any emotion.

At this point I don’t care. If I am going to die, just get it over with because the torture of knowing my daughter and Knight would have to live a life without me is hurting more than anything that he can do to me.

“Fucking bitch!” he yells and stands me up on my feet, cuts my jacket off me and throws it at my feet. He grips the back where my collar is, takes the knife, dragging it down my shirt, exposing my back but the shirt still covering my front.

“Oh, look I won’t get to cut this,” Ryan gloats and then I feel him touching the back of my bra strap, unsnapping it, leaving my back totally exposed.

“Too bad that she is turned the wrong way, huh,” one of the men behind me says.

I close my eyes and pray to God that they don't rape me.

I can hear movement behind me. I peek around and see that Ryan is holding a whip in his hand.

He grins at me, catching me looking. I try not to show the fear I feel. I was hit with a whip once on my hip years ago and it was horrifying.

He reaches his arm out and lets it smack the ground next to me. I flinch at the snap of the whip.

They burst out laughing, noticing it.

"I think she really is scared, Ryan. Do you think we should stop?" one of them states in amusement.

"Wait, do you think we should start with the front so we can have extra skin to work with?" another guy suggests and they all murmur their agreement.

Ryan cuts the rope and turns me around. I'm now facing the men that have sentenced me to death because I wanted to live a normal life with those I care about.

These men have never felt an ounce of happiness in their life; they are fucking miserable pieces of shit that deserve to suffer.

I take in the faces of every single man here. I know the crimes of each and every one of them.

They are horrific, the things they have done and have been allowed to get away with are awful.

They have killed, raped, tortured and they didn't think twice about it. Who gives them the right to play God and decide what justice should be?

In the far distance, I see a small little light, like someone's phone flashlight.

I know without a single doubt that he has found me.

Ryan grabs the front of my shirt. Using the same knife he cuts it from my body and nicks my skin in the process. I am completely shirtless in front of them, my breasts exposed under their disgusting and leering eyes.

I see the heat in their expression. I try to hold back the tears I feel right now, the humiliation that they're trying to break me before they kill me..

Ryan chuckles. "Well shit, I can see two reasons why Arthur fought to get you back so hard."

I try not to throw up at the turned on look on his face. I see the light again and it's much closer. They can't see the light because they're facing me. The only light in this field right now is the fire directly in front of me and the lanterns hanging above my head.

It's completely pitch black around us.

Ryan flicks the whip again, but I don't flinch this time. His smile drops when he doesn't see that I'm terrified.

A resolve has come over me, I have accepted my fate.

"I just want you to know," I tell all of them. They look at each other laughing at me, like it's hilarious that I am speaking for the first time.

Ryan crosses his arms holding the whip in his hand, the main end resting just in front of my foot.

They're staring at my breasts, but in this moment, I don't care. I flex my arms behind me to see if there is any give.

"Yes?" Ryan says in a condescending tone.

I smile, and when I see movement behind them, I keep my eyes on Ryan. "You have signed your death warrant; you may end up killing me but your death will come. I am an ole lady of the Grim Sinners Rebels and they don't take kindly to someone kidnapping their women," I tell them.

They burst out laughing. "Oh yeah, come on out then, fuckers." Ryan turns and looks around dramatically like he is looking for them.

"Oh, wait, because they're not here," Ryan gloats and flicks the whip again, still not hitting me.

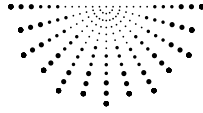
Anger fills me. He thinks that he can intimidate me, scare me but it's not happening. "Just get the fuck on with it then.

Are you afraid, Ryan?" I ask in a smirking tone, loving the way his face twitches with anger. "Do you need those men behind you to back you up, to help you lash an innocent woman?"

He screams at me and I grin widely. Knight slips out of the darkness and his brothers following at his back with guns in their hands.

"Yeah, do it, fucker," Knight says darkly, pressing the gun to his head.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN



I arch an eyebrow at Ryan's scared expression. "What's the matter Ryan, scared?" I gloat.

Knight looks over his shoulder at Gage who takes his place, pulling the gun out of the back of Ryan's pants.

I almost don't recognize him with the way he looks right now. He pulls his cut off and takes off his long sleeve flannel.

He unties me, his eyes never leaving mine. I know he is trying to give me respect after everything that happened.

He slips my arms through the sleeves, so gently and tenderly, night and day difference between those men and Knight. "Annie?" I ask.

He lets out a deep breath. "She's fine. She doesn't know what happened. She thinks you might be pranking her."

I close my eyes at that, sinking into his arms and let him hold me for a minute. Letting me feel the safety for just a moment, he kisses the top of my head and tilts my face back, looking at my face.

I can feel the swelling and bruising on my face. He hit me in the face with a gun, the wound is throbbing in my temple from where he hit me and the smack to my face.

I can't resist looking over at the teacher. She was horrible and sold me out, but she didn't need to die for it.

Knight stands back and I'm facing the men again, but this time I'm the one in control.

They're staring at me and each other in shock, they didn't expect this to happen. To my knowledge this is the first time they have all been together in one place.

One of the men looks at Ryan accusingly. "What the fuck, Ryan? You said no one would look for her. It's just her and your fiancée."

I swear I almost pass the fuck out. "Who is the fiancée?" I almost don't recognize the voice coming out of me.

"Annie," he says, like it's the most normal thing in the world.

I burst out laughing in shock that this is happening right now. They're so insane and then anger hits me. I march over to Ryan. God, I fucking hate him.

"You are a disgusting piece of shit. You will not be leaving here today alive, and you will never ever touch my baby, that is a fact." I rear my fist back, punching him hard, square in his face.

His head flies back and he snaps to look at me, hate in his eyes. "Don't fucking look at her like that!" Knight roars and pushes his face down, so he is looking down at the ground.

He doesn't do as Knight commanded of him. At this point I want to watch all of them suffer, to feel the pain they have caused so many people. They are the reason, all these men here, for the suffering of so many.

"Hold his face, brother," Knight tells Gage, who holds his face toward us. Knight looks at me and without using words, asks me to turn around.

But I don't.

Knight takes that as my answer when I don't turn around. Knight holds his eyelids open and reaches his fingers into his eye sockets. He screams, thrashes, and tries to get away with all his might, but it's useless.

Knight tears his eye right out of his skull and tosses it right into the field like he just threw a bouncy ball.

I stare in shock at the hole in his face. Knight does the exact same thing to the other eye, making him completely blind.

Gage lets him fall to the ground, clutching his face and where his eyes are missing, the eye rolling in front of his foot.

The elders are screaming and trying to run away but the guys push them back inside the circle so they can't leave.

Knight takes my hand and I intertwine our fingers. "I love you. I'm sorry this is happening." I hate this is all happening because of me, I never wanted this to happen.

He looks shocked that I apologized. "Don't apologize, baby," tells me, and I nod. "I love you, but none of this is your fault. It's theirs." He growls the last word, staring at the elders.

"How many women have you killed?" I look to the first man, his face pales and he looks at the others like he wants them to help him. "Now!" I demand, pissed off.

"Thirty," he whispers and the guys close their eyes around me. No one truly knows how bad it is in the church until you're in it and you're a woman.

One by one I ask every elder, the numbers growing higher and higher with every person.

We are seen as literally no one by these men.

I shake my head; I knew it was bad, but this is beyond what I thought I knew and then we stop on Ryan who is still crying about his eyes.

Knight steps in front of me. "Every one of you is going to die today." He looks at every single one of them, his voice steady, leaving no room for argument.

"You exposed my woman." His hand clenches. "You wanted to fucking humiliate her, you wanted to lash her to death, torture her. Death is what you will be fucking wishing for," he trails off, his jaw clenched, he breathes deep.

He looks at Gage, who nods. "The sentence is more than just death; I'm taking your eyes, for daring to look at my

woman and you're sentenced to the same fate my ole lady had. Lashing."

They all gasp in shock that Knight said that to them.

A prospect comes from the back of the group. "Darlin, you don't need to be here for this. Want to go to the truck and call Annie?" he asks. I nod. I don't want to see this, and I know that after today, all these men will be dead and that the cult will be completely crippled. This is the end.

He kisses my forehead. "You do not let her out your fucking sight. Stand outside her door and don't move." He points to the prospect.

He presses his forehead against mine one last time before I follow the prospect through the field. I look back one last time. "Do you need me to carry you? Are you hurt?" he asks me and I shake my head no.

I was hit but I am not hurt; it could have been so much worse if Knight and the guys didn't show up when they did.

He opens the truck door for me and right before I get inside, screams are echoing across the mountains, causing the hairs to stand up all over my body.

I shut the door, blocking it all out and call Annie. She brings a smile to my face.

It will be all okay, this is the end of the cult, and I would have gone through it all over again if it meant that it was over.

It's all over.

Knight

I WAITED until she was in the truck before I started what I was fucking aching to do. Me and my brothers line them up all in a line, on their knees.

Reaper is by my side with a knife.

One by one, we start with their eyes, taking them from them. No man alive who has seen my woman exposed without her permission, will fucking see another day.

The screams of them are feeding my fucking soul. I made a promise to myself that every fucker that dared to hurt her would die by my hands.

The fucking sight of her standing there in front of these men, naked, while they stared at her and then prepared themselves to fucking lash her to death, was my undoing.

That shit will haunt me for the rest of my life.

The regret that I didn't protect her from this, the fear in her eyes and then the relief when she saw that I was there fucking crushed me.

Ryan, I recognize the fucker as the man that was the one that took her from the parking lot at the restaurant.

He is still crying, in a fucking fetal position. "Not so tough now, are we?" I gloat and kick him with the butt of my gun, pushing him face first into the ground. He sits up and the dirt is covering his whole entire face because of the blood that covered him.

He reaches up and touches his face horrified.

But I don't have an ounce of regret. He was going to hurt her and torture her, he doesn't deserve an ounce of mercy.

I look to all these fuckers, they have killed and hurt so many people in their lives, it's time to fucking end this cult.

"Shit, what a beautiful sight," I gloat to Gage who chuckles. I have seen firsthand what he would do to make sure that River is okay; we all would do this to exact revenge for our women.

I turn to the guys who are waiting for me. "Daniella might be pregnant," I tell them, raising the magnitude of what the fuckers would have taken from us, from her.

"Fuck," Gage hisses.

Reaper growls and pushes one of the elders down onto the ground when he tries to stand.

I take the whip off the ground. I grip it in my hand and stare at it. They were going to use this on my Daniella. My

woman.

I grit my teeth. “Line them up,” I tell my brothers and they make all of them get onto their knees.

I take the whip and crack it against the ground, and one of them screams at the realization of what’s going to happen.

“I bet they won’t make it past twenty.” Terror chuckles, leaning back against the cross where they had tied Daniella to.

I look to the teacher; she was a piece of shit for giving up Daniella, but she didn’t deserve to die.

“Please, we can give you whatever you want,” Ryan pleads with me, holding his eyes.

I laugh. I laugh at the fucking audacity of him. “You think I would take whatever you can pathetically give me?”

Ryan curses. “All of the women you want, they can be yours.” He tries to bribe me with something that I don’t even want.

Now I feel fucking insulted. I move so I’m directly in front of him. “Do you think anyone would even fucking compare to my Daniella? She is everything. You are going to die. No matter what you say, it’s not going to change the fact you are going to die, all of you are going to fucking die.”

He doesn’t say another word, but now has a terrified look on his face. I chuckle and tap his face, pushing him away from me.

I go back to my spot and this time I don’t even tease them.

I smack the whip against his back, he screams and flexes his back like he is trying to get away from it.

I zone out and hit him repeatedly, his screams making me fucking laugh.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

We are forty deep when he passes out onto the ground, his back look like a fucking meat grinder got to it at this point.

I take out my gun and shoot him in the back of the fucking head ready for this shit to end and I can get to my woman.

Reaper takes the whip from me; he takes his pick of elders. One by one, my brothers choose their victims, making them suffer.

One by one, we plant the bullet in their brains, ending their fucking destruction. “I will send one of the prospects to take her to a funeral home, she deserves to be laid to rest,” Gage tells me and I’m happy with that.

“Let’s get the fuck out of here. Leave these fuckers for the members of the cult to find; I want them to see what happens if they start this shit up again.”

I don’t turn back; I march across the field to where we parked our vehicles. It was the longest fucking drive of my life, the fear of what could be happening to her was the worst feeling I will ever have.

The fear of losing her is something I wouldn’t fucking survive; she is my life, her and Annie are my whole entire world.

She opens the door when she sees us walking to the vehicles and bikes. She runs straight to me, and I lift her off the ground holding her so tight that I’m afraid that I’m hurting her.

She kisses me hard, tears mingling with our kiss breaking me down to my fucking soul.

I close my eyes and just kiss her like it’s the last time I will ever get to fucking touch her. I had a glimpse of what it would be like if I lost her, and I never want to feel that again.

I wipe the tears from her face, hating to see them. “I am sorry this happened to you,” I whisper to her, my heart fucking cracking.

She shakes her head. “In a way I’m glad it happened because it’s over. All of those women and kids who have

suffered have gotten their justice.” She stares into the dark field where the only light is the fire in the middle of all the dead bodies, you can barely see them lying there.

“Baby.” I don’t know what to say, I just hold her tighter. “I love you so fucking much, I could spank your ass for scaring me like that,” I joke and she bursts out laughing, the final tears drifting down her face.

All the guys are watching us smiling. “Thank you, brothers.” I thank them and they all move to me, putting their hands on Daniella’s back and mine. “She is yours and that means she is ours, brother,” Gage simply states.

I love my brothers; they are the family that I didn’t have and one I feel like I don’t fucking deserve sometimes.

Daniella

TERROR IS TELLING the prospects what they need to do as they walk across the field. “We are going to give her a proper burial,” Knight tells me when I look to her, still hanging off the cross.

“Thank you,” I thank him and all the guys.

They are my family. I reach out and take a hold of Gage’s hand, still in Knight’s arms. “Thank you all.”

Reaper smiles at me and it’s the first time I have ever seen him smile. He walks over to Gage’s truck and opens the door for us. Knight climbs in with me still in his arms, thankful for the heat that washes over us.

I rest my head on his shoulder needing this right now. “I love you,” I whisper to him, the shock of everything starting to wear on me.

“I told Annie that I accidentally got lost when I saw a hurt animal in the woods,” I tell him. It’s obviously a lie and I don’t like lying to her but if it protects her from the real truth, I’d lie a hundred times over.

He nods, pulling me impossibly closer. I feel something cold on my finger, I lift my left hand and I stare in shock at the

huge diamond ring.

“What?” I ask in shock.

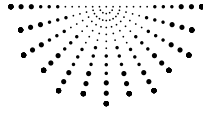
He laughs, lifting my hand and kisses the back of it, right below the ring. “We’re getting married,” he tells me and I burst out laughing.

“Not even going to ask me?”

He shakes his head. “Fuck no, you’re mine.”

And I am, all of me.

EPILOGUE



DANIELLA

Months Later

I wake up to the sweet sound of Annie singing. I smile and look over in bed next to me. She is holding our sweet angel, Kaitlin. “Good morning my girls,” I tell them and rub the back of Kaitlin’s sweet baby head.

Knight is sitting on the other side, observing, to make sure Annie has the hang of it, while holding Evan.

You guessed it, I had twins.

The shock we felt when the ultrasound tech showed us two sweet angels was enough to rock our world.

I had to have a C-section after the labor went on for days. I fought it, but the babies were starting to get distressed.

“Good morning, Mommy.” Annie grins. She has decided that the twins are really her babies and I just carried them for her; she is amazing with them.

I was scared that she would have been jealous, but she has been so excited from the start. Her and Penny pretty much planned the whole entire nursery. I caught them before I left for the hospital making a timetable of when they will be babysitting.

Julia kept Annie for me while I was in the hospital, she is currently pregnant herself with a mini little Reaper.

The kidnapping was the best thing that ever happened to them. River had her baby a month before me. It's baby central at the clubhouse right now and I love it. I love seeing the guys who are scarier than sin fall into a mess at the sight of a baby.

“Good morning, Momma.” Knight walks around the bed, kissing me on the cheek and helps me sit up. I try not to wince in pain.

He turns his head to the side, noticing my pain. He hates seeing me in pain, but I won't take anything because I'm breastfeeding and I don't want any painkillers affecting the babies.

He gently hands me our son, and I smile into his precious little face. Evan looks just like his daddy and Kaitlin is a mixture of the both of us.

“When did he wake up?” I ask, yawning. I pumped enough that he could bottle feed and I could rest.

“Just a few minutes ago. Annie ran into the room the second she heard the cries.” I giggle at that, she loves her babies.

I will never forget the pure love on her face the second she saw them the first time. I kiss Annie on her cheek, pulling her closer to me for a snuggle.

Knight

I STAND BACK and look at my whole fucking world right before me, the ring on her finger is glistening from the lamp on the nightstand.

She has never been more beautiful than she is in this moment. It fucking awed me what she went through to give birth to our babies.

But she never complained.

I reach out and touch her cheek, tilting her head back so I can kiss her. She looks back at me with pure love.

At times I don't feel like I fucking deserve love.

But I love her, I love her with every part of me, to my fucking soul and these kids too. "I love you so much," I tell her.

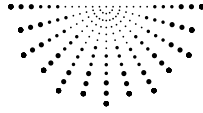
She touches my hand on her cheek. It's hard to believe that a year ago, she just moved here.

Little did I know that she was going to turn my world on its fucking head. I met my forever and I thank God every fucking day for my family.

Yeah, this shit is the best.

Annie

EPILOGUE



DANIELLA

I peek out of my window, grinning down when I see Penny below. “Hurry your ass up bitch before our parents find out.”

I laugh and start to push myself out the window when my door opens showing the angry face of Evan.

I growl. “Not a word to anyone about this, boy.”

He looks too much like his dad. He is glaring at me the way he does and making me feel slightly guilty that he has caught me sneaking out.

“Where are you going?” he asks me, eyeing me and then walks past me to peek down and see who is below me.

Penny sees Evan’s face and takes off running, hiding behind a tree. “It’s too late bitch, we have been caught.”

She walks from behind the tree and kicks her foot. “Really, Evan. Can you be cool for just a moment?” she groans.

He laughs smiling down at her. “Well, if it isn’t my future ole lady,” he gloats and I roll my eyes.

My brother has been in love with Penny since he was old enough to even understand what an ole lady means.

He is twelve and we are seventeen, but it doesn’t stop him. “Turd, go inside and go to sleep. We are just meeting up with

the other MC kids.”

The other MC kids are the Grim Sinners and the Devil Souls; we meet up in a town that doesn't belong to us and raise hell. Our parents have these towns in lockdown.

My door is pushed open again and Kaitlin walks in with a grin. “I'm ready to go,” I groan and I know that this is going to set Evan off.

He may be twelve years old but all he does it bitch like an old man about how it's his responsibility to take care of us girls.

I see a shadow behind Penny and her brother Donovan, who is her stepbrother, but they were the same age when Royal met his mom. “Did you really fucking sneak out, Pen?” he growls. “If you want to sneak out at least tell us guys so we can make sure you don't trip and die.”

He looks up, see me and smirks. “We all know what happened.”

I glare. “I fell once,” I point out.

“Right off a cliff into the water. I had to fish your ass out.”

I growl and slam my window shut. Bitches, all of them. Evan pulls his twin out of the room before I blow up. I look back out the window to see Penny stalking off but Donovan is still looking up at my window.

I open it enough to stick my head out. “What?” I sass.

“Nothing, darlin.” He winks and backs away causing me to have a heart attack. Donovan and I have had this crazy attraction to each other over the last year and I am avoiding that like the plague.

Until I can't.

THE END

You guys guessed it!

Reaper and Julia is next!

Found out how Reaper stalked and kidnapped his woman

LOL, love you guys

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