



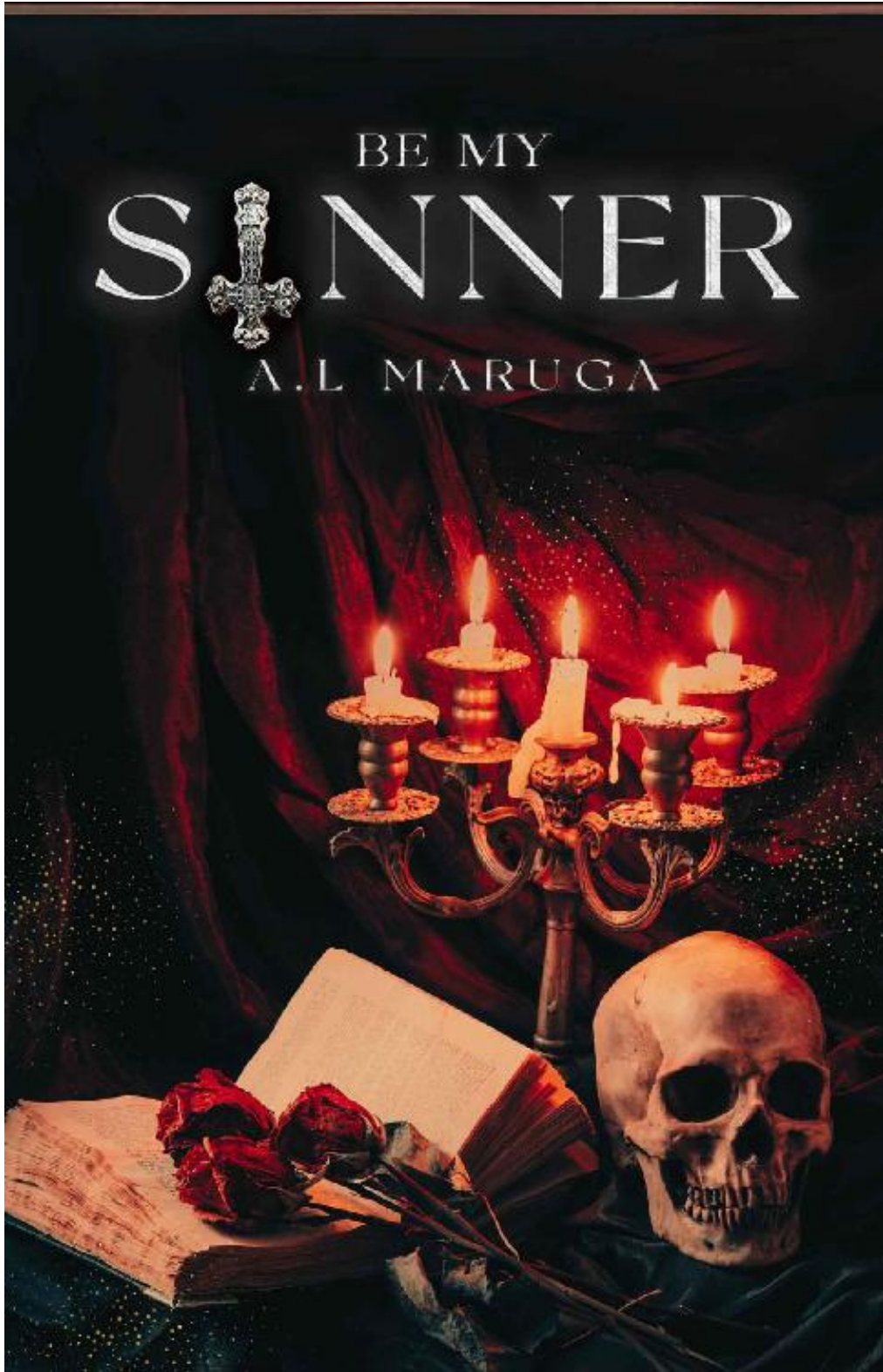
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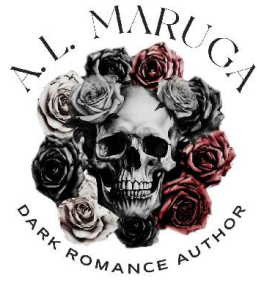
SINNER

A.L. MARUGA

BE MY
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Acknowledgements

About the Author



For all the *sin-loving good girls*

with a touch of darkness in their souls.

The ones who are out here still trying to fit:

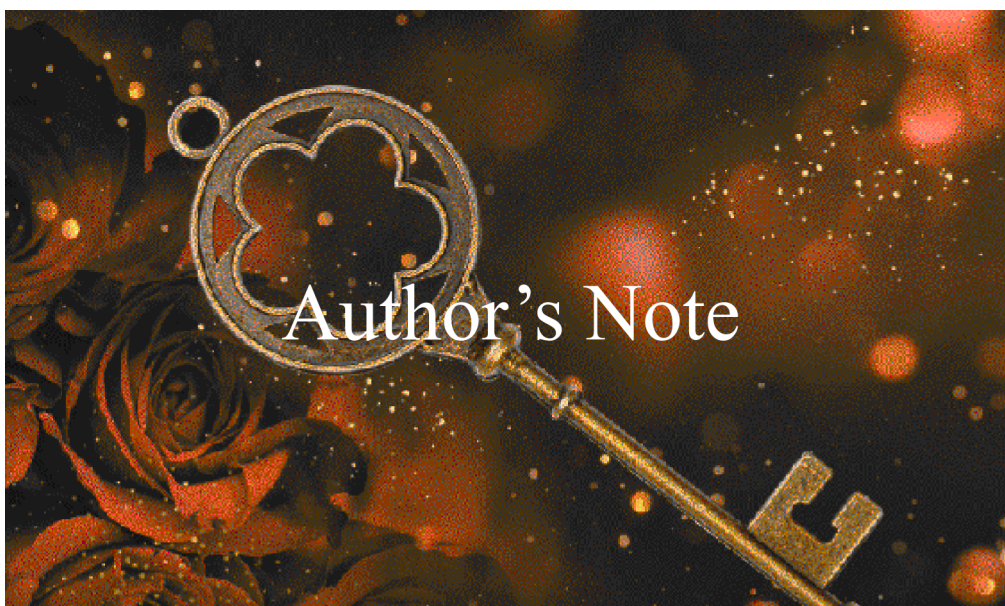
Into the expectations of others;

that situation in your life;

those uncomfortable jeans over your ass.

Love, let that shit go!

We are now in our villain era, making no apologies and
taking no shit.



For those of you who are looking for redemption or characters that can be redeemed. **Look elsewhere.** You won't find them in this book.

These characters are unapologetically unhinged, depraved, malevolent, and dangerous. They make no apologies for forcefully demanding that their story be told just the way they wanted. They are psychotic assholes down to their very cores, and they have no regrets. **None.**

They are steeped in evil deeds, pure, unadulterated darkness, and sinful and grievous behavior. They revel in it and refuse to be compelled onto the straight and narrow path; they'd sooner set the world ablaze.

There are no gallant knights or beautiful princesses here, just villains. Each one vying to outdo the other in their depravity, with a macabre competition of wickedness. They are sitting within the pages of this book, salivating to drag you down to their level of hell, pick your bones clean, and leave you just as unstable as they are.

This book takes place in a semi-dystopian future, where a corrupt religious organization has usurped power, and abused it for their own means. Expect plenty of religious undertones, sacrilegious behavior, and desecration of people and morality along the way. This is a work of fiction and is not meant to target any religion.

Please don't turn the page if you can't handle the *darkness*. There will be no return trip from hell available to you.

There are so many **T.W.** and sensitive topics in this book that it would literally take up multiple pages to mention them all here. Please check them **here** or on my website.

For those of you who wish to go in blind, please remember this is a work of fiction, and I **DO NOT** condone, or approve of any of the situations, actions, or behaviors of the characters.

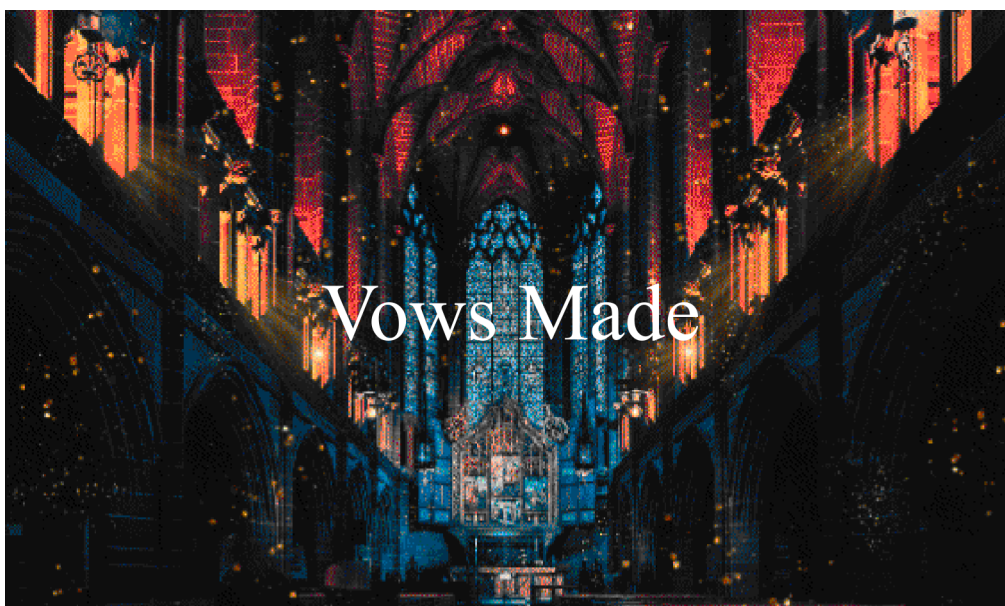
This book will mess you up. **Guard your mental health.**

Don't say I didn't warn you.

xoxo

A.L. Maruga





Life is demanded and restrained.

Power is given, but not without sacrifice.

The sacraments absolve you of your dirty sins,
and the blood stains on your soul.

The price? Your eternal soul and obedience.

Holy orders, they tarnished and broke.

Devastation and evil they created and served.

The shadows disguise their deeds from the prying light.

I was chained and left to rot.

Forced to endure the sins of my forebears on my pained and
weary soul.

Punishment given for sins not committed.

Until they took more than they ever gave.

From confined darkness, I will rise.

A dark specter in the night.

The devil, my constant companion, whispering sweet
nothings in my ears.

New vows I have made.

Ones that will rain down chaos and hellfire.

Their society I will burn, until not even the embers of ashes
remain.

I am the lost sheep, returned to the flock.

The shepherd and his followers will perish at my hands.

Their sins fuel my wrath. Their blood will cool the fires that
live within my veins.

Don't pray for me.

I don't want to be absolved or forgiven.





The world was too quiet around me. The air seemed to hold its very breath with desperation, as darkness descends on yet another day in a world that has lost all of its luster and vibrant humanity. I move silently like a specter through the space once inhabited by cars, airplanes, and vast populations of people. Noise, all the noise seems to have vanished, along with hope it seems.

Gone. All of it is now limited to only those who see themselves as part of the hierarchy. Through the gloomy dark night air, my eyes find the rows of houses that are now empty and abandoned, awaiting demolition while their former inhabitants live in deplorable conditions, squeezed together like mice in a cage, just waiting to die.

Death is a mercy in this new world, one not readily given. If they can continue to take all you have until your last breath is spent, they will. It's in their nature: those who have, *take*, and those who don't, *suffer*.

I keep moving through the thick copse of trees, the scent of pine and earth making its way into my nostrils, and giving me a momentary sense of peace. It's a facade I allow myself to momentarily dwell in, as I move closer to the large manor in the distance. The one with all the pretty lights from within, while the rest of the populace lives in darkness.

My stomach rumbles quietly as I move through the woods that have now become a part of me. The wilderness and thriving plant life are all that is left of free will and the right to control one's own autonomy. Freedom is just a word, forgotten and abandoned in this world.

Hunger is a constant companion; only those with power eat well, while the rest of us consume scraps left from the altar of those holy men who offered us salvation and hope. The Order of the Brotherhood; the righteous who would save our souls, while offering us freedom from our sins and cleansing so that peace could be won.

Freedom. What a silly word that our ancestors took for granted. After hundreds of years and countless wars fought on that very principle, the world crumbled with one fell swoop at the feet of men who promised freedom, but wrapped chains around the world's populace instead. *Sheep led to the slaughter blindly.*

We were too ignorant, a broken and beaten populace gripped by a fervent desire for change, hope, and a lasting peace, in a world ravaged by wars. Our hearts yearned for a brighter,

more just future. The weight of our hope hung heavy in the air, like an unquenchable thirst for a better tomorrow.

Yet, we were blinded by our longing; we remained unaware of the poisonous corrosion eating away at the foundations of our society. The men who would take advantage of our weakness. The false promises from false prophets that were being made for a better world. It was a gradual descent into a darkness we couldn't perceive, until it had already swallowed us whole, the signs of corruption hidden beneath the surface until it was too late to turn back.

All of the world's technologies and methods for fighting back were confiscated by the Order. First, they took away our means of communicating over distances with each other, so we could not learn what was happening in different parts of the world. The atrocities and mass murders they were committing against those who resisted.

Then, they stripped us of our knowledge, deeming access to information and wisdom a sin, beyond the grasp of anyone but the chosen leaders. This act left the next generation in darkness, ignorant of the one that preceded them, unaware of the vast world that slipped through their fingers, and that was surrendered to false prophets. It was a world once brimming with wonder, inhabited by people filled with hope, desires, and aspirations.

Then came the classes, a system meticulously crafted to extinguish any flicker of ambition or revolt you might still possess. It was a world that had once fought relentlessly for

the right to choose, to define their own destinies, now bowing in submission before a group of men who held the power to dictate their futures.

Now, all one could hope for was that their children wouldn't succumb to abject poverty in one of the servitude villages, and that their own demise would arrive swiftly. The desire for a long life had vanished years ago, replaced by fervent prayers for an end to suffering and servitude.

Even among the upper echelons, the righteous found themselves torn, whispering prayers for salvation with one breath and invoking death with the next. This was especially true if you had the misfortune of being born a female in this world, as I did.

Your destiny was sealed from the moment you drew your first breath. Unlike those occupying lower rungs of the class system, you, too, would be conscripted into service, albeit in a different capacity.

Your womb would be held hostage by the Brotherhood, compelled to swell their ranks with righteous soldiers for their cause. No choice would be given to you. They would dictate whom you would belong to, and your opinion or desires would never be considered. You were to be nothing more than property, in this divine world forged by the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament.

A deep sigh leaves my lips as I approach within two hundred feet of the house, concealed within the deep green foliage with only the stars above me to guide my path. Even the moon

seems to have decided to forego me this evening; shrouding itself behind dense clouds, refusing to be present to witness the horrors being committed below in the mortal realm.

I gaze up at the sky, pondering what my ancestors would have been doing in a moment like this. Would they be appalled by the world's transformation? Would the women who came before me call out to me and demand justice? I like to believe that they would, that the females who rest in their graves are screaming for retribution, demanding justice for the sins committed against their sisters, demanding that I avenge them.

I draw the blade from my strap, running my fingers along its sharp edge. A drop of blood rising to the surface of my skin, the acute pain a stark reminder that I am alive, even though I feel lifeless inside. Yet, it is this pain that reassures me I still live, breathe, and have a purpose. It is a sensation that fuels my resolve, a connection to my humanity in a world that now feels devoid of it.

I know that with this blade and the tools at my disposal, I can soothe their pleas, and incite the screams of the men who would seek to subjugate the women still on this pitiful earth of their line. That I can still bring about freedom with my fury and violence.

This blade I wield becomes a means to not only soothe their suffering, but also to appease the rage that smolders within me. A rage that hungers for retribution and blood, and demands justice. It is a relentless force, one that refuses to let me rest until my mission is complete. For them, I have become

a specter of the night, a hunter of prey, a harbinger of vengeance, purging the earth of its vermin.

Have I sacrificed a portion of my sanity in this unrelenting and insatiable pursuit of vengeance? Perhaps, though, it feels like a small price to pay in the grand scheme of things. Am I irreparably broken now? *Yes*, but all my shattered fragments have transformed into jagged weapons to wield against the enemy.

They took everything I had without a trace of remorse, and imprisoned me like the very animal they perceived me to be. They mistook me for a sheep when, in truth, I was a lion. They underestimated me, just as they had underestimated my female ancestors for centuries. In the end, the only way to combat a predator is to transform into a greater one.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Fuck that; all I do is want.

I crave violence. I want to be consumed by a seething rage. I yearn to witness the blazing fires of hell, unleashed upon those who callously buried me in a shallow grave, forsaking me to rot without a second thought.

***Forgive my sins and trespasses,
Father.***

I assure you, I know exactly what I do. I am the *Unholy Ghost*,
and I will not rest until the world is cleansed.



Chapter 3



The Sinner

Dinah

I watch them intently through the narrow opening, concealed by the deep shadows surrounding me. My knees protest the crouched position I've been holding for over twenty minutes, but not even the threat of my legs spasming and shattering could have me moving right now.

My eyes are glued to the sight in front of me. I watch as he fists the blonde's hair, yanking her back until her neck is wholly bowed, and pain is etched across her features, as he pounds into her mercilessly from behind. His long, muscular, tattooed body is forceful in its movements, each muscle defined and etched out as if made from marble—*a malevolent Adonis who corrupts the world around him with sin.*

I can see his long, meaty cock slipping in and out of her gaping hole through the lens of the long-range sniper rifle I have trained on him. The sight is disturbing, intriguing, and intoxicating, calling to all the deep desires that live within me. A trickle of sweat makes its way down the back of my neck, even though the night air is cool. Lust, hunger, and anger fill me, warring with each other for dominance.

His dark midnight hair is soaked at the edges with perspiration that trails along that masterpiece that is his torso, covered in beautiful, vibrant art. Each time he pulls out to the

tip, the glint of metal catches my eyes. *Pierced*. Damn, my mouth waters.

Movement from the right momentarily diverts my gaze from the tattooed, naked, virile male before me to a figure draped in black robes. The fabric conceals him within its folds like a shroud of darkness. His presence quickens my heart rate, and stirs anticipation in my stomach like a captive butterfly.

He moves forward, lowering the hood of his robe and removing the white mask that conceals his features. My breath stutters inside of my throat at the beauty I see before me. He's a striking combination of rugged and handsome, with tousled light brown, wavy hair that frames his strong, chiseled features.

His eyes, a mesmerizing shade of dark pools of melting amber that hold secrets untold, are narrowed at the sight before him. His lips are set in a taut, unyielding line. A hint of stubble graces his square jaw, accentuating his rugged beauty. His confidence is unmistakable and draws you in with its sinister intent. He is beautiful in a menacing way. In a way that darkness is as it sucks all the light out of a space, and you know something evil is about to consume you.

Even if a thick pane of glass didn't divide us, I'm too far away to hear their words. *Pity*. The one in the black robe moves forward, smooth and sure in his movements, like a slithering snake, ready to wreak damnation in his wake.

He reaches out and tightly grabs the blonde's trembling chin in his harsh grasp. His fingers squeeze into her pale flesh, no

doubt leaving marks behind in his cruel wake. Her eyes grow enormous and frightful, replacing the look of ecstasy that was present on her face mere moments ago. His expression is a blank mask, giving away nothing of the thoughts that burn within his dark mind. He speaks words to her that make tears slip down her face.

How I suddenly long to lick those tears and taste her sorrow. She's even prettier when she cries. She's going to be stunning with their marks placed all over her alabaster skin. The unhinged thought crosses my mind, but I don't regret it, do I? It's even fair to say that I might be feeling the tinge of the green monster that lives quietly inside of me. He doesn't worry me, though; he's the least of the demons that inhabit me.

I can't hear their words, but I can imagine them, and they aren't soothing or compassionate. They trickle through my mind, teasing all the depraved and dark corners. No, they won't be showing her any mercy. After all, she's a *'gift'* to them. One to be used any way they want, and use they will.

No words of denial will cross her lips, and he wouldn't care to listen even if she uttered them. He slips three fingers inside of her mouth, stretching it and opening it wide until she looks grotesque. They both laugh at her obvious distress, as the other one continues to mercilessly fuck her from behind. He's pounding into her so fiercely that even from my distance, I can see her body being pushed forward and pulled back, her skin reddening from his relentless pace.

The man in the robe removes his fingers from her wide-open mouth, a trail of spit sliding down from the corner of her lips to coat her trembling chin. He begins to discard the robe, followed by his black jeans and hoodie, revealing tattooed golden skin inch by inch. It makes me shift uncomfortably in my concealed stance. The pain in my knees becomes pronounced as I continue to watch from my position in the large tree outside their room, hidden by thick branches and foliage—a ghost hidden, observing the sinister and depraved work of the devils that inhabit my world.

They'd removed her from the main room, preferring not to fuck her in the middle of the orgy that was happening after the ceremony with the other members of the Brotherhood. Maybe they only like to share with each other and aren't into large group activities? *Who the fuck knows?* Regardless, it makes my task easier and more enjoyable not to have to track them through a crowd. It also makes it more dangerous, and that is a thrill that I can't pass up.

The man in the robe stands before her naked now, his chest broad and robust, adorned with tattoos that trail down his impressive abdomen, arms, back, neck, and legs. He's a living work of art, a vibrant and dramatic canvas of colors.

The tattoo connoisseur in me appreciates each of his exquisite pieces, as I peer through my small magnifying glass that brings them into sharp focus. Much like the other man, his body is a canvas adorned with art depicting religious motifs, alongside the emblem of the twisted Order he dutifully serves. Angels, devils, and scripture adorn every accessible inch of his

skin. I can't help but roll my eyes at the lack of originality in his choice of artwork. *It appears there are even sheep among the shepherds.*

The other male releases his punishing hold on the girl's hair, and pushes her head with the palm of his large hand towards his waiting friend's hard cock. His fingers dig into her hair before he fists the blonde strands, and her lips open in a cry of pain. One that brings a tinge of excitement to my own body.

The dark purple tip of a thick cock traces her pouty, pink lips, painting them in shiny precum before making its way into her mouth. He releases his hold on her head and wraps both his hands around her naked, petite waist, and slams into her hard enough to make her mouth move on his friend's cock.

The man in the robe doesn't hesitate, slamming into the back of her throat without the slightest hint of benevolence. They use her like a seesaw between them, pushing and pulling while she's helpless to restrict their movements. Tears cascade down her pretty face as saliva trickles down the side of her stretched mouth, coating her chin and landing on her naked chest.

She gags and tries to pull away, her expression pained but ignored. His hands grip either side of her face, forcing her to take all of him down her throat with so much force that she will be covered in his fingerprints come morning. *Beautiful marks for a beautiful girl.* Gentleness isn't in their nature, it seems. I'll need to remember that to repay them their sins in kind.

Fuck, that's a pretty sight to witness. For one fleeting and insane moment, I find myself almost wishing I were in her place. Being fucked mercilessly and used by both the man in the robe and the tall tattooed one. My pussy throbs, and I can feel wetness seeping into my panties, causing disgust to ripple through my skin. I shouldn't desire them; no part of me should be intrigued by either of them. They are both monsters of the Order.

Call them by their names, my mind insists. Don't let your thoughts wander to these two demons just because you're feeling desire. Address your enemy by their names, so there's no confusion about why you're here.

I roll my eyes at my mind, which never hesitates to call me out for my depravity. One that has taken root within me, growing stronger and deeper as I plunge head-first into darkness with no escape.

Good luck, bitch. I don't care what anyone thinks of me. It's natural sexual biology, watching two prime male specimens fucking that helpless girl with ruthless abandon. Of course, I would be turned on. Fuck, it's no different than watching hardcore porn on the dark net when I can hack it, which I may or may not do. It means nothing that I am aroused. *Right?* It's not about them as much as it is about the violence and the control they are perpetuating on her.

My mind is correct about one thing; I should be addressing them by their names. They're not strangers to me, even though I don't recognize this version of them. Abraham Mercier and

Ezekiel Rothesay are two demons destined to reunite with their brethren in hell someday soon.

My finger twitches on the trigger. It would be so easy to snuff out one of their lives right now. I know I wouldn't be able to take both of them out before the alarm is raised, signifying a threat to their precious, entitled lives, but just a little more pressure of my finger, and I can end one of those miserable traitors in a heartbeat, unburdening this world of yet another male who uses women only for their own satisfaction.

No! My mind screams—it's too easy, not enough suffering. They must endure pain and watch their crooked, depraved world crumble at their feet first. Stick to the goddamn plan; we've plotted too long and worked too hard to end it like this.

Abraham pulls his cock out of her mouth. I'm almost disappointed that I didn't get to watch her choke further on it. I close my eyes briefly and shake my head. *Gotta stop watching that shit*, my mind admonishes me. He moves away from her and stalks towards a black leather sofa in the room. He sits himself down, wide-legged, with a relaxed air like it's just another Sunday after church, and it's perfectly normal to be a wall away from a raging orgy and use a submissive girl like a damn yo-yo.

Ezekiel pulls out of her pussy, and I watch as a look of pain, longing, and regret crosses her features. He's obviously hurting her with his long, pierced dick, but in the best way. The way that causes my own traitorous pussy to clench as his

cock bobs up and down, slick from her wetness, against his firm abs as he moves.

Abraham motions for her with his tattooed and ringed hand, and she stumbles on unsteady feet towards him. Her legs almost give out in those ridiculously high heels they have her wearing in the short steps it takes her to reach him. She looks dick drunk already, *weak bitch*.

She crawls up unsteadily on the sofa cushions and straddles his waist while his cock stands proud and erect below her. He doesn't hesitate, impaling her on his hard length in one go. I can almost hear her pained scream from my distance. The sound must be beautiful to their ears. *I know it would be to mine*. I watch from my little lens as her mouth opens wide in the silent scream. *Jesus*.

He moves inside of her, fucking her from below so violently that she looks like a rag doll being thrown around on top of him. Her limbs and hair move in different directions as he uses her without regard. Ezekiel steps forward, and the movement below her stops as suddenly as it had started, forcing her head to snap back. He pushes her flush against Abraham's chest, who wraps one muscular arm securely around her waist and his other hand around her throat. His tattooed fingers sprawl along the creamy skin, tightening their grip until I can see panic present on her face.

Those long fingers tighten until she attempts to thrash in their grip. Her pale blue eyes widen in terror as he increases the pressure of his grip, watching her pretty face contort into a

haunting shade of purple, and her body succumbs to the fight, going limp atop of him.

He choked her out, and she passed out. My blood rushes in my ears, sweat dampening my palms as I once again wrestle with my decision to pull the trigger and end his life. It would be so easy, so swift. *Just one fleeting moment, and he could cease to exist.*

Before I can decide, I watch, almost mesmerized, my jaw becoming slack, as Ezekiel uses the girl's moment of distress to push his pierced cock inside the same hole his companion is in, stretching her wide with both of their long, thick cocks inside of her pussy. He doesn't hesitate and starts moving in and out with a slow, lazy rhythm, causing her to return to herself slowly.

Suddenly, their combined thrusts pick up as she thrashes again between them, trying to dislodge Ezekiel from behind her while they both use her for their pleasure. At first, fear is evident in her features, but within moments of their combined efforts, her expression eases, and the look on her face conveys that she is no longer frightened but instead in a twisted version of ecstasy. I watch her eyes roll back as they thrust into her in unison.

Abraham's fist enters her hair, harshly pulling her long blonde strands and forcing her neck to bow at a sharp angle. Whatever he says to her causes her body to yield entirely to the sensations they are stirring within her, and she goes limp, allowing herself to be used and dominated.

I watch as he bites her hard on her collarbone and then on her shoulder, blood appearing on the surface and screams of pain and shock crossing her face, tears sliding down her face, and her lips trembling.

Abraham tightens his hold on her neck again while Ezekiel bends forward, leaving teeth marks all along her creamy flesh. Ezekiel reaches forward, grabs one of her breasts, and squeezes the globe tightly before slapping it with the palm of his hand, and I watch it bounce. My traitorous clit throbs painfully in my panties, knowing full well how we would love to receive a slap like that, just not from those monsters.

He yanks her face to the side and slaps her hard, leaving the imprint of his fingers in red marks across her high cheekbone. I watch Abraham laugh at his companion's actions, his face moving forward and biting her jaw as she thrashes in their grip. She's trying to stop them from hurting her while delivering scratches to their skin. Her only weapon in self-defense against the two demons is her nails. She catches Abraham with her claws and scratches down his arm; blood seeps up from his wound, bright red, and brings me a sense of satisfaction on her behalf. They are both slamming into her so forcefully now that I know they are nearing their completion.

Abraham angrily tightens his grip on her neck again, his eyes narrowing and nostrils flaring. A rose blush crosses his chest and neck, as he holds her away from his body and stares intently into her pale, terrified eyes while Ezekiel pounds into her from behind. He reaches forward and pulls on an erect

nipple while, using his other hand to hold her in place and force her body to take their punishing strokes.

Her face is now completely flushed red, and I watch as her pale eyes widen dramatically as though they might burst from her skull. He doesn't relent; if anything, he further tightens his grip on her neck. Her mouth opens like a dying fish desperately trying to siphon air inside. She tries frantically to dislodge his hold with her fingers. Scratching and slapping at his grip, but it's useless; his grasp on her throat is too tight. I watch as she loses consciousness again and stills, but he doesn't release her this time.

What the fuck? Release her! FUCK, release her! My mind screams, willing me yet again to press my finger on the trigger.

No, she's alive, she has to be. They wouldn't kill her just like that, would they? Unease fills me as I continue to watch them both use her pussy and body, leaving marks all over her like two savage animals ravaging her. Her body spasms between them, fighting for survival. Even then, Abraham continues to hold her neck tight as the two of them find their release and cum inside of her, finally stopping their movements and use of her with their shudders. He releases his hold on her neck, and she flops to the side, her body limp as they laugh. *Holy mother of fuck.*

Ezekiel's head turns towards the window, narrowing his green eyes and his forehead furrowing as he scans the thick trees outside. It's almost like he can feel my eyes on him. I hold my breath. I know I'm well hidden, and there is no way

he can see me from his current position, but still, my heart rate rises with anticipation and fear. After a few more seconds, he turns away, and I see his shoulders relax once again. I release the breath trapped inside my lungs on a low exhale. *Too close, Dinah, too close.*

Abraham leans forward, both of them still impaled deep inside of the girl's cunt, as his mouth reaches for Ezekiel's lips. Their lips collide with a fiery hunger, moving harshly against each other. It's a passionate and violent war of teeth, tongues, and hands gripping as they eat each other's mouths. Both of them start moving inside of her again. Fucking her cunt, while she lays half off of them and unmoving. Please tell me she's just passed out and not dead. Fuck. *You know the answer, bitch. You knew it before even asking the question; you just don't want to admit it out loud,* my mind whispers in disgust.

I watch, stunned and unable to move, as their hands slide against each other's chests roughly, trying to get impossibly close while the prone body of the girl still lies between them as they continue to fuck her. Ezekiel pulls out suddenly from her cunt and stands, pointing his pierced cock at the other man's mouth, still covered in her wetness and their combined cum. Abraham opens his mouth wide and swallows it to the back of his throat, while still fucking the unconscious girl with his cock.

Holy fuck. It all makes sense now. The pieces are falling into place. That's why they don't participate in the orgies with the rest of their brothers. That's why they prefer to take their

'gifts' in secluded privacy. It's one thing to share a 'gift'; I'm not sure anyone in the Brotherhood would bat an eyeball at that, but to fuck each other? Two Brotherhood members, especially two prominent ones? That might raise a few eyebrows, no matter who their fathers are. *I got you now, motherfuckers. I now know your little secret.*

The tranquility of the night is shattered by a solitary sound in my elevated vantage point. A nightingale's song captures my attention, causing my eyes to strain and explore the darkness below, seeking its concealed source. *Where are you, my love?* Its haunting call beckons me, a gentle reminder to return to his side. I've lingered here far too long.

I know I'll never catch sight of him unless he chooses to reveal himself. He's just as adept as I am at remaining concealed. Another specter walking the earth, this one determined to aid in my plans.

I spy his shadowed form down on the ground, hidden amongst the thick shrubbery at the base of the next tree. With one last regretful and pained look through the rifle lens at the two males and the poor female who now lies discarded on the ground at their feet, I throw the rifle strap over my shoulder and climb quickly and silently down from my perch, vowing that they will pay for what I witnessed here tonight. She will not be forgotten, and her life will not have been in vain.

My thoughts keep turning over with visions of how I will hurt them, distracting me as I make my way towards my refuge, my sense of peace. A beam of moonlight hits his

chiseled face and lights it up, and my breath catches in my throat. My hands flex, and I tighten them at my sides to prevent myself from reaching out and running my fingers down the side of his jaw. He looks like an angel of death coming to bring my final bout of peace. I close my eyes and inhale the crisp, clean night air deeply to steady myself.

The deep scar along the perfection of his razor-sharp jaw does nothing to mar its beauty. If anything, it enhances it with its roughness and signal of danger. A warning to others that this creature before me is a fighter. He's survived anyone who has come for him. That part of him is what always calls to me with a thirst that only he seems to be able to quench. He's a soothing balm to my terror-filled soul, even if he, too, is a demon in the flesh.

The wetness between my legs, and the clenching of my core, reminds me that I'm still revved up from watching those devils fuck that blonde to within an inch of her life. *Are you sure she's still alive? Don't fool yourself, bitch.* She has to be. I have to believe that she is, and it was just some sick game they played with her; otherwise, I may storm into that house and kill those two without a second thought right now. I take a deep breath and then another, trying to calm my mind.

For a brief moment up in that tree, I had wished for it to be me spit-roasted between those two traitors, enjoying the pleasurable and painful ministrations of their long cocks. But now that my feet are back on solid ground, the reality of what I just witnessed is hitting me.

Do I feel grief or compassion for her being forced into whatever sick game they are playing? *No*. Much like mine, her fate was determined before either of us could stop it from coming to fruition. The minute we took a miserable breath in this life, our fates were already sealed. Do I feel guilty for getting off on her being used? *Maybe*. No, not maybe, I do. This darkness inside of me is twisting my thoughts and making me lose parts of my humanity and my compassion.

Like he can read my dark thoughts, and the war going on inside of my head, my scarred demon quirks his sinful lips and examines me from under lowered lashes. “Something got you a little hot and bothered, my little Nightstar?” He nuzzles my neck, inhaling the scent of my skin. His warm breath caresses my overheated flesh, leaving a trail of goosebumps in its wake. The clean, minty-sage scent he exudes gives my tormented soul an instant sense of solace.

My blood heats and races through my veins, surging with a jolt of adrenaline and a touch of fear the moment his voice reaches my ears. My mind tries to convince me to hit fight or flight, knowing full well we could never escape him, while my pussy spasms and begs for the pounding she knows he can deliver. He, too, is a vicious predator, and I am his ever-willing prey.

“If I slipped my fingers into your warm cunt right now, would I find you soaked, my pretty little star?” His smug smile in the moonlight tells me he already knows the answer to his question. He would find me drenched, and my arousal

slickening the inside of my black leggings. A moment of guilt tries to rise once again within me at the source of that arousal.

I don't bother to answer him and take a few steps back into the shadows and away from my prey for the night; the two who deserved a bullet in each of their brains. There is no sense in tempting fate further and getting caught, however, no matter my current desires. That would put a huge wrench in my plans.

He follows me on silent steps until we reach a thick crop of pine trees, and his hand grabs my long dark ponytail and pulls my body tightly against his. Even through the fabric covering my back, I can sense the heat radiating from his body and his chest moving harshly against me. It appears I'm not alone in my aroused state. I wonder if he disobeyed me and watched them fuck her, instead of keeping an eye out for enemies and threats in our midst.

His grip on my hair doesn't lessen as he pushes me down to my knees on the forest floor. "Pull your tights and panties down to your knees, my little dark star."

I don't hesitate in my actions, knowing that we won't get moving again until he has had his fill of my dripping cunt. I slide my hands into the band of my tights and drag them and my underwear down to my knees. The debris from the forest floor digs into my flesh, and the cool night air stings across my overheated and clammy skin. I'm so aroused that I can feel it coating the sides of my thighs.

"Sammy..." I try to get words out, but I am not even sure what to say. How do I even give voice to what I saw and its

effect on me? It makes me just as depraved as the two committing the sin.

“Shhh, Nightstar. I know what you need.” He lowers himself behind me, dragging his other palm along the bumps of my spine, warming my flesh through the cloth and leaving goosebumps behind in its wake. “Your pussy is soaked. I can see it glistening in the moonlight, my naughty whore.”

He trails a finger down the crack between my asscheeks and into my waiting core. Plunging in and out and making me shift on my knees, as I try to swallow the moan that is desperate to erupt from my lips. I need more, and he knows it; he’s attuned to my body’s every need. After all, he programmed it himself. He made sure that he knew how to bring me to rapture, the same way he taught me to ensure I learned how to please him in every way.

A second and then a third finger slip inside me, scissoring and stretching my warm hole, making my breath catch and then wheeze out. I bite down on my bottom lip to hold back the sound of the whimper that is trying desperately to escape my mouth. He releases his hold on my hair, forcing the back of my skull down to push my face into the dirt before me. “There you go; a sinner should always be in the dirt. Don’t you agree, my little Nightstar? You’re my dirty little sinner, aren’t you, baby?”

I bite down harder on my bottom lip until I can taste blood to prevent myself from begging him to take me, as I inhale the earthy scent all around us. He knows what effect his dirty

words have on me. The way they cause shudders to race across my skin in desperation for the rapture only he can give me. I am a whore and a sinner. I make no apologies for being either, as long as I can be his.

“Answer me, my pretty, or I won’t give you what you crave,” he demands through heated words. His voice sounds deeper, raspier, and filled with the promise of sin as his fingers move inside of me, rubbing against my sensitive walls, and his palm creates friction on my swollen clit.

The moan I’m desperate to contain slips from my lips as he pushes my cheek into the dirt, and his fingers pick up speed inside of my needy cunt. “Yeeessss. Fuck, yes.”

His hand releases my head and slides down my spine, and then a crack sounds in the night air as he delivers his first smack to my ass. A second and third follow in immediate succession. The sounds are loud in the silent forest. Even the sounds of the night and outdoors have disappeared with our arrival.

My breath picks up until nothing but harsh pants and small moans fill the air around us, along with the echo of his palm slapping my flesh. “Count, my little Nightstar, while I fuck my pretty hole.”

He removes his thick fingers on a cry from my lips. I shift on my knees, the hard ground unforgiving as my ass stays positioned in the air, just as he likes it. The cool air is both a blessing and a curse to my heated flesh. The quick rustling of fabric and the sound of a zipper being lowered are my only

warnings, before he slams into my pussy with his thick, hard cock. The movement is so harsh that it forces me to stumble forward, and my face digs further into the ground. Little bites of pain from rocks and twigs add to the already overwhelming tornado of sensations I'm experiencing.

He thrusts once, twice, and on the third time, his palm comes down on my ass harshly once again. "Count, my little dark star."

This is dangerous. We could be caught at any moment in the enemy's territory. A moment of depraved lust ending both of our lives. The thrill and danger of possibly being caught races through me, adding to my heightened senses and causing my pussy to clench on his long length. A grunt leaves his lips at that action, and his fingers tighten painfully on my flesh.

Through my stuttered and shaking breath, I begin to count. "One, two, three...*fuck.*" I inhale a deep breath of oxygen, tinged with the smell of dirt and pine needles. "Seven, eight, nine," a groan leaves my lips. His thick cock picks up speed, thrusting viciously inside of me. "Ten, eleven...*please...* twelve," I beg like the whore he loves to make me. A sinner on her knees in the dirt.

His other hand wraps around my body, and his fingers meet my swollen and throbbing clit as my ass pushes back against his invading cock. He feels so good inside of me, stretching and hitting the end of me. That little bit of pain, combined with his harsh spanking, pushes me to the very edge of the cliff I crave to throw myself off, but not enough to have me

diving head-first into the abyss. The image of two males fucking a tight pussy in tandem invades my mind, and has me climbing the high depths towards my release.

His slaps pick up speed and ferocity, and I lose count, my breathing coming too quickly as two of his fingers pinch my tender clit. He pounds into me simultaneously, and I explode in a wash of energy and colors that fill the night behind my closed eyelids. My core tightens painfully around his thick length, impaled deep inside of me, as his hand stops spanking me to grab onto my shoulder and pull me forcefully into his body as he, too, finds his release. His cock grinds inside of me as he spills his warm cum, coating my trembling walls.

“Fuck, Dinah. Your cunt always feels so good wrapped around me.” His voice is husky and filled with pleasure and wonder, pulling a satisfied smile to my lips.

“Let’s get home, Sammy. I want to do that again, but in bed, this time.”





The Liar

Abe

A satisfied groan leaves my mouth as Zeke pulls back from my lips. His dark eyebrow arches as his green eyes stare at me across the short distance. The body of our latest ‘*gift*’ is still between us as both of our cocks soften inside her gaping and well-used cunt. I can feel our combined cum already slipping from inside of her and trickling down my balls. The sensation brings a devious smirk to my lips.

I look away and stare at her half-draped naked form. She was a pretty little thing, brought here from one of the outlying states, given up and gifted by her family to please and satisfy the needs of the Order. It’s too bad, she will never leave here. *What a fucking waste.*

Another daughter who might be missed but will never be looked for. Her family will have been from a lower tier of the Brotherhood, and its only purpose is to breed servitude in all its formats for our depraved and righteous needs. She isn’t the first and won’t be the last to never reappear after being handed over to the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament.

I would like to think that we did her a favor, releasing her from this life where she would suffer, and not always at the hands of two who would show her pleasure like we have. No, there are still worse villains than us walking amongst mere mortals.

“Her cunt is getting cold, brother. As much as I get off on fucking them to death, I’m not a fan of cold pussy.” Zeke grins as he pulls out of her cunt and steps back, his cock still semi-hard and glistening with our combined release. He smirks and points it at my lips. I open my mouth wide, and he slips the head between my lips and rests it for a split second on my tongue, so I can taste the combination of our bitter, thick cum and her tangy musk on his length, and then he’s slamming into the back of my throat like the asshole that he is.

He fucks my throat raw in deep strokes, forcing me to take each punishing thrust and swallow his thick, pierced length down my gagging throat. My cock twitches inside the dead girl, once more rising to the occasion as I thrust in time to his movements. For the briefest of moments, I feel a small hint of guilt for continuing to use her. *She was an innocent, as much as one can be in this psychotic world that we live in.*

Zeke’s hands come around my head and force me to open my mouth wider, taking more of him down my throat until all my air is blocked. Tears slip down my cheeks as he punishes my mouth with his cock. His taste and smell are everything I live for, an addiction I never want to be cured of.

One of his hands moves tenderly over my face, as his bright emerald eyes meet mine with a sadistic glimmer in their depth. *This fucker right here will one day be the death of me. Literally and figuratively.* His fingers slide up my cheek, and his forefinger and thumb pinch my nostrils, stopping even the tiny semblance of air that was getting through.

I know what he wants. He wants me to thrash below him, to fight him off. He gets off on the struggle and the violence, on the control. My cock thickens and spasms inside the girl's cooling cunt, and I grab onto his wrist, digging my fingers into his tattooed flesh just as the first spurts of his cum release down my throat, and the tingle of release hits my spine before I cum again inside her pussy, her weight still both a comforting and disgusting feeling on my lap.

Once we are both spent, he pulls out of my mouth and plops himself next to me on the leather sofa, pushing the girl off my lap until she falls to the floor with a thick thud and her limbs sprawl in each direction, leaving her naked, exposed, and her pussy dripping with cum. My eyes can't seem to look away from the morbid and grotesque sight before me. She's a damaged and broken sex doll, her skin pale but also showing signs of our abuse. Her pale blue eyes are vacant, and the look of fear during her last breath is still etched upon her face. *What a goddamn waste.*

"She was a pretty one. Too bad she didn't put up much of a fight; we might have kept her around longer if she had. Decently tight cunt, too, until we stretched her. We should have waited to try her ass before we put her out of her misery." I smirk at Zeke's words. He always looks at the bright side of things. Yeah, there is a bright side to fucking a girl to death. At least she went out in pleasure. So many in our world die in abject poverty and suffering. Horribly depressing deaths, if you ask me.

“Maybe the next one, Zeke.” I grin back at him, and he reaches up with his thumb, pressing it against the corner of my mouth. His thumb moves back and forth, wiping before he brings it to his lips and licks the digit clean.

“You left a little of me behind, fucker. You shouldn’t waste precious gold spunk.” He chuckles, and I roll my eyes at his antics.

He’s always been like this, a ray of bright sunshine in my otherwise pitch-black world. Don’t get me wrong, the fucker is sadistic, completely psychotic, and a serial killer in the making. But he and I share the same essence, two kindred and destructive forces plotting the world’s inevitable downfall in time, of course.

Are we both unstable and depraved in our needs? *Sure*, but who isn’t in this fucked-up eat-or-be-eaten world? We didn’t make the rules. We merely exploit the cards fate has dealt us.

Are we more privileged than the girl dead at our entitled feet? *Sure*, but she never had to bear the burden of being the daughter of a high-ranking member of the Order, let alone the offspring of two of its founding fathers.

She enjoyed her freedom until it was stolen. Zeke and I, on the other hand, are destined to remain ensnared—both in this lifetime and the next.

“So gloomy already, Abe? Do I need to go find another cunt to take that frown off your face, or would you rather ride my cock for the rest of the night?”

“You know we can’t do that here, fucker.” I swallow the desire that rises at his mention of riding his pierced cock. He’s forever testing my restraint, pushing me to the brink. Someday, I fear I’ll surrender to the darkness within, and there will be no turning back.

It’s already a considerable risk what we do here in the house of the Brotherhood while the orgies are happening. Does anyone raise an eyebrow when we disappear with our ‘*gifts*’ to enjoy them together? *No*. They don’t even ask questions when they show up dead, like the poor girl on the floor. Most of the others are into weird ass fucking shit too. *Really, who’s going to question us?*

Would that all change if they found out that we enjoy more than sharing a whore or two between us? That we enjoy the pleasure of riding each other’s cocks, and swallowing each other’s dicks deep in our throats. That I will never get enough of him, and that he would set this world ablaze for me without the slightest hesitation. That Zeke belongs to me, and I to him. A connection not even our malevolent fathers could sever.

Yeah, that would be a problem for the Brotherhood of the Sacrament. Righteousness and sin go hand-in-hand here. But not that kind of sin. You can pretty much commit all the rest and be absolved, but never love thy brother more than God commanded, and definitely never swallow that brother’s cock. Well, fuck them and God too, for that matter.

I smirk at the thought of our father’s faces at finding Zeke deep inside my ass or me swallowing his cock. They would

lose their proverbial minds. Two high-ranking founders with sergeant-at-arms sons who disgrace the Brotherhood and the church. Would they try to cover it up, or would they set the fires to burn us in the flames of hell? *Probably the latter is my thinking.*

“We could always head back to my room or even into the woods?” As soon as his words escape his lips, the room’s door flies open, crashing against the wall. The handle digs deep into the plaster, creating a thunderous impact. My body twitches with the need to get up and thrash whoever has dared to enter our space, disturbing us. I clench my fists to suppress the urge to strike out and beat the living fuck out of whoever is here, ending my moment with Zeke. *Careful, your crazy is starting to show again.*

My father is the first to stride through the door, a grimace etched onto his weathered face. He still remains adorned in his black order robes, accented with crimson embroidery, marking him as one of the Founding Fathers. Even though the actual founder was my grandfather, not him. Dear old grandpa helped to destroy the world, only to rebuild it in this fucked-up image and then went ahead and died, leaving the rest of us to grapple with the consequences of his malevolent actions.

Zeke’s dad, Noah, follows immediately behind mine, as does their security team. Guns at the ready to take out any possible threat against a Founding Father. I roll my eyes at the dramatics. I don’t even know why my father bothers. He knows I’m not afraid of him, and there are no lesser families to play *king of the castle* to in here.

“Another one? Can’t you at least try to keep them alive longer than a night or two?” He inquires with disgust across his face, as his eyes meet the dead girl’s body still sprawled on the floor, and then trails up mine and Zeke’s naked forms. Suspicion briefly presents itself on his face before he wipes it away, and into the disappointed mask he always wears around me. I narrow my eyes and quirk my lips at him. The way I know sets his blood pressure skyrocketing and gives me immense pleasure. *Does he really want an answer to that?*

“You both shall be in the chapel at sun break for penance. God will have you seeking a cleansing for your sins, boys,” Zeke’s dad, Noah, admonishes us while refusing to look at the body. *Weak motherfucker*. Literally, cause he fucks my mom on the regular. Good old dad likes to share and then wonders where I got it from.

If I didn’t have my psycho father’s features, I might think I was actually Noah’s spawn. That would be a bit fucked up, considering I love taking Zeke’s cock any way I can get it. Would that stop me if we were actually half-brothers? *Probably not; what’s one more sin?*

When neither of us answers, we get a smack to the back of our heads from two of their soldiers with rifle butts. I turn my head to look back up at *Cain* and *Abel*, two fucking assholes who worship at our fathers’ feet. One of these days, I am going to shove those two rifles down their fucking throats. Then they can honor my father in hell, like all the rest of the demons.

“Yeah, sure. Daybreak. Chapel. Got it,” Zeke mumbles and spreads his legs wider when he catches one of the other security guys staring at his pierced cock. I watch with a devious smirk as his cock twitches in his lap. Even soft, it’s pretty impressive in size and girth, never mind that sexy as fuck barbell piercing on the tip.

The guy blushes and quickly averts his gaze from Zeke’s cock before my father catches him. I give him a dirty grin, knowing full well he’s going to be dreaming about Zeke’s monster cock later when he wanks off. It’s impressive. I should know. I’ve had it down my throat and up my ass since we were sixteen, and he’s only gotten better at using it with time.

I turn my attention back to the menace that is my father. “You need something tonight, father?” I sit up and start pulling my pants back on, ignoring the angry looks I’m getting from him. He lives to be disappointed in me; why try to change that now? He’s had twenty-one years to get used to it. I’ve had just as much time to hate every single cell in his body.

“Another family was found tonight. The founder was slaughtered, and all his family members were set ablaze. None of his male line survived.”

I turn quickly and meet my father’s dark brown eyes. “Where?”

“Two states over. These ones had been dead for at least a day or two. This killer is becoming more brazen, Abraham. That’s sixteen founders that have been taken out in less than a year.

Fifteen of them from within the country now.” He sighs deeply and runs his tattooed hand, with the Order of the Brotherhood sigil on it, through his thinning gray hair.

“They ensure that the heirs do not survive. They die painfully and grotesquely, along with the founder. Someone is actively trying to bring down chaos upon the Brotherhood.”

Zeke snorts and moves past me to grab his own clothes, winking as he passes the gawker. I should have guessed that he spotted him looking at his dick. Not much gets past Zeke. Even if it seems like he’s not paying attention, he always is. It’s what makes him so dangerous. You don’t see him coming until it’s already too late.

“Someone is always trying to cause chaos and bring down the Order. This is nothing new, Peter.” He disregards my father’s concerns like only he can do with no remorse or fear of consequences. *Sometimes, I wonder if he doesn’t have a death wish.*

“Do we have any new leads, or are we still calling them a ghost?” I throw my shirt over my head and mask my grin within its confines before my head pops back out of the opening, and my face becomes the practiced mask that I wear around my bat-shit, power-hungry father. I immensely enjoy knowing that some guy out there has decided that killing the Founding Fathers and their heirs is his lot in life. *Shit, I would applaud him if I could.* The only problem I see with it is, that Zeke and I, are Founding Fathers’ heirs, and I have zero fucking desire to die.

“Nothing. Whoever this is, he’s smooth, careful, and trained. He knows how to avoid detection until it’s too late, and ensures that the founder’s bodies are found in distasteful and abhorrent ways, while also guaranteeing none from the founders’ line can take his place. This is a trained killer, a psychopath. One that is actively pursuing founding families and determined to wipe us from the goddamn earth,” Noah replies angrily, his body tense and that ugly vein in his forehead throbbing.

“Obviously, he’s punishing the founders for some wrong he or his family has suffered,” I smirk at my father and watch as his lip curls in disgust he can’t seem to hide. It’s too fucking bad for my good old dad that my mom was only able to birth one legitimate heir for him. I’m sure I’d find myself at the bottom of an ocean if he had any other male child. Unfortunately for him, the Brotherhood requires heirs to be leaders of the male species only, and while I am sure I have some illegitimate sisters out there somewhere, I have no brothers.

“No one is above the righteousness of the Order, Abraham. We cannot have demented assholes out there stirring an uprising, and taking it upon themselves to call our good founders home to God’s gates.” He sighs, and I watch as the toe of his pristine, shiny black shoe presses against the girl’s cheek, her mouth still open in a garish scream. From this angle, it almost looks like he wants her to lick his shoe or shove the whole thing in her mouth. I wouldn’t put it past him

to be into some fucked kinky shit. *I'm the kettle calling the pot black, though.*

“Yeah, yeah. The righteousness of the Order. God is on our side, always. We do his good work, don't we, Dad?” I button up my pants and meet Zeke's eyes with their warning glare. I can tell just from his tight expression he wants me to tone it down, and not give my father a reason to punish me. Something he happens to enjoy doing immensely.

“You two will work together with Emmanuel to try to find this *ghost* and eliminate them, Abraham. It is your duty as my son and as God's child. You will be the avenging arm of the Lord. Bring this heathen to penance before the Order.” He turns on his heels with one last look at the whore's pussy and stalks out of the room, with Noah on his heels and the security team making a hasty exit behind them.

Zeke blows a kiss to the gawking fucker, who bangs into the guy in front of him in his hurry to get out of the room and as far away from us as possible.

“Fuck this shit. I have no desire to hunt this fucker down.” I grab the bottle of whiskey off the coffee table and down a huge gulp. The burn making its way to my stomach is a welcome relief after having to deal with my cunt of a father.

“You'd rather they make an attempt on our lives?” Zeke questions, grabbing the bottle from my hand and taking his own large swallow.

“Let them try.”



Chapter 5



The Sinner

Dinah

A few days later.

My mother's every movement was watched, dissected, controlled, and suppressed. Until she was nothing but a fly in a cunning and ruthless spider's web, waiting to die. Like so many women forced and later born into this fucked-up world.

Handed over ruthlessly to the Order as a vivid lesson to the other families of the Brotherhood. An example to the other wives and children, so they could see what would happen if the patriarch of your family betrayed the Brotherhood. Death would have been a mercy, so of course, they denied it.

My family's name and misdeeds became the boogeyman story in your waking and sleeping nightmares. Whispers to your mind of terrors unseen. Ones that they don't want you to wake up from because they enjoy the dread they inflict. It keeps you pliable, broken, and shaken to your core, no longer knowing which way is up and allowing them to control the very air you breathe.

My father's body was never found, at least not in one piece. The videos they made me watch forced me to bear witness to our heavy fall from grace. The same ones they made my mother and brother watch assured us there was no way he could have survived the sadistic and painful retribution the

Order demanded for his sins—the repentance they demanded with a heavy fist around his throat and a sharp blade in his side.

“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”

The sins of doubt. The sins of free thought and betrayal. Of all the sins to commit, my father chose the ones that would not only damn his soul but those of his whole family. The Brotherhood is not made of understanding or forgiveness. No, they are demons and vipers wrapped in flesh.

I was forced, chained to a chair, to watch for hours and then days on repeat, as they cut pieces off of him through a video feed. As he repented his sins, calling out in agony for a God who would not answer and left him to their demonic hands.

With every excruciating, painful cut, they made another strike against my own tarnished, weary, and young soul. His blood-curdling screams, which I still hear anytime I close my eyes, haunt me. Their pitiful sound, never dampening, has become the lullaby I hear at night. One that I now crave the sound of, just in another context.

One sin after another, extracted from his skin until finally the screams stopped, and there was nothing but a broken, bleeding mess left behind. **Red**. All that was left of the father I once loved was red.

My family’s legacy is weakness, betrayal, destruction, and sins. A great founding name and house brought low by the sins of the father, that must be taken out of the lives of the wife and

children. That is how the Order maintains control and suppresses revolution and free thinking. None of that is allowed in this world anymore.

It's also how they created the monster that I have become. The one who has become addicted to the taste of blood and retribution. The one determined to take everything that they hold dear and burn it from the inside out.

They named my family terrors in the night, a cautionary tale. Made us boogeymen, and so I have become one. Now, I stalk their waking and sleeping thoughts. Terrorize them with fears of where I will strike next. Who is the deadly ghost? Where did I come from? Who will be my next victim, and why?

No one is safe now from my blade or my unrelenting vengeance. The need to spill their blood is all demanding. *Red*. I will paint this world red, and when I'm done, there will be no absolution. No angels to welcome them home, and no forgiveness from a divine God.

Like Moses once saw plagues ravage the Egyptians, I shall be the plague of the Order. They should have let my family go, or murdered us all simultaneously. Now, they will suffer the consequences of not doing so, one painful inch at a time, until there is nothing left standing, and like a plague, I have ravaged them to their very core. Destroyed all they have held dear and given this world a cleansing.

By fire. By blood. By hate.

Mercy is a word I no longer know and is a plea that falls on a murderer's ears, just like mine did so long ago. I have given

my soul to the devil, and in his appreciation, he has welcomed my deeds with open arms.

I run my finger down the gray, fine thread count sheets and the plush mattress, leaving a trail of red behind in my wake next to his sleeping form. I watch with envy as his body inhales and exhales in exhausted sleep. *Sleep* is a luxury I no longer have the time for, with so many men to kill.

What does he dream of, I wonder? Does he see his precious, privileged life before him, free from the worry of someone taking all he loves away? He lies so peacefully, unaware that a predator is mere inches from him, ready and willing to take his life.

Not yet, though. This spider hasn't played with her food yet.

Black Death. Unholy Ghost. The names they whisper now with fear. My body count is frightening to the Brotherhood. Little do they know that I am a black widow. Destroying evil men everywhere I go.

They have never suspected a woman. How could they? We're perceived as too frail, too compliant to orchestrate something like this. The females of the Order are deemed too easily manipulated. Dominated. Subjugated on our knees or with our legs spread. We are vessels only needed to be used for pleasure by our male counterparts, and to breed the next generation of the Brotherhood.

How could a vessel fight back? Where would she get the skills or the drive for something like that?

It's ironic how, when you've lost everything, you transform. You die and are reborn as the very embodiment of what the world that shattered you fears. They took too much from me. They took everything I had, everything that was once good inside me, and left only darkness in its wake.

I have become their boogeyman, a harbinger of death, patiently waiting to claim their souls and drag them down to hell with me. When my reckoning is complete, he, too, will face the price of his betrayal, but the time for that vengeance has not yet arrived. I've only just begun.

I dip my brush into the cooled blood, listening to the soothing rhythmic sounds of his breathing as I paint his walls with the words of a God I no longer believe in. One that the Brotherhood has corrupted all the good and divinity out of.

With one last look at one of the devils who betrayed my family, I restrain my need to feel his beating heart held in my hands. *Soon*. I will have my vengeance soon on this one and the other. They will pay with everything they have, including their last breaths.

He will cry for me. He will scream for me and beg for mercy from me. In the end, it shall serve only to serenade me into sweet slumber. The voices of angels will celebrate, for I will have cleansed this world of one more semblance of evil.

"Sleep tight, sweet prince. I'll be seeing you soon," I whisper, blowing him a kiss.

I move silently through the room with one last look back as I enter his ensuite bathroom and climb out the open bathroom

window. Their arrogance is helpful to my cause. They think they are safe here. *Untouchable*. I'm here to prove to them they are not. They are prey in my web, and it's time I start having some fun with my unwilling oblivious food.

The minute I'm out of the window and scaling the three-story brick facade back to the ground, I can breathe again. My heartbeat is a drummed tempo in my chest, and my blood rushes wildly through my veins, too loud in my ears. The hunt. The thrill. The euphoria of the chase making my body sing.

"What took so long, Nightstar? I was starting to worry." His voice breaks through the night air, the sensation of velvet across my heated skin. Raspy and quiet but filled with concern, reproach, and demand. A shiver slides down my spine at the sound, filling me with need—a need to be comforted in his strong arms.

It should bring with it rage. I have now killed men for less. No male will ever control my freedom. *He is the exception*. He will always be the exception.

His devotion is no longer to a God he cannot see, or an order that left him riddled with sins and made him believe he was beneath them. *No*, his devotion and prayers are set at my altar now. I am both his greatest sin, weakness, and eternal salvation; he is mine.

"It took as long as it needed to, old man. It's done now; soon enough, he will wake to the horror and panic I have left behind. I can't wait to see his reaction when he realizes how close he came to dying."

Annoyance flashes across his face at the detested nickname. “You could be wrong, Dinah. He could alert them.” His fingers trail along the collar of my black, skin-tight shirt, making goosebumps rise across the surface of my skin. Shivers threaten to race down my frame at the heat coming off of his delectable body. Adrenaline is still riding me, and I would like nothing more than to ride his face into sweet oblivion now that my task is complete.

Relief comes to me in only two ways now. Only two methods soothe the demons that awaken the venom within me. *Fuck or kill*. Since I didn’t get to kill that fucker sleeping under lock and key, I need to fuck. I need to ride Sammy’s face, cock, or better yet, both, until I come undone and shatter under his ministrations.

“He won’t. The two of them still believe they are invincible. It would mean clipping their own wings. They won’t willingly do that.” I sigh and close my eyes as his warm skin meets mine, his scent enveloping me in the night air.

“Fuck, I hope you’re right, Nightstar. Let’s get back before we’re spotted. You still owe me a round with those pretty, pouty lips stretched around my cock. I have no intention of being denied or gentle with you tonight.”

I smirk at his obvious need as he presses his hard body firmly against mine. He can try to deny it to himself all he wants, but he gets off on my sins just as much as I do. He enjoys watching me seek my revenge, and benefits from the

fallout of my rage. He turns me around with a firm grip on my shoulder until I face him, and he can read my expression.

One of us will be on our knees before the sun rises in a few short hours. Maybe it will be me, but I have no doubt that either way, Sammy will be praying at my altar and worshiping all my holes. The mere thought has wetness leaving my core, making me rub my thighs together, seeking friction.

“Are you wet already, baby? Is your pretty cunt already looking forward to being used like the depraved slut you are?” His hand strikes out and wraps around the thin column of my neck, and his fingers tighten as his dark blue eyes stare into mine, illuminated by the gloomy silver glow of the moonlight. They rival the deep night sky all around us, and just like that sky, they have seen so much suffering and pain.

What does he see in their depths? My sins on display? My depravity because I enjoy the bloodshed? The need and willingness to be used by only him?

To be brought to my knees, my body used in any way he sees fit while also taking the pleasure he provides. He names me his slut and whore. If those terms had ever left another man’s lips directed at me, I would cut out that man’s tongue. Sammy, however, can call me those with honor.

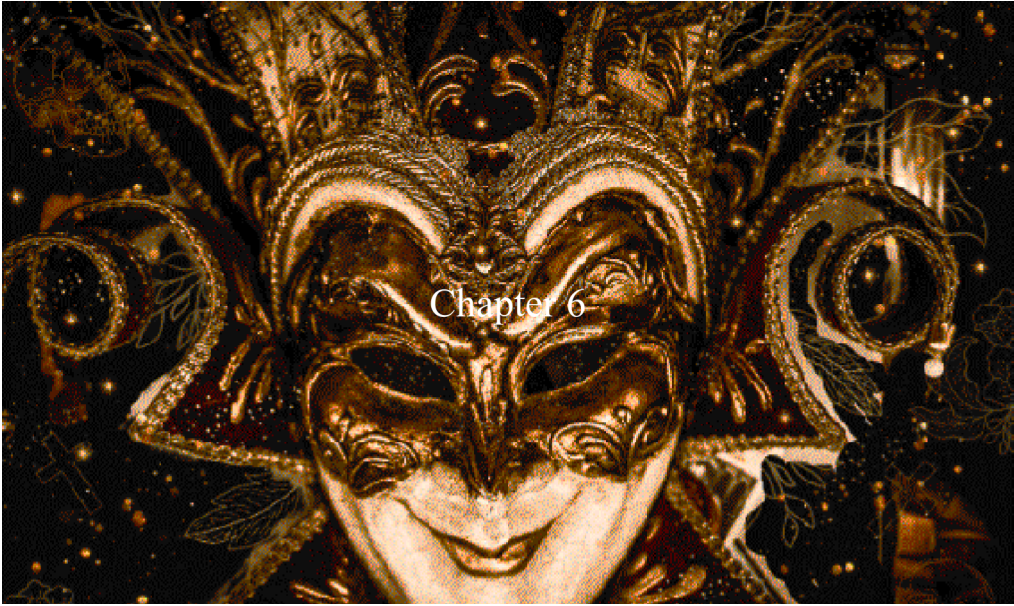
He understands the depths of our shared experiences and all we’ve endured together. The hell that we have both survived at the hands of the Order. From his sinful lips, those words are a decadence. I will always be his whore willingly, and he will always be my blade and my shadow.

We are two shattered and scarred souls, who discovered each other in the unlikeliest of situations—hell. Fate delivered us into this inferno, yet somehow, against all odds, we found our way to one another.

Allies. Weary souls. Broken.

He cradles a fragment of my tarnished heart and my fragile sanity in his sturdy, patient, and unwaveringly loyal hands. I clutch a piece of his disillusioned and weary heart in my blood-soaked grasp. *We are the embodiment of tragedy, souls entwined through suffering and anguish.*

With one last look up at the open window, I break from Sammy's grip and take a step forward, away from my need for bloodshed for the moment. If I'm still craving blood in a few hours, I'll take it out on his skin as he will on mine.





The Forsaker

Zeke

“Beware of false prophets,
which come to you in sheep’s clothing,
but inwardly, they are raving wolves.”

Fuck, this asshole is quoting ‘*Matthew*’ now. My eyes stare hard at the messy red words painted on my wall, the very wall directly facing my bed. This sick fuck knew that it would be the first thing I saw once I opened my eyes and sat up. It nearly gave me a heart attack when I did.

How could I have slept through someone being in my room, mere feet from me? The fucker could have killed me in my sleep, and yet they didn’t. Instead, they played sick games with me, leaving bloody fingerprints along my sheets and smearing red shit on my walls.

Fuck, is it possible that’s blood? *It can’t be, can it?*

I lean closer, inhaling the words printed on my pristine white walls. The pungent odor of rust and iron instantly assaults my senses—blood. The fucker actually stood here and wrote all of that in blood while I slept not more than eight feet away. *What. The. Fuck.* This shit is insane.

“What the fuck was so urgent I had to rush in here, fucker? I had my cock down Elizabeth’s throat!” His displeased and

disgusted voice reaches my ears at the same time his heavy boots storm across my hardwood floor.

I offer a dismissive eye roll in response to his irritated comments. He always has his cock down someone's throat or up someone's holes. Lately, it's like he can't go more than a few hours without his cock needing release. I can't really complain when, a good percentage of the time, I benefit from his lack of control. Right now, though, I'm not fucking interested. I keep my eyes on the red words and wait for him to approach me.

“What the fuck is that?” His words escape his delectable mouth, tinged with anger and a hint of panic. The corner of my mouth twitches at the sound. I shouldn't find any amusement or satisfaction in his distress, but I can't resist.

“A warning, I believe, from the *'Unholy Ghost'*. It would seem I have displeased him and put myself on his radar.”

“Jesus fucking Christ, Zeke, that's a threat. False prophets, what does that mean? Is this psycho calling the Order out? Is he talking about the Founding Fathers?” Abe's tattooed and ringed fingers trail through his thick, wavy hair in agitation, his booty call now completely forgotten.

My hands clench at my sides with the need to grasp onto his silky, thick locks and pull them myself. Bring him to his knees before me and hear his cries of pain and pleasure. I want to hurt him, see his blood run red, like the words on my wall. I bite down hard on my lip, trying to squash the need that is coursing through me. Destruction calls to me like a tempting

little whore, willing to spread her legs for me as long as I do her bidding.

I turn away from the worded threat on my wall and meet his anxious amber eyes; lines are etched between his dark, thick eyebrows, and his lips are drawn tight. “Yeah, looks like the fucker is. I’m amused that he thinks we are raving wolves. Not a bad description.”

I observe the shadow of worry passing over his chiseled face. A face I’ve committed so deeply to memory that I could effortlessly conjure every detail, crafting a flawless portrait of him. He’s the sole individual I hold dear in this desolate world—the only one left to stand by my side. The unbidden mental image of stormy blue eyes, filled with fear, attempts to intrude into my thoughts, and I promptly slam the door shut on that unwelcome vision.

Abe is usually the reckless one, and I, the worrier of the pair. It seems today, our roles are reversed. The urge to shove my tongue down his throat and hear his moans almost takes control of me. I look away and back at the words of God across my wall. Words that a murderer has left me there in a veiled threat. A snort leaves my lips; *wolves, indeed.*

“We need to clean this shit up before someone from the guard or the servants catches wind of it.” My voice comes out steady even though anger and slick fear still coat my veins. *He was here...so close.* While I slept unaware, like some useless turd.

What am I going to use to get the blood off? Does blood even come off of plasterboard? This fucker has completely ruined my day with this shit. *He could have killed you in your sleep, asshole. Be grateful you just have to wipe some bloody words off a wall,* my mind admonishes me with anger. Why didn't he kill me? Why taunt me?

“What the hell are you talking about? Clean this shit up? No, bitch, we have to tell your dad. This psychopath somehow got in here with all the security crawling around this place, and could have killed you.” Abe moves forward and trails his forefinger down the dried syllables. A shudder runs down his spine at the action. *Does he see my death before his eyes?*

“No. We can't fucking do that. The minute my father or yours knows what happened here, we will be under lock and key, Abe. Prisoners. You know that as well as I do. They will fucking separate us to keep their precious heirs, and the next generation, alive.” I grab onto the front of his gray shirt, pulling him to me. His eyes meet mine, staring deep into my dark soul, and his lips part with a sweet-scented breath. *He's mine, and I will not be parted from him.*

“No one is going to find out, and we will not be separated. *Ever.* You fucking hear me, Abe? You belong to me. I will not allow anyone to take you away from me. Not my fucking father, not this psychotic order, or some madman pretending to be a ghost.”

My lips crash down on his with violence. Our teeth clash together as my tongue invades the warmth of his mouth. *I held*

out for a good couple of minutes. Now, my restraint is at an end, and I mean to have a taste of what is mine.

His tongue meets mine stroke for stroke. One of his hands finds its way to the back of my neck, his long fingers wrapping around and squeezing the column. The other trails down the front of my body and grasps onto my hardening cock, over the thin material of the shorts I threw on after I saw the bloody words. My cock twitches behind the fabric, desperate to have his fingers wrap around its thick length, the tip leaking precum that I wish was already coating his thick lips.

I need him with a desperation that I can't contain. The dread and the stark realization that I might have perished in my sleep, or awakened at the mercy of a killer, consume me. I break free from his embrace, gasping for breath, and lock eyes with his gaze, steeped in lust.

Normally, we exercise caution; it's perilous to openly embrace our desires here. Too many of our fathers' loyal minions keep a watchful eye on the house we both inhabit. They would be infuriated if they discovered our secret, that we find pleasure and solitude in each other's arms.

In their eyes, we can never transcend the bounds of brotherhood, or mere best friends. They remain oblivious to the truth—we are soul mates, our love pure and unbreakable. The two of us...once we were three...but now, we are all that is left. Pain attempts to stir within me, resurfacing memories I wish to bury—betrayals I have committed.

I step away from him and head to my door, firmly shutting it, engaging the lock, and, just to be safe, sliding the chair I keep nearby under the handle. I wouldn't underestimate my father or one of his guards attempting to breach my privacy. I can't afford the risk of them catching us off guard, but I need Abe at this moment as much as I need air.

He watches me with a lust-filled expression. His tongue peeks out and licks his top lip, and his hands reach behind his neck, pulling his gray T-shirt over his head and tossing it to the floor, before slipping his hands to the band of the black sweatpants he's wearing and yanking them down. He slides his feet out of his black unlaced boots and steps out of the pants. Sunlight streams through the window, glinting off of the small silver barbells in each of his nipples, taunting and teasing me to pull on them with my teeth.

Completely naked, his thick, muscled form is a work of graphic and colorful art that would make the likes of Michelangelo or Agasias weep. Those fuckers never understood true perfection. They didn't have *Abraham Mercier* as a muse.

He's all mine, though, and I will never tire of looking and appreciating his form. The two V-shaped muscular grooves on his abdomen cause my mouth to water. I move towards him, a lion stalking his prey, and watch as he licks his thick lips in anticipation. His thick, hard cock bobs against his chiseled abs, beads of precum weeping from the mushroom tip. His willingness to cause me pain while also bringing me pleasure is my addiction, one I never want to be cured of.

He loves the chase as much as I do. The violence is both a need and a soothing balm to our demonic and damaged souls. The only thing he might enjoy more is when I force him to his knees, and demand he take my cock without mercy. He is only submissive to me; everyone else will get the insufferable dominant side of him.

Lust. Depravity. Force. Sin.

Those are our love languages, and we are both fluent in them. I motion with my head for him to move forward toward the bed. We are so in tune with each other's needs that he knows exactly what I want, without me needing to speak the words.

He bends his large body over the end of the bed. His rugged, chiseled chest meets my gray sheets, only a foot away from the bloody fingerprints of the person who could have taken my life. He spreads his legs wide, his round muscled asscheeks in the air, clenching. The muscles in his back ripple with tension, ready and waiting for my touch. He is so tempting and sexy like this; submissive, spread wide, and awaiting my cock, filling him to the brink.

I move to my dresser, grab the bottle of lube from the top drawer, and shed my shorts. As much as I crave violence right now and maybe even blood. I don't really want to tear my favorite hole. I want to ravage him, leave my marks across the perfection of his skin and have him swallow my cum, but not break my treasured toy.

I grab the belt from yesterday's pants and my shirt off the floor and approach his straining, muscular form. I watch as he slowly thrusts his cock against my sheets, looking for friction as he clenches his ass in eagerness and need. *Fuck, I wish we had more time.* He would look beautiful with a few lashes from my belt across all that gorgeous inked, deep, golden skin. My hand clenches tightly on the belt, knowing I will have to hold back on my desires.

I yank one of his arms back behind him and then the other one, wrapping the belt above his elbows and tightening the leather firmly until his shoulders are pulled together. His harsh breathing is loud in the air as he gets worked up, knowing that I am not going to be gentle with him.

I kick his legs further apart before reaching over his head and tying my shirt around his mouth to the back of his head, gagging him with it and filling that sweet mouth with the taste of cloth permeated with my scent. He moans deeply into the fabric, as he turns to stare back at me, his eyes the rich, captivating hue of warm tones of honey, wide and filled with lust.

He grinds harder into the bed, turned on, his hips rising and falling and giving me a perfect view of his large, engorged cock. I can see the precum from his tip leaving wet spots on my linens. I lick my lips, needing a taste of his salty goodness. My hand trails down the middle of his back, each bump of his spine making contact with my fingers as I reach the top of his firm ass. I use both my hands to squeeze his asscheeks before

parting them and bending down to my knees behind him. He is the only person breathing that I would get on my knees for.

A groan leaves his lips, muzzled by the gag. I lean forward and bite down on his left cheek, the sting of my teeth making him grunt and his arms pull on the tightly wrapped leather constraint. He buries his face in my sheets as I let my tongue trace the teeth marks on his golden tattooed skin. *Perfection.*

Even his ass is a work of tattooed art, with swirls and lines meeting in intricate patterns. I move onto his right cheek, biting harder until his breath stutters. I draw back and see that my canines have made him bleed as he grinds forcefully into my bed. I lap up the small drop of blood, his taste hitting my senses and making me groan.

As much as I would like to spend all day savoring his taste and every inch of his delectable skin, we are on borrowed time before someone in this godforsaken house comes looking for us. My need to ride him hard and dirty is prominent; the rest will have to wait. My tongue snakes out and licks between his cheeks, over his tight hole that clenches at the feel of my warm mouth. I lick down his perineum, nipping with my teeth as I go until I reach his thick testicles, hanging heavy and swollen with the need to release their contents.

I suck one into my mouth and roll it with my tongue, letting saliva coat and drip from it before allowing it to pop out of my mouth, and hit my chin with its weight, before doing the same to the other. I stand back up as Abe thrashes below me; his need is palpable in the air around us. I grab the bottle of lube

from next to him and let some drip down his clenched cheeks, coating his ass hole and pouring some over my thick length. My fingers stroke over my long shaft and squeeze down tightly on my pierced cock head. I swallow the moan that wants to leave my lips as I rise back to my feet.

I don't give him any warning, no soft caresses, no stretching him until he's ready, or softly spoken words of love, before I slam into his hole without mercy. Breaching the thick ring of muscle and diving in deep until my long, wide length is wholly encased inside of him. My balls tighten at the instant heat and the sensation of him gripping me in a vice grip.

Abe's muffled screams rent the air around us, his body trying to fight my intrusion and push me back out, as his upper body lifts off the bed and hovers, all his stomach muscles taut. His rigid abs make my mouth water as I trail fingers across their firm staircase of flesh. Later, I plan to run my tongue down each and every groove, licking his taste and savoring him.

“You will take all of me, hard and fast. I plan to stretch your tight hole and fill you with my cum. You will take all of it like the cum dumpster you are for me. Maybe, if you're a good little demon, I might even let you come.”

I pound into him with relentless abandon. My thrusts are forceful and move him along the bed's surface, unable to stop his forward momentum before I drag him back onto my cock. The only sounds in the air around us are Abe's gagged moans, and the sound of skin slapping skin—a *symphony of sins for our ears*.

I press the palm of my large hand into the back of his head, pushing his face firmly into the sheets, using my grip to deprive him of the air that he only breathes for me. *He is mine.* His body, mind, air he breathes, and, more importantly, his dark, depraved soul. Everything about Abraham Mercier belongs to me, and I will take all I desire from him, even if that means his life.

With a few more thrusts, my spine tingles, and heat soars across my tight skin. My vision starts to blur at the edges, darkness threatening to take my sight. The orgasm races through me, merciless and demanding to have me roaring out my satisfaction and promising to rip my heart out of my chest with how frantically it's beating. I cum in long, thick spurts into his clenching ass, the warm, tight embrace siphoning all my goodness out of my spasming dick.

I thrust hard one last time, my body completely flush, and bowed against his. His sweat meets my own as I reach up, release the shirt's knot, and force his mouth to meet mine. His tongue slips into my mouth and thrusts in and out just like my cock did inside of his ass. *Fuck, so good.* He always tastes so good. I can never get enough of him.

I break the kiss and pull back, lifting myself off his back with my crushing weight and pulling out of his ass. My cock bobs before me, still hard and wanting another round. I watch as he pushes some of the cum out, and it trickles down his crack. *Naughty fuck.* He knows I want him to wear my load all day. I catch my cum on my two fingers and slip them back inside of his ass, fucking him with my fingers until a pained

moan releases from his lips, and I know he just came against my sheets.

I grab the belt and pull him off the bed savagely, forcing him to his knees before me, his hands still tied behind his back, his muscles tense and straining. My hard cock thrusts into his open mouth and to the back of his throat, closing off his airway with my length and thickness. “Suck and clean your ass off my cock, my little demon. You were a naughty fuck and came without my permission.”

His bright amber eyes meet mine from his knees, sparkling with satisfaction and humor. His lips curl up on either side of my cock, and he sucks with enthusiasm. His head bobs back and forth, taking me to the back of his throat over and over, until I can feel the stirrings of another orgasm speeding its way like a freight train down my body. My hands find their way into his thick, wavy hair, and I pull on the strands, forcing his head to stop moving and taking over the thrusting down his throat.

I fuck his face hard like the animal that I am, while his groans vibrate against my length. Encouraging me to use him, to make him my demon. *My sinner. My toy.*

Two more thrusts, and I’m emptying down his tight throat as he hollows his cheeks and sucks hard, and his tongue licks the underside of my cock. My balls tighten painfully as the last ropes of cum leave my swollen head, and he swallows every drop. A moan barrels up my chest and escapes my mouth

before I can stop it. His eyes sparkle, and the fucker wags his brows at me as he continues to lick my cock.

I release my grasp on his hair and pull back, slapping his cheek hard, before bending down and kissing him, my taste mixed with his meeting my lips, and making me groan. *Fuck. I wish we had more time. I wish we could stay like this forever.* I hate this fucking world our fathers and grandfathers have made that would deny us our freedom.

“So, bleach?” He huffs out a deep breath, still on his knees, with cum and saliva still coating his chin and neck, and nods towards the wall. Turning his back so I can untie his arms and release him from my constraint, he flexes his large arms, forcing the blood to circulate once again. I guess I tied it tighter than I thought. *He’s a big demon; he can take it.*

“Might work; otherwise, we will have to do some fucking spray painting real quick. Do you still have any of those cans left from when we used to tag the buildings?” The minute the words leave my mouth, my stomach sinks. His expression turns from heated to cool, and then it’s like a thick blanket of sadness lands on his broad shoulders.

He looks away and won’t meet my eyes. I want to take the words back, but I can’t. *The damage is done.* He gets quickly off his knees, wiping my taste across the back of his hand from his mouth, and moves to get dressed with his back turned to me.

FUCK.

“I’ll...I’ll go get them...now. Be easier...to explain...than the smell of bleach. They will think we killed another whore in here.” He doesn’t wait for my response, removing the chair, unlocking the door, and shutting it firmly behind him.

I rake my fingers through my hair, tugging on the strands until some of them tear from my scalp. I loathe how all our memories have been tainted. Most of all, I hate that I’ve inflicted pain upon him, the one person I have left.



Chapter 7



The Sinner

Dinah

I observe them through the tiny camera I discreetly installed in Zeke's room last night. They won't discover it, thanks to Sammy's exceptional skills—a talent forsaken by this wretched, regressive world.

In the old world, Sammy would have been at the top of his game as a master hacker, and a brutal enforcer—someone who could have been a billionaire in his own right, with the tech he designs and creates. Regrettably, in this desolate hellhole we call home, he's relegated to the role of a mere guard despite his brilliance. A peasant to the order of the Brotherhood, like anyone not born into a founding family.

How I long to blow it all up. To ignite a blaze that engulfs all those who deem themselves superior, merely because their name is linked to a founding father who ravaged and plundered our world. The savages who decimated countries, lives, and people, without the slightest hesitation. My father was one of those men, and look at how they rewarded him.

As Zeke woke up, my excitement and anxiety warred with each other; at first, I thought he would be oblivious to the little present I had left him. The fucker was too busy stroking his morning wood to even notice the bloody fingerprints on the sheets next to him, or my scripture on the wall.

Disappointment threatened to tear through me as the minutes ticked on. My blood pressure rose with both annoyance and a hint of desire as he stroked his long, pierced cock in his fist, the tip dripping beads of creamy precum. The sight made my core clench despite my hate for the man. Even though it leaves a sour taste in my mouth, I can't deny that he's beautiful to look at. He always has been. It's what's underneath that facade that's the problem.

Evil has many faces and ways to lure you, and Ezekiel Rothesay is the embodiment of all of them. *He wasn't always*, my mind tries to whisper to me, and a flash of a young, bright-green-eyed boy grinning at me enters my mind.

Nope. That boy no longer exists. He perished under too many sins, and this demon was born in his place. I refuse to allow my mind to play tricks on me and convince me otherwise.

I watch with rapt attention as his movements suddenly stop. The blood on the sheets has finally caught his eye. He leans over and studies the red marks, rubbing one of his long fingers over the sheet. His head moves around, eyes surveying the room, and it doesn't take him long before he notices the wall and jumps out of his comfortable bed in a panic. His cock long forgotten and no longer hard. A snicker leaves my lips, knowing I have killed his ardor. I plan to take away all his fun before I'm done.

"Is sleeping beauty finally awake? That fucker sleeps like the dead." Sammy's warm breath tickles along the back of my

neck, making the hairs stand on end.

The sneaky asshole is always so silent when he moves. A panther, moving like silk through the air, stalking, ready to take down his prey. I didn't even hear him coming. I would have never known he was in the room with me if it wasn't for his delectable scent. *Dangerous*, my mind supplies.

“Finally woke up. I'm pretty sure I just took a few years off his life.” I shrug with pleasure as I watch Zeke call Abe on his phone and demand his presence.

I'm so happy that we decided to go with the cameras that have the ability to transmit sound. It does make them more dangerous to install, but it's well worth the joy they are bringing me right now.

I need to hear the panic in their voices, not only see it on the screen. I knew the sound would be soothing to the rage that lives inside of me. The predator who wants her kill but also craves suffering. *The monster we have become—the monster they have made us into.*

We both watch as Abe storms into the room with annoyance. “What the fuck was so urgent I had to rush in here, fucker? I had my cock down Elizabeth's throat!” *Elizabeth? Is that one of the maids?* I make a mental note to do research on who that is.

The sound is a bit muffled and low, but his disappointment at not getting his cock sucked is hard to miss. *What a fucking brat.* A spoiled prince throwing a tantrum. *He wasn't always like that.* The thought whispers through my mind, trying to

bring up images long better left in ashes. Despite my mind's attempt at trying to humanize them, there will be no mercy offered to either of them. It's only fair since they offered none when my family needed it.

Zeke ignores his tempestuous tone and continues to stare at the wall I left my message on. The psycho actually sniffed that wall to check if it was blood or paint. I'm not here for the party tricks, fucker. This is not a gag someone is pulling on you. I'm the real deal.

The blood I used to write on his wall is that of the last founding father I murdered. Bleeding him until I had enough to use for my messages, then decapitating him and setting him on fire while his sons watched, before ending their entitled lives, too.

He died with his miserable sins still stained on his lips. The agony and destruction I took out on his body, and that of his malicious sons, made my own blood sing in happiness for days. Vengeance not only for my own depraved needs, but for every single person that he has made suffer since the old world fell at his deceitful feet. *More will die, just like he did, before I am done.*

I know I should start to worry about how each kill is taking a little more of my soul every time. That soon enough, I will be as soulless as the ones I hunt. *It's worth it. Even if we lose ourselves, it will be worth it. This world needs a cleansing,* my mind whispers.

“What the fuck is that?” Abe’s voice resonates through the air, a note of panic in its sound. It helps bring me back to the here and now, pulling me away from my own morose thoughts. I take my eyes off the screen to see the look of satisfaction cross Sammy’s face. His blue eyes sparkle like two large sapphires. *He’s beautiful when he’s taking joy in others’ misery.*

“A warning, I believe, from the ‘*Unholy Ghost*’. It would seem I have displeased him and put myself on his radar.“ Oh, bitch, you have done so much more than displease me. You have stirred the fires of hell inside my veins.

“Jesus fucking Christ, Zeke, that’s a threat. False prophets, what does that mean? Is this psycho calling the Order out? Is he talking about the founding fathers?” I watch as Abe pushes his fists through his thick, wavy hair, his caramel and brown eyes wide and going back and forth between the wall and Zeke’s stony face.

“Yeah, looks like the fucker is. I’m amused that he thinks we are raving wolves. Not a bad description.”

Do I think they are wolves? Demons, maybe. Lowlifes, certainly. Traitors, absofuckinglutely. He’s amused? Let’s see how amused he is when I have him hogtied and bleeding at my feet with a hot poker shoved up his ass. *Ooh, that image makes me all warm and tingly on the inside.*

“We need to clean this shit up before someone from the guard or the servants catches wind of it.” Zeke’s voice comes out forceful, in control but with a hint of wariness.

Gotcha, fucker. I turn around and give Sammy an evil grin. I was right. I knew there was no way Ezekiel Rothesay was going to give up his freedom. That he would realize instantly the repercussions of his father finding out. It looks like it was wise not to underestimate the psychopath. *Hey bitch, pot calling the kettle black right now.*

“What the hell are you talking about? Clean this shit up? No, bitch, we have to tell your dad. This psychopath somehow got in here with all the security crawling around this place, and could have killed you.”

You have no idea how close I was to making that happen, how the temptation to end his life ran through my veins. How the need to see his blood spilled almost convinced me to put aside my plan and end his life.

A snort from Sammy has me raising an eyebrow in his direction. “It’s funny that they think security crawling everywhere would deter you. They have no idea how good you are. Nothing could or would stop you, once you got it into your head to go after them. They are imbeciles if they think their high walls and guards will save them.”

He’s right, of course. I’ve had years of training. Years to master all my skills while I sat in confinement. Forced fucking confinement at the whims and mercy of the Order. They might have a few well-trained guards amongst them, but I would put Sammy and I up against all of them and know with a certainty that we would come out on top.

“No. We can’t fucking do that. The minute my father or yours knows what happened here, we will be under lock and key, Abe. Prisoners. You know that as well as I do. They will fucking separate us to keep their precious heirs, and the next generation, alive.” I watch with rapt attention as he grabs Abe by the shirt and yanks forward, his grip tightening, his jawline hard as if it was made from granite. *Is it getting hotter in here?*

“No one is going to find out, and we are not going to be separated. *Ever*. You fucking hear me, Abe? You belong to me. I will not allow anyone to take you away from me. Not my fucking father, not this psychotic order, or some madman pretending to be a ghost.”

Their mouths crash together, the sound of two animalistic groans loud in the silent air around us. Abe’s hand wraps around the back of Zeke’s neck, and even through the screen, I can see clearly how tightly he’s holding on to him. There is desperation and violence in that hold intertwined.

“Well, damn, Dinah. I think you forgot to mention something,” Sammy grunts next to me as we watch Abe and Zeke eat each other’s mouths like they are starving animals. I tear my eyes away from the stunning males on the screen to watch Sammy’s expression. There is no repulsion or distaste across his features. If anything, there’s a slight flush across his neck and cheeks. His breathing has picked up as his chest rises and falls more rapidly, his gaze locked on the screen before us. *Is he aroused by watching them together?*

In all our years together, he has never given me the slightest indication that he preferred anything but women. Specifically one woman. *Me*. It's not like he's had much exposure to any other women, either. It's been us two forged together by circumstance and fate for years. I was young, naive, and set adrift from all I knew when I met him. A fifteen-year-old hostage, being punished for the sins of her father. He was closed off, angry, and filled with untapped promise—a twenty-five-year-old guard assigned to oversee the punishment and confinement of a girl.

Did fate bring us together? Did it intertwine two broken souls so that they could find comfort in each other? I don't know if I believe in blind intervention any more than I believe in an omnipotent entity. All I know is that from the moment I met him, my soul found a peace I hadn't experienced in years.

I turn back to the screen and watch as Abe rips off his shirt and lowers his pants after Zeke locks and bars the door with a chair. That stupid chair would have done nothing to keep me out if I wanted to get in, but I'm amused with how easily his sense of safety is satisfied.

Did you forget the unlocked bathroom window? These guys think they are invincible. I am going to enjoy showing them they're not.

Together, we watch as Abe bends himself over the end of the bed, and Zeke ties his arms together with his belt before gagging him with a shirt he grabbed off the floor. My breath gets caught in my chest at the moment of tenderness, and the

expression of want and emotion on Zeke's face, as he runs the palm of his hand down Abe's spine before clenching the globes of his ass in both hands and squeezing, until Abe thrashes against the mattress.

I must make a sound because Sammy moves behind me, his chin landing on my shoulder as his warm breath meets my neck. His large, rough hands circle my waist before tightening and pulling me back into his muscled body. His hard erection presses into my ass as heat races up my spine, and his scent floods my senses.

“Is my little Nightstar getting drenched watching those two fuckers going at it?” His tongue trails out of his mouth and across my warm skin, my lips parting with the shudder that runs through my body at the contact. “Is your juicy cunt wet, Dinah?”

He doesn't wait for me to answer, slipping his hand inside the band of my tight black yoga pants and over my panty-clad pussy. His thick fingers stroke my pussy lips over the damp material. My hips undulate, chasing his touch.

“What a naughty little slut you are. Getting off on watching the two of them going at it.” He turns my face back to the screen as his lips meet the edge of my jaw, and his teeth scrape across the surface, eliciting a small moan to escape my lips.

My eyes focus back on the screen just as Zeke slams his impressive, pierced cock inside of Abe's ass. The angle of the camera placement allows us to watch as he pistons inside of Abe with forceful, angry thrusts, but not Abe's expression.

Damn it, I should have installed more than one camera. I would have too, if I had anticipated such captivating images. They are utterly reckless, exposing themselves to a substantial risk of being caught just outside that fragile door.

Do they think they are impervious to danger because of who they are, or do they seek the adrenaline rush that it provides? I'm guessing it's the second option. Neither of them is stupid; they know the world we live in intimately. *Princes of the Order, disobeying its authority.*

I watch Zeke's strong back, legs, and ass clench with the movement of his muscles, and the sound of skin slapping skin in a rush to meet euphoria. The sound is loud in our silent room, where my harsh breathing is the only other noise.

Sammy moves my panties to the side, his fingers now brushing across my slick skin without any barrier before he plunges two fingers inside of me, mimicking the movement and speed Zeke is fucking Abe. "You come when he comes, my little whore."

He bites down hard on my neck, and I clench around his digits as the palm of his hand rubs across my clit, adding friction to the mix. The sensations almost make my knees buckle and cause heat to rise up my body and race across my skin. He thrusts his cock against my ass through the barrier of our clothes, causing my blood to rush in my ears. I'm so close already, so turned on that my pussy is soaking the palm of Sammy's hand, and wetting the upper part of my thighs.

Sammy bites down again, this time where my neck and shoulder meet, stroking the divot with his tongue. My head falls backward against his chest, my eyes closing, lost to the sensation of how his fingers are fucking me.

“Open your eyes, Nightstar. *Watch.*“ He licks the stinging spot, and my eyes open, watching as Zeke loses control and thrusts so hard into Abe’s ass that he’s driving him across the bed’s surface, before pulling him back by his tied arms.

Electricity races up my spine, heat flashes across my entire body, and sweat breaks out across the surface of my skin, as Sammy’s thrusts become more powerful. His fingers filling me up, stretching my pussy, and forcing me to the tips of my toes. He fucks me roughly, plunging another finger inside of me, stroking a spot inside of my core that makes me cry out, and causes my eyes to roll into the back of my head.

“Pull on your nipples. Twist them hard. I want to feel you gush on my fingers, Nightstar. I want you to come like the dirty, little, depraved whore you are. Watching two men fuck. Watching his ass get filled up by that long, pierced cock, again and again.”

I yank my shirt up, slipping the bottom of it between my teeth as I pull on my hard nipples. Twisting them between two fingers until the bite of pain has me bearing down on Sammy’s fingers, and soft moans are leaving my lips through my clenched teeth. My whole body tightens painfully as I struggle to hold back the orgasm that is racing through my limbs and tightening my core.

With one last powerful thrust, Zeke comes inside of Abe's ass, and I let go of my own restraint, coming in violent spasms over Sammy's thick digits. My mouth opens wide as a scream leaves my lips. Wave after wave of primal euphoria crashes through me as Sammy keeps pumping his digits inside of me.

He pulls his fingers out and slips all three digits inside my mouth, the salty, musky tang hitting my taste buds. I swirl my tongue around them, licking and sucking every drop off his fingers. My eyes watch as Zeke forces Abe to his knees, and makes him clean off his cock with that sinful mouth of his.

Fuck, why is that so hot? Why is watching Zeke manhandle Abe, and forcing him to take his cock over and over, so fucking intense and sexy?

"Do you wish you were between them, Nightstar? Do you wish it was you licking his cock clean after it's been in Abe's ass? Being their little cum whore?"

"Yeeessss." The word leaves my lips in a breathless whisper. There is no point in denying it. Sammy and I have no secrets between us. He knows that I enjoy all manners of depravity and that I long to be used like a whore in the bedroom.

"Maybe one day, you'll get your chance; for now, though, you are only my whore. Get on your knees and swallow me like the good little slut you are. I want to coat that vicious throat of yours with my cum."

I fall to my knees, my eyes tearing away from the screen as Zeke fucks Abe's mouth. The sounds of gagging are loud in our space. How I long to be making the same sounds. Sammy

unbuttons his pants and pulls down the zipper of his black jeans, his cock popping out the minute it's unleashed from its harsh confinement. I love that he refuses to wear underwear. The fewer clothes between us at all times, the better.

His cock head is large, dark red, and swollen, with a thick vein protruding from the side of his long shaft that my tongue craves to trace. The tip is already messy and covered in precum across the mushroom head, and down the ridge of his crown. My tongue snakes out and licks the moisture, a moan leaving my mouth at his slightly bitter taste. I lash down the veiny length of his cock to the root. My tongue wraps around its girth before my lips leave behind a trail of kisses, and I brush my teeth lightly over his girthy length.

Sammy loves a little pain with his head. He enjoys the feel of my teeth as I carefully trail them up the length of his shaft back to the head, where I hollow my cheeks and suck hard just on the tip. My tongue lashes the slit repeatedly as his hands fist in my hair until tears trail down the side of my face. His firm grip on my long, dark tresses tells me I'm about to lose the ability to control my actions.

I swallow him down until he hits the back of my throat, and even then, it's too much; there are still inches I can't fit. My head bobs up and down on his length, each time pushing him a little further down and closing more of my airway. Spit slides out of the corner of my mouth as I gag over and over again without mercy on his cock. His fisted grip in my hair stops my motion as he takes over fucking my mouth.

“That’s it, my little Nightstar, show me what a whore you are. Suck me down that tight throat.”

I hold on tight to the material covering his thighs as he pounds into my throat, losing himself in the sensation and chasing his own orgasm. His grunts and the smell of his sweat and scent are an aphrodisiac that entices all my senses.

This is what I needed. This is my heaven. The feel, taste, and smell of Sammy is my addiction. He is what is still keeping me grounded to this world, preventing me from toppling over from the madness that wants to roll me under its dark depths.

When he finally comes down my sore and abused throat, it’s without mercy. He makes me take his cum deep in my throat and swallow all of its creamy goodness. He pulls back, releasing his hold on my face and hair, and his vibrant blue eyes meet mine. They are a sea of darkness, the pupils wholly blown. Color is rising across his olive-toned skin, and I watch as a drop of blood wells on his bottom lip, from where he must have bitten down as he found his own bliss.

His hand gently caresses the slope of my face, his thumb rubbing over some of his cum on my lips. “You are too good for them, Dinah. You are too good for any of us.”

He pulls away from me, tucking himself away in his pants before giving the screen one last look and walking away. Just as he’s about to leave the room, he turns back around. His dark blues glimmer in the light, filled with emotion. This man before me should have hurt and helped destroy me; instead, he

became a part of my survival and heart. He is my everything, and right now, he is looking at me like he's already lost me.

“Remember you belonged to me first, Nightstar. I will never let you go.”

His words bring a chill down my spine as he turns to leave with one more heated look. I sit there on my knees, trying to figure out what just happened, and why did Sammy just behave like there was ever a chance of losing me? *There isn't a chance, is there?*

Don't be fucking ridiculous, Dinah. I admonish myself. Sammy will never lose you unless it's to death or madness. Certainly never to those two fuckers.

With one last look at the now-empty screen, a huge sigh leaves my lips as I drag my hands down my face. FUCK. I don't need this shit. I can't have Sammy doubting me. He is mine, and I am his.

Fuck it, right now, I need another release, one preferably at the end of a blade that will cover me in the blood of my enemies. I'll try to dissect this shit later, or maybe I'll just ignore it, and nothing will come of it.

The sound of sarcastic laughter fills my mind with a taunt. *Sure, bitch. I'm sure it will all work itself out.*



I dig my fingers and nails deeply into his cheeks, grinding the soft flesh against his teeth as more blood escapes from his

lips in a red trickle down his chin, and screams of pain try to crawl out of his mouth. The groans and whimpers he is trying so hard to swallow cause shudders of pleasure to race down my spine. The knowledge that he is my captive, a fly stuck in my web, waiting for an end that will not come swiftly, makes my core tighten and dampens my panties.

Pain and blood really are the sexiest fucking shit. Forget sweet words and caresses; give a girl a little blood, some much-needed vengeance, and a sharp blade, and watch her cream her panties like a little slut.

I know, I know. I should worry that my mental state is deteriorating faster than my stash of pretty panties, but that was a worry for someone who planned to live a long life. I knew I didn't have that luxury. No, my sins would eventually catch up to me, but not before I set the world on fire. How pretty it was going to look when red, blue, and gold flames were licking at its every surface.

“Please!” The voice behind us begs, strangled with emotion, pain, and a panicked timbre. The smell of urine is ripe and solid in the air. They always seem to lose their bladders, these mighty and powerful men of the Brotherhood. *Well, their bladders and their dignity.*

I tear my eyes away from Michael Kingston, his dark brown eyes filled with terror and hate as he stares at death before him. My hand lashes out and slaps him hard in the face, causing it to snap to the left before being wrenched back. I have to give him credit; not once has he begged or bargained

for his life. No, he would never bow down and plead with a woman or with the ‘*Unholy Ghost*’.

Diabolus Mortis. That is what I have become to the Brotherhood of the Sacrament. I wonder if they plead with their God to save them from my blade. I wonder if I am now the devil they fear in the night, here to take their stained souls. *I fucking hope so.*

It’s almost a shame I have to kill this one. A deep, regretful sigh leaves me, and I watch as his eyes widen further. I let my fingers trail over his bloody eyebrow and down the side of his aged face in a gentle caress. I would have loved to have him in my cage a little longer, so I could see him finally break. *They always break*. It doesn’t matter how tough they think they are, or how big and strong their bodies are. *They break*. I make sure of it.

“Mercy, please! Lord, please save us!” My eyes turn to the bloody mess behind us. His arms are tied behind his back while a blade protrudes from his side, bleeding him out like a stuck pig. This one broke way too quickly, and his whiny voice was starting to really grate on my damn nerves.

I grab a fistful of hair and yank Michael’s head back. “You sure that one is your son? He’s a weak, fucking brat, Michael.”

Disgust, rage, and embarrassment cross Michael’s battered face in succession. *Ah, he’s embarrassed by his crybaby son too*. I wonder if I released him, would he beat his son for shaming him before his enemies? It seems like something a high-ranking member of the Order would do.

“Please release us. Lord, save us!” A sharp cry leaves the son’s lips as the sound of flesh hitting flesh rents the air. I watch as Sammy pulls back, his fist coated in blood, rolling his eyes as they meet mine.

“What? He’s getting on my fucking nerves with his whiny voice. Fuck, his mom didn’t even cry this much before you put a bullet in her head.” He shrugs his large shoulders and moves away from Samson. I think it’s hilarious that good old Michael here named his son after one of the toughest characters found in scripture, only for him to be pathetic, weak, and a sniveling fool.

Sammy’s right; good old Samson’s mom didn’t cry out; she fought tooth and nail to save her worthless husband and cowardly son. Usually, I don’t kill the women. The mothers and daughters are terrorized and confined to this world. I release them and tell them to run, or for the ones too beaten down to run, Sammy makes arrangements with our underground network to save and hide them from the Brotherhood. Most of them are grateful, and relieved to be released from the bonds of breeding servitude that the Brotherhood of the Sacrament places on women.

What does that tell you about the world that we find ourselves in? When a woman watches her husband and sons be terrorized and murdered in cold blood by two psychopathic serial killers, and they feel relief that their suffering has ended. Some of them even thank us. *That’s some fucked up shit right there.*

Mrs. Kingston was an exception. She enjoyed her title of Sacred Wife. She liked how the females below her were terrorized by the Order, and how she benefited from her husband's position. Naw, that bitch had to die and go to meet the devil. I hope she enjoys her place rotting in hell.

"I'm going to slice him open, Michael, pull out his innards, and make him choke on them, all while you watch. Do you know why?" I lean forward, my warm breath sliding over Michael's blood-streaked face as my blue eyes meet the rage in his brown eyes. "Because I can. Because your God is not coming, Michael. Because the Brotherhood cannot save you from my wrath, and I have no mercy."

A wide smile crosses my face as I move away from him and towards his son. I can hear his struggles behind me, but it's no use. The bindings tying him to the chair he's confined in are too tight, and the knots are expertly done. He will never get out of that chair alive.

"Samson Kingston. God has no mercy for you. You have been judged by the devil and found wanting. You will die by my hand, the miserable and useless piece of shit, you are. Forgotten within moments of your last breath."

I lean forward and pull the sharp blade from his side. A loud scream leaves his lips, vibrating off the wine cellar walls. Walls with rows of precious and expensive hoarded wine. While the majority of the populace lives on water and stale bread, these assholes drink wine nightly. Toasting to

themselves and a corrupt institution that has destroyed so many.

“Men are like wine - some turn to vinegar, but the best improve with age.” An unhinged chuckle escapes my lips. “That was Pope John the Twenty-third’s theory. Did you know that? Don’t worry, Samson. We are about to ensure your vinegar doesn’t infect anyone else.”

“Please...” The gurgled sound leaves his lips, and more blood chokes up his throat. I slash out viciously with the blade, catching him in the middle of his stomach and slicing him open like a ripe piece of fruit. My arm strikes again, another large cut opening up before I plunge the blade deep and cut him open, his intestines spilling out like ugly worms coated in blood. His breath hitches, his chest-beating furiously underneath the emblem of the Brotherhood.

I reach forward and grab a fistful of intestines, yanking and forcing them up his chest and into his mouth. Forcing them down his screaming throat until blessed, fucking silence from his mouth is heard. “Finally!”

Samson’s body twitches once, then twice, and then a shudder races through him as the light goes out of his eyes. Behind me, I can hear the screams from Michael; music is what they sound like to me. High pitched, lovely in decibel, and filled with pain. A shudder of hot and intense pleasure races through me at the sound. The way he now begs for mercy and fights against his restraints. I could fall asleep to that sound.

I turn around and move towards Michael. A dark and depraved smile curves my lips as his son's blood trails down the skin of my arms, and coats my chest and neck. As much as I would love to remain here, relishing the blood I have spilled and the sounds Michael is making, we have already been here for hours. The risk to Sammy and me grows with each passing moment. *I can't have this ending so soon; not enough blood stains on my soul yet.* He stares up at me in horror and fear, that look making my skin tingle.

“Michael Kingston, your God has deserted you. Your order cannot save you, and death wants its due. There will be no heaven for you or any of your brethren. I will see you in hell.” I plunge the blade, still slick with his son's blood, into his right eye, then pull out with a pop and slam into his left before slicing his throat open and watching as the blood pours from the wound, covering me in its warm spray. Droplets rush down my cheek, jaw, and neck, coating me in the blood of yet another enemy.

Joy. The feeling running over my skin and down my bones is joy. Joy at one more life being ended. Joy at another member of the Brotherhood taking his last breath. A smile graces my lips, and I taste copper on my tongue. *Death always tastes delicious.*

Sammy moves forward and hands me a brush, which I press against the gaping wound in Michael's throat to write my message on the wall. My warning to the others that I am coming for them next.

“Oh, ye Lord. You have forsaken your sons:
sinners, false prophets, and devils.
I shall cleanse the world of their sins and bring
the sheep back to the house of the Lord.”

“Poetic, Dinah. I do believe that you are getting better with the messages. They are likely to think it’s one of their own with regrets.” Sammy smiles at me as his fingers trail over the blood coating my skin. I can see heat in the depths of his eyes. He would love nothing more than to fuck me covered in their blood. “We need to get cleaned up and out of here, my little Nightstar; we have dallied too long already, and it’s a long drive home.”

Home. Home is wherever we are together. There is no one place for either of us. We are outcasts, things left to rot somewhere safe. I once believed in home and lost everything that I valued.

I’m stronger and wiser now. I no longer believe in the fairy tales told in books. With one last glance at the bloody mess and another founding father’s name crossed off my list, I grab a couple of bottles of wine off the rack on the wall and leave the cellar behind.

I shall toast to the Kingston family tonight as I enjoy the spoils of war.



Chapter 8



The Sinner

Dinah

I skip down the long, brightly lit hallway with a mischievous grin breaking across my face. The sunshine is pouring in through all the large windows, making everything seem tinged in bright white and yellow light. I was so happy when I found the pretty blue ribbons that Momma left on the top of my bed. Blue, the same shade as my eyes, with a dark hint of gray. Eyes that match my momma's. Daddy says they make us the prettiest two ladies he has ever seen. I'd tied the ribbons quickly in my hair, making sure that the bows were tied correctly, like Momma taught me. One rabbit ear, then another, and a tight loop.

I want to be beautiful like my mom. Everyone we know says my momma is the prettiest woman they have ever seen. They say she looks like a princess from a long-ago time with her long, dark hair and beautiful blue eyes. She is blessed by God to look like one of his angels. I want to be exactly like her so I, too, can be blessed by him. Nothing in our world matters unless God approves it. You are only worthy if he says so. I desperately want to be worthy.

I'm so excited to show my pretty ribbons to Daddy and Gabriel. I love it when Daddy calls me his 'sweet angel' and Gabriel tells me how cute I am. Even though he can be annoying sometimes and his friends are rude, I love spending

time with my older brother. He is my best friend, next to my momma.

I look for Momma in the kitchen to thank her, but she isn't there, and I can't find her in the rose garden either. Our maid Josie wouldn't answer me when I asked her if she saw my mom, and the cook told me to go wait for her in my bedroom with a sad look on her face. Why did they both look so scared and sad? Were they sad because they didn't get pretty ribbons? Was Daddy having a bad day and yelling again?

I don't want to wait for Momma in my room, and I want to show Daddy my ribbons, so I skip out of the kitchen area, ignoring Cook's calls. Momma has to be with Daddy in the office. I wonder if Gabriel is with them? I stroll across the large foyer, humming to myself, and that's when I notice our front door is wide open. Two men are standing on our front porch wearing the dark blue soldiers' uniforms with the crest of the sacrament on their arms. Weird.

What were soldiers doing here in our house? My eyes move across the large space, and I notice two more guards standing tall and like rigid statues through the window around the porch. I turn my eyes back inside and am met with two dark brown eyes and a face lacking all warmth and emotion. I knew him, and he wasn't very nice. He was one of Zeke's dad's guards. Gabriel, Zeke, and Abe always made fun of how he followed Zeke's dad around like a shadow, even to the bathroom. What does someone need protecting from in the bathroom?

What is he doing in my house? Is Zeke's dad here to see my daddy? Is Zeke here to play with Gabriel? Butterflies sprout in my tummy at the thought of seeing Zeke. He was kind of rude and a little loud, but that didn't stop me from having a crush on him. He has the prettiest green eyes, like summer grass.

The mean guard's eyes narrow on me, and I watch intently as a grimace crosses his face. He doesn't seem to like me very much. I don't know why; everyone likes me. I'm daddy's angel and momma's sweet girl. I never get in trouble, unlike Gabriel and his friends.

"Is...is...my...momma in there?" My voice comes out with a slight stutter, and I can hear the fear and uncertainty in my tone. Why am I so scared? I tighten my little fists at my sides to stop myself from shaking. There's nothing to be scared of; Daddy is here somewhere, and he will protect me from the mean guard.

His head cocks to the side at my question as his eyes travel from my blue ballet flats over my bare legs and across my pale pink dress. The way his eyes are staring at me makes me uncomfortable. The hair on my arms stands straight up as I shift from foot to foot. I want my momma to come put herself between me and him. I want my big brother; he will protect me. I'd even settle for loud-mouth Abe to come stand with me right now.

His head tips to the side, indicating the door, and I slowly inch forward, watching him from the corner of my eye as I reach for the handle and slowly turn it. I can see him take a

step forward towards me. Panic starts to build in the pit of my stomach, my heart rate picks up speed, and my little chest huffs with a breath that's coming in and out of my lungs too quickly. Fear washes over me like a cascade of rain, drenching every part of my body and making a cold sweat break out over my neck and back.

I don't know how I know, but this man wants to do bad things to me. To hurt me and make me cry. I need to get away from him quickly and find my parents or brother. I would even settle for those jerks, Zeke and Abe. They wouldn't let him hurt me. Hopefully.

I quickly turn the handle and push the door open, stumbling inside as I feel his fingers brush against my long, dark hair. A frightened whimper escapes my lips as my eyes widen, and a scream crawls up my chest, ready to vacate my body.

I stumble in my first step into the room, almost falling down to my knees with my head still turned back in fear of the man behind me. I take another step forward, and my eyes turn to the room to look for my mother. That's when the sounds of crying, whimpers, and grunts reach me.

I can't see my momma; so many men are standing around blocking the view of the front of Daddy's desk, but I can hear her. I can also hear the low murmuring of multiple male voices and soft slapping noises.

What was happening in here? Why did some of these men not have any pants on? My face heats with embarrassment at some of the hairy legs I'm seeing. I almost swallow my tongue

when I see a white hairy bum in front of me. Did these men confuse my dad's office for a bathroom? Where was my momma and my daddy?

"Make her cry out, Paul; she doesn't seem to be begging for the Lord's mercy loud enough. The whore that she is, she needs to scream," a man to the side bellows out, and the rest laugh at his words.

Whore? That was a bad word, and not one daddy allowed in our house. Abe had used that word a few weeks ago to describe one of the maids, and my dad had slapped him on the back of the head for saying it. This man was going to be in big trouble with my daddy if he heard him say it.

"Whose turn is it? She's already sloppy wet with cum," another voice questions.

"Gotta love a dirty whore who knows how to take a train run on her. You're such a good little slut, aren't you, Maria? You should give my wife some pointers on how to take it in all her holes." More laughter fills the room as I take another step forward. Why is this man talking to my momma like that? Saying all these horrible things to her.

"I'm next in her ass. It's still semi-tight, unlike that gaping stretched-out pussy," a loud booming voice cackles, one I recognize as Abe's dad as he steps forward towards the desk. That's when I realize it was his hairy ass I was looking at. Gross!

As he moves forward, I glimpse my momma's side profile, naked and bent over my daddy's desk. A man on the other side

is holding her hair tight in his grasp. Her face is pressed up close against his body. I can't see her eyes or mouth from how he holds her head. Another man is standing behind her naked and holding tight to her waist.

There are red marks all over Momma's skin, and she has a handprint on her bottom. I grit my teeth hard; someone spanked my momma. She's not a bad girl; she shouldn't be hit; she's an angel. My little fists tighten at my side with anger. I watch Abe's dad climb up on my daddy's thick desk and bend to his knees, straddling my mom's lower back and bottom. He runs his fingers between her bum cheeks, and my face flushes red. Yuck, why is he touching my momma's bum?

He does something with the large worm in his hand against Momma's bottom, and she lets out a pained cry. Tears slide down her face as the man with his grip on her hair makes her swallow another worm. His fingers tighten on her nose until she's thrashing around on the desk. She looks like she is in pain. Why are they hurting her?

"STOP!! You're hurting my momma! Stop, please!" I scream and rush forward, only to be grabbed from behind by a thick arm around my waist and pulled right off my feet. I thrash and kick in the hold, trying to release myself to help my momma. A grunt behind me with a whispered "little cunt" is the only warning I have that it is the scary soldier restraining me. I hear my mom's muffled screams as she tries her hardest to push the men off of her, but there are too many holding her down, and she is just a little thing.

“FUCK! What is she doing in here?” Another man’s voice, loud and startling, pierces the air. I recognize it as Zeke’s dad’s voice as he steps into my line of sight while the soldier holding me tight pulls me back.

“You’re hurting her! Let go of me! Where’s my daddy?” I scream, slap, and scratch at the hand holding me tightly.

“Let go of her!” My dad’s voice yells from the far corner of the room, and I watch with tears pouring down my face as he rushes forward, pushing men out of the way. He makes it in front of me, bending down to his knees as the arms holding me release me, and I stumble into his arms.

“It’s okay, angel. It’s going to be alright.” He tries to calm me down as his arm wraps around my waist tightly, pulling me into the safe haven of his arms, as he tucks my head into his chest. My dad’s scent should be soothing, but it’s not, and all I can smell is the sweat in the room. He is my knight, my protector. Why isn’t he protecting momma?

I can still hear momma struggling and the men hurting her. The more she tries to push them off, the harder they push against her and pull her hair. Then, a loud crack sounds in the air, followed by another. I peek over my father’s shoulder to watch as Abe’s dad slaps Momma over and over across the face. “Settle down, slut. Do your sacred duty to your Lord.”

“Daddy, please! They are hurting her! Please make them stop!” I beg, anger filling me at the sound of my momma’s, cries and the joking and laughing happening around us. Most

of the men are ignoring me and Daddy now, their eyes focused back on what is happening to Momma on the desk.

“She’ll be alright, angel. Don’t look. We need to get you out of here.” My dad tries to take a step forward towards the door with my body pressed firmly against him, but I fight his hold. There is no way I am leaving momma in here alone with these animals hurting her. I don’t understand why my daddy is allowing them to hurt her. He loves her. He tells her all the time. “No, you can’t leave Momma! They’re hurting her!”

“Let her stay, Francis. Maybe she can learn something. She’ll be a Sacred Wife in a few years and needs to learn her duties. Especially if she’s going to marry Ezekiel one day.” Noah, Zeke’s dad, calls out and moves toward us. He is thankfully still wearing pants, but they are undone, and he looks messy. Disgust fills me looking at him, and I curl my lip and bare my teeth like a wild animal at him. I don’t want to marry Zeke. I don’t want to marry anyone!

“She’s ten years old, Noah! For fuck sake, I’m not letting my little girl watch you all gangbang her mom, regardless if she’s to be a Sacred Wife or not.” My dad’s angry tone sends a shiver racing down my spine, and his hold on me tightens. What is a gangbang? I’m going to be a Sacred Wife? I don’t want to be a Sacred Wife if I have to do what momma is doing.

I can’t stop my eyes from finding my momma’s form on the desk. Her beautiful blue eyes, eyes exactly like my own, are wide and filled with fear. Her face is bright red from the slaps

Peter, Abe's dad, had given her, and her beautiful long hair is clenched tightly in another man's fist.

Her eyes plead with me to run, to look away as more tears slide like a river of diamonds down her beautiful face. I watch as Abe's dad pushes into her, making her body slap against the surface of my dad's dark wood desk. He grunts loudly and then stops, pushing harshly against her again before leaning over her and spitting in her face. My eyes follow the spit as it runs down her cheek, to her chin, and then disappears down her neck. Tears slide down my own face, trailing off my chin and soaking the front of my pretty dress as I watch them being so viciously mean to my mom.

"Momma!" I scream and try to rush around my father. He momentarily loses his hold on me, and I force myself past another man. Then Zeke's dad tries to grab me, but I punch him in his private area. A hint of satisfaction runs through me at the sound of pain that leaves his lips, and out of the corner of my eye, I watch him crumple to the floor.

I'm going to hurt all of them. All of the men who are hurting my momma. I'm going to make all of them cry like they are making my momma cry. God will forgive my sins. I will pray for absolution later and do as many good deeds as momma says I have to, to atone for my sins. God loves my momma; she is his angel, and I will be forgiven for saving her.

Just as I almost reach my momma, someone grabs me by the ribbons in my hair and yanks me back hard. I feel hair rip out of my scalp with a sharp burn, and tears fill my eyes and pour

down my face. No, Momma! I almost got to her. I almost got her away from the monsters holding her down.

I awake with a start, my heart racing in my chest and the sour taste of bile in my mouth. My whole body is shaking, and my skin ripples and crawls with disgust. NO! Fuck, not this shit again. The dreams keep coming, waking me with terrors of times long gone. Of pockets of time when I was helpless and weak. When I couldn't defend myself or anyone else. A time when men ruled me and took from me all that they wanted. They took from my mother, too.

I trail my shaking hand down my face as I try to force the beating of my heart to slow down. I need to calm down. They can't get to me here. They can't hurt me. Not anymore. No one will ever be able to hurt me the way they did, nor hurt my mother again. I will kill them all, just like I promised that day in that room so many years ago. I will be their reckoning and their damnation.

I will replace their cruel words and taunts, which will forever haunt my ears, with the sound of their painful screams. Screams and pleads for mercy, something I'm not equipped to provide. No, there will be no savior for the likes of the Brotherhood.

That day in my father's office was the day that my world changed forever. The day my innocence died a horrific death. The day I realized that monsters were real, and they didn't hide under your bed.

No, monsters walked in the light. They were your pastor and your friends' fathers. They were members of your congregation, and Founding Fathers of the Brotherhood. They were your own father. That one was the worst of all the evils I discovered that day.

My father, who professed a deep love for my mother, stood back and allowed all those men to violate and hurt her, over and over. To use her for their own carnal desires, all while spitting nonsense about God. There was no way God demanded that sacrifice from my mother, or any of the other women those men abused. If there was ever a benevolent being watching over us, he had turned his back long ago on humanity.

We were nothing but abusers and sinners. Not even one step above the devils we professed to hate and fight against. The powerful men of the Brotherhood weren't holy. They were evil and the worst types of demons. The ones who used the words of a loving God to force the masses into subjugation and submission.

I have spent eleven years with every waking thought on how I would tear those men limb from limb. My thoughts solely focused on how I would end their miserable hold on this world and cleanse it by fire. My time, though long, was well used. They thought they were raising a Sacred Wife, one they could someday abuse, like they did my mother and every woman of the Brotherhood.

Little did they know they were raising their own death, feeding her lies and betrayals to ensure that her wrath grew. I am vengeance, seeking retribution. I am the dark night calling them back to hell. I am the hell hound, tracking her prey and devouring it.

Five of the twelve men who abused my mother that day in my father's office were still standing, and so many more just like them, who hide behind their titles within the Order. Men who are supposed to protect the females of their lines, not abuse them. Not break their souls, minds, and bodies.

I get up from the bed and turn on the bedside light, a fine tremble still running through my body. The nightmare's cold claws refusing to release their malicious hold on me and sticking to my skin with a chill.

A grunt from the right side of the bed has me turning around to face the sound. Sammy's beautiful blue eyes, filled with sleep and profound exhaustion, meet mine as he sits up in bed. The white sheet falls to his waist, exposing beautiful, golden planes of skin. Usually, the sight would be enough of a temptation to lure me back to bed and into his waiting arms. The ones that help keep me grounded and semi-sane in this world we are living in.

Tonight, however, they don't offer the same lure. I can't seem to shake this antsy feeling. The need for bloodshed and sorrow. I need to hear the screams of my enemies to replace my mother's cries in my head. There is a sense of urgency within me, one I can't place the cause of. I am safe here with

Sammy; the Brotherhood doesn't know it's me killing its members.

“Another nightmare, Nightstar?”

I don't bother to acknowledge his question. He can see it plainly on my face and how I hold my body rigid. As if, at any moment, someone will attack me, and I have to be ready to fight them off. I wipe what little sleep I had from my eyes, refusing to give voice to my nightmares.

Reaching down, I grab my black pants from the floor and slip them on. Then, I throw on Sammy's oversized hoodie over the t-shirt I was wearing to bed. A chill races down my body, refusing to leave me even with the lights on, even with the layers of clothing now protecting my skin from the air around me. My hands shake as I try and fail to pull up my zipper and button my pants in one shot.

NO! Fuck this shit!

Anger fills me like poison spreading through my veins. A poison that I no longer know how to live without. I will not allow them to do this to me. I will not allow them, or their heinous memory, to make me into the same scared little girl who was afraid of every noise in the night. Every male who glanced her way, wondering if they were thinking about abusing her in the same way she watched her mother be abused.

“Little Dinah, you will be a perfect Sacred Wife with all that soft skin. You will serve your Lord, your husband, and the

Brotherhood, won't you, princess? A perfect Sacred Daughter raised to be a perfect, obedient, Sacred Wife."

The sound of Noah's voice rings in my ears and makes me want to vomit and scream at the same time. How many times did his eyes roam over me after that day? How many times did it make me want to run away?

"Get up. We're moving up our timeline. Dorset and his sons die today."

I move away from the bed to the bathroom, turning on every light I come across to banish the darkness still clinging to my skin. Once I reach the sink, I turn on the cold water and splash my face repeatedly until my skin is ice cold, and I can finally breathe. I still feel the impurity of my skin. The crawling sensation of men's fingers brushing against my limbs. Of my father's arms, trying to restrain me.

That sensation might be the worst of them all. He was a liar, a traitor to his wife and daughter. A willing abuser. He may not have readily taken part in the actions of those men hurting my mother, but he allowed it. He watched as they inflicted the abuse without stopping it. Just like when the time came, he would have allowed them to abuse me.

Gabriel would have never allowed it. *Zeke wouldn't have allowed it, either*, my mind tries to whisper to me. I guess we will never know now, will we? Life changes in the blink of an eye. People you think you know so well surprise and devastate you. Causing you to rethink everything you believed to be true about them.

“Dinah, do you really think it’s wise to kill another one so soon and one so close to home? Dorset is only four hours away.” Sammy’s concerned eyes meet mine in the mirror. The lines on his face are deeper somehow than when we went to sleep. I know the pace I’m keeping us at, and all the deaths I’m leaving in my wake, are starting to do a number on him.

Sammy is violent but doesn’t crave death and blood like I do. Yes, he hates the world that has been changed into this travesty that it is now, but alone, he would not have thought to take out members of the Brotherhood. He had his own vendetta against them, and he could readily seek his retribution from behind a keyboard. Helping the resistance slowly topple the Order, one Founding Father at a time. It was me who needed the constant hit of violence—the constant need to see blood spilled.

It is me that Sammy craves above all things. I am his God, his salvation, and his prayers. He would follow me to the end of the world and into hell, even if it broke him. I have no doubt that one day, we will both be welcomed into its deep, dark depths, but not until I fulfill my promise.

I turn my body around, my back leaning against the stone countertop, and allow my fingers to trail over the scar on his face; the one put there by the Brotherhood when he refused to leave his home at fifteen. Leave his mother and sister defenseless against this world. He was called forth to be a soldier of the Brotherhood, and there was no denying that conscription. His sapphire eyes close tightly at my touch, and his breath leaves his puffy lips in a heavy sigh.

“The Lord said, cleanse the world of sinners, bring forth my wrath on all those that deny my true name, and let them see the glory of thy God.”

I smirk at him as I deliver my words, his eyes opening as he raises a snarky eyebrow at me. I’m not playing fair; we both know that I can be a manipulative bitch when I need to be. I’m sure he remembers those words. They were the last ones his pastor heard before I slit his throat.

The fucker had been raping Sammy’s sister for years, as ‘penance and atonement’ for being born a woman to the wrong class in the Order.

“I’ll load the truck.” He turns and walks away, but not before pressing his lips against my hair gently, reverently. The action causes my chest to tighten painfully, and I have to force myself to swallow my words of regret and not call him back.

Only one man left on this earth deserved to live, and he just walked away from me. *Are you sure?* My mind questions.

Fuck, I’m not sure about anything anymore other than the need to feel blood soaking my fingers, and the last breath of evil leaving this earth.





Sammy

I load the car with our equipment, a turbulent mix of anger, frustration, and worry coursing through my body. Dinah's behavior is becoming increasingly troubling. A snicker leaves my lips at the acknowledgment that I'm only genuinely beginning to worry now. She has already brutally killed over twenty men in the last seven months. *Maybe we should have been concerned twenty men ago?*

Anger and dissatisfaction blaze through me at the words she just spoke to me. They leave a bitter taste in my mouth, which I never thought my Nightstar would place there. She's manipulating me with the very words that she uttered when she helped me enact my vengeance and justice two years ago, against the man who brutally raped my only sister repeatedly for years while I was away, and unable to protect her.

All in the name of a faith I no longer believe in. I was drafted to fight in its army, compelled to uphold its twisted principles. The very values that shattered my family, and ultimately claimed the life of my sibling. Values that I now help Dinah extract painfully from the Order's members while they scream.

Yes, my sister was the one who threw herself off the cliff in our hometown, diving head first to her death. Her small and fragile body hitting the sharp and jagged rocks below before

being carried out to sea. But make no mistake, the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament was the weapon that led to that destruction: *cause and effect.*

Her desperation to evade her inevitable fate left her with only one path to follow. As long as I draw breath, I'll never forgive myself for not resisting them more fiercely back then. *You were a boy; what could you have genuinely done?*

I run my fingers along the rugged and calloused skin on my jaw. The bumps and grooves serve as a relentless reminder that I was once feeble, a disappointment. That I didn't truly defy the tyranny of the Order until much later; by then, it was too late to rescue her or myself.

"Boy, you will take your punishment for being a coward. One unwilling to fight for God and do what is required of you. Your penance will be to look at your face in the mirror and witness your cowardice for the rest of your life."

I fight against the hold of the two Order soldiers holding me down. Neither of them are from my village, but this sergeant is. Before the world lost its damn mind to this new world order, this man used to be a member of my church. He worked at the local mechanic shop fixing our cars. Now, here he is, standing over me with a blade while two gorillas hold me down, preventing me from fighting back or fleeing.

The sharp feel of the blade against my jaw has me holding my breath. A smug and maniacal look crosses his face. His dark eyes filled with joy at my misery. He presses the blade further into my skin, and I feel it give way, splitting and

stinging. The sensation of my warm blood trickling down my neck, seeping into the torn collar of my shirt, fills me with a sickening mixture of disgust and fury. It drives me to thrash against their grasp, to fight for my freedom, but they show no mercy, gripping me even tighter until I fear my arms will be torn from their sockets.

The pain is harsh but bearable. I grind my teeth against each other, the taste of blood filling my mouth, while I swallow the scream that is trying its hardest to rip from my lips. These fucking grown men are enjoying torturing a fifteen-year-old boy. I know they want to break me so that they can control me, just like they have done to most of the boys who grew up with me in my village.

Those who now avert their gaze from their neighbors' suffering. Will I, too, become like them after my service? Will I be all too ready to harm someone I've known all my life in the name of a 'righteous' order?

"Ship this coward out to the northern states. He is to go into the front lines to fight against the rebels. Maybe his ugly mug will scare them off!" All three of them laugh at my expense. I feel a metal vibration against my skin, and pain lances through my body with the shock collar they slap onto my slick skin. They drag me away from my home, the only place I have ever lived, and the only kin I have left in this miserable world, without even giving me a chance to look back.

I return to myself, pulling myself from the memory of that day. That was the last day I ever got to see my sister alive. The

day the Order took away a boy who still believed things could change, that right would overpower wrong. *A dreamer.*

I was wrong, so fucking wrong. I spent ten years in that army on the front lines, fighting daily for survival while simultaneously wishing for death nightly. Fighting against former neighbors who would not bow readily to the dominance of the Brotherhood, and this new world they created in their image.

Those years took a soft, wistful dreamer and turned him into a death machine. A complex man with very few limits, and forced obedience to the Order. One who rose through the rankings and never again had to be reminded of his cowardice. My gruesome scar became my reminder and pledge to never be brought down to my knees again.

Who knows what would have happened to me had I not been promoted to the honored position of a loyal guard, and sent to keep watch over a future Sacred Wife? A task some of my fellow soldiers snickered about. In their eyes, it was demeaning work after so many years of service. In mine, I couldn't wait to put all the killing on the front lines behind me.

That was indeed my beginning. My rebirth into this world that I no longer cared anything about. My family was gone, my sanity compromised, and my reasoning to keep going lost. Until the moment I laid eyes on a terrified, dark-haired girl with the biggest, fiercest, blue-gray eyes I had ever seen. I knew right then and there everything that had come before that

moment was gone, like grains of sand through an hourglass. My life was restarted, my purpose reassigned and renewed.

The moment our eyes connected, it was like a live wire was being attached to my body and soul. At that moment, I knew what I would live for and spend my life protecting and giving my soul for. A fifteen-year-old Dinah Camrose, spitting mad, fighting against the hold of two large men, even though her small, fragile body was beaten and bloody.

I have never wanted to protect anyone more than I did her. It was unexplainable, the reaction that overtook me. The need that coursed through my veins to protect and save her from the Order, but more importantly, from herself and her rage. Ferocity and anger like she displayed would get her killed, and probably me right along with her. After all, I was tasked with keeping her in line and safe, until the day the Order would hand her over to her future husband.

A man who would not be from my social class. No lowly guard or soldier would ever be eligible for a Sacred Wife. Despite her temper, tendency towards violence, and foul mouth, there was a perfectly coiffed and trained Sacred Wife under there. One who would fetch a high-ranking Founding Father, or heir of a Founding Father.

No, Dinah Camrose was never meant for the likes of me, and not only because I was nothing in the grand scheme of the Order. Just another worker ant, ensuring the populace's compliance. Too low ranking and undeserving of such a gift,

not least because I was ten years her senior and she was a child, trapped in the curves of a woman's flesh.

Even at fifteen, she was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. She was lit by a fire that blazed from inside her depths, and radiated out through her eyes and pores. Even at that age, her innocent gestures and mannerisms unwittingly ensnared men's attention and hearts, as if she were a natural temptress. In the old world, they would have called her 'jailbait' or a 'siren'. How many men would have willingly walked to their execution for Dinah? I was not an exception, despite fighting against my own heart and desires.

That was perhaps one of the greatest tortures, seeing her and knowing she could and would never be mine. Even though she was so young, she was already promised to someone else. That someone was going to own what I coveted at that moment. That some undeserving man, loyal to the Brotherhood, would get to taste her flesh, to have her beneath them. To hear her screams of passion and her curses of pain.

That man would never be me, not when she came of age or when she took her last breath. I had to resist and be honorable, not only because of my position, but because she was still an innocent in this world, one I would try my best to keep from being compromised.

Her first words spoken to me had my face splitting in the widest grin I had worn since before my time of conscription, and did wicked things to my heart, bringing back the spark of life that had laid dormant all these years.

“What are you staring at, you demented, fucking cunt?” Her stunning eyes shone with the promise of the pain she wanted nothing more than to inflict on me. A little girl trying to hide her fear, and using profanity that would shock grown men.

That was our beginning; six years later, here I am, following her around this psychotic new world like a loyal devil’s hound, and hiding her presence from the *‘righteous Order of Brotherhood of the Sacrament’*. Protecting her not only from capture and torture at the hands of the Brotherhood, but also from herself and those demons that live within her, their claws firmly grasped on her angry and weary soul.

“Are we ready?” Her soft voice rings out from behind me, the dark night helping to disguise her presence from me, even though my heart and soul both sense her approach.

Every part of Dinah speaks to me in a way I can’t deny, and never want to truly understand. She’s a fragment of my soul, embedded so deep that there will never be a me without her. She is now the very air I breathe—the only reason for my existence, and my weary and tarnished heart’s sustenance.

“We should rethink this, Nightstar. This is too rash. It’s too soon to make a move. They haven’t even found Kingston’s body yet, and you want to kill another Founding Father?”

I turn and reach for her, both my hands encircling her biceps and pulling her closer to me. Her soothing scent of spicy herbs and warm toasted vanilla invades my senses. Causing my body to want to lean closer and wrap itself tightly around her, like a python, squeezing the very life out of her for being reckless.

She belongs to me, and I will not let anyone threaten and hurt her, not even if that someone is herself.

She stares up at me with haunting blue-gray eyes that sparkle in the night sky. My Nightstar is dark, beautiful, and deadly. Her dark, luxuriously thick hair falling down her back in deep chestnut waves. Her skin is pale in the moonlight, looking luminescent and hiding the beautiful tattoos that mark every inch of her arms, parts of her chest, and upper thighs. Art that I placed on her velvet skin meticulously with my own hands. Her ripe, red lips call to me, begging my own to take charge of her mouth and stop this madness.

“We need to kill more of them...*I* need to kill more of them.” Her words are soft and filled with emotion and a hint of frustration. I know what she dreams of. In the very beginning, when she became my charge, I would sleep in a chair outside of her room nightly. Every single night, without fail, she would wake screaming from nightmares that caused the hair on my own body to stand on end.

She would be covered in a cold sweat, shaking, and unable to catch her breath when I stepped into the room. Some nights, a scream would be lodged in her throat, unable to escape, and would cause her breathing to stutter. It was horrifying and soul-damaging to witness her state. To see the devastation that the Order had caused to such a young girl, even one of privilege.

It took over a year for her to trust that I wouldn't physically hurt her, despite her pushing my buttons daily. Another for her

to see that she could trust me to truly keep her safe, even from the nightmares that plagued her. Yet, it still took another year of me hiding her mischief and attempts to escape from the Order's clutches, for her to truly understand that she was safe and protected in my hands. All that time, I was falling slowly and deeply in love with the girl I couldn't have.

When she suggested I teach her how to protect herself, I thought she was joking at first. My mind warned that whatever I taught her, she would then use it against me to escape. Despite that very possible reality, the fear that she would one day be taken away from me and handed over to a man who would abuse her, was all the reasoning I needed to do that exact thing.

My little Nightstar was an exceptional student. She soaked up the lessons and continued to ask for more until I had taught her all that I knew, and then we both searched for further knowledge from a world long gone. My self-taught skills with a computer finally coming in handy.

I tighten my grip on her until a grimace crosses her lips before she masks the pain I'm causing her. My Dinah will never show anyone her fear or pain, including me. She is the strongest person I have ever met, but I am watching her self-destruct before me. In fact, I have been watching her for months do that very thing.

I should have tried harder to talk them out of forcing her to attend the funeral. I should have argued my points fiercely. *You know it wouldn't have worked. She had a duty as a Sacred*

Daughter to attend. They wouldn't have allowed you to keep her hidden away. One day, they will come for her, one day very soon.

The thought makes sweat break out across my back. One day, the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament will come for Dinah, and force her into the life she abhors. The life her father tried to petition against and lost his own life to. The life the Order made sure Dinah watched leave this world piece by bloody piece for weeks, torturing a young girl with her parent's horrific torture and death, even if that parent had let her down.

I was unable to prevent or protect her back then, without them realizing that I was no longer just her guard, but was, in fact, her protector, her loyal companion, and worshiped her with a devotion that should only have been reserved for God. Now, in recent years, after she turned eighteen, and after the Order did not arrive to collect her, I have added lover to that list.

A fact that if they ever found out, they would put us both to a painful death for. My Nightstar is no longer pure and untouched, like a Sacred Daughter should be, before she is given to her husband. In fact, she's as far from pristine as possible. I made sure to take all her firsts so that her memories of them would always have my presence.

“Listen to me, Dinah. I know that you crave their bloodshed, and I promise you, my little vicious Nightstar, you will have it.” I pull her closer until her chest is flush with my body, and

the heat emanating from her skin melds with mine against the night chill. “I promise I will help you paint this world with their blood, but I refuse to lose you to this madness or to your own recklessness.”

Her eyes close, and her forehead leans against my chest. My chin tucks immediately into the top of her hair, and I inhale her amazing scent. A huge, frustrated sigh vibrates against my shirt, and I release my hold on her arms and wrap her tightly within the embrace of my large arms. Arms that will always keep her safe, even if it means keeping her safe from herself.

How long do we have left with her before they take her? Will you really let her live that life, even if it means she gets to keep breathing? I try to ignore the thoughts that plague me night and day. They are getting harder to ignore. It’s already been too long; she’s over the age they would have collected her. Something is not right here.

“Let’s go; get in the truck.” I roll my eyes at my own thoughts, knowing that I am about to be reckless, and indulge her need for violence and blood. She’s a fucking brat, but she will always be my fucking brat. Her happiness and safety are the most important things to me, and right now, she’s not happy.

“Where are we going?” She pulls back from my embrace, and I can see a flicker of excitement in her stunning eyes. My hands trail down her face to her neck, where my fingers wrap around the column and apply pressure.

“We are going to cause some mayhem, maybe destroy that pretty car that fucker Abraham drives around in, and then I’m going to carve my name into your skin.”

“Fuck...” The word leaves her pillowy lips with a gasp, and a shiver races down her body. I can feel her trembling with the desire for chaos. “Can we do that first?” She questions me with a smirk across her face.

“No. You have to earn my blade and needles on your skin. First, we go set fire to shit, then I get a taste of your flesh, my little Nightstar, and only if you’re my good girl and obey me not to be reckless.”

She pulls away and heads towards the passenger side of the black truck I stole years ago. She opens the door and sits like a little princess in the front seat, waiting for me with electricity and giddiness running across her body.

“Fuck, she’s going to be the death of me, but what a fucking way to go,” I whisper as I round the car, off to once again cater to my little psychopath’s whims.





The Liar

Abe

Zeke has been brooding, and a moody son of a bitch, ever since the morning he woke up and found the blood-smeared message on his wall. I can't really say I blame him too much. That would have pissed me off too, if I had been the one to have awakened to that shit. *Fucking 'Ghost', motherfucker.*

I take another sip of my smokey, rich bourbon, lying back against the sofa cushions while I watch the two maids use the rolled-up piece of scripture paper to snort white snow up their noses. Both women have been taking hit after hit ever since they ate each other out for my viewing pleasure. If they're not careful, they will be strung out and dead bitches on my floor. Not that I mind that in the least, but I prefer to have my cock inside of them when they take their last breaths.

I know, I know...I'm a psycho, but at least I own my shit and don't try to pretend to be something I'm not.

Why am I sitting here watching them instead of fucking both their pussies? Fuck, if I know. All I know is shit hasn't been feeling right ever since that morning. The way that Zeke looked at me and fucked me with such desperation, like it would be his last time, has played on repeat in my mind. A feeling of foreboding crawls like insects on my skin, making me itchy and uncomfortable.

That's probably an aftereffect of all the drugs, fucker, my mind snarls at me.

The fucker just had to open his mouth and bring up the spray paint, and he who shall not be fucking named. I drag my large tattooed hand down my face, releasing a pained and frustrated sigh. I know that Zeke didn't mean it. He, of all people, feels the loss just as much as I do. A loss that we can't do anything to remedy, even with all our access to power. There is no bringing back the dead.

My eyes blur as I grab a fistful of the redhead's hair before me, and I yank her back until she stumbles off her knees and lands on her ass, sprawled naked before me. Her pained cry makes my cock start to harden in my pants.

"You dirty little cunt, come here and suck me deep into that worthless throat of yours. You've done enough of my blow for the night."

She moves into position, opening up my zipper and sliding her hand into my pants to stroke my hardening cock while her friend takes another hit, and then comes over and starts kissing her sloppily. Their tongues war between them as the redhead continues to stroke my cock. I can feel the bead of precum on the tip of my dick, rolling down my thick shaft and meeting her fingers that are not long enough to encompass my girth. I need her to tighten her grip, to give me what I need so that I can get out of my fucking head, even if it's just for a few moments.

“Baby, do you want me to eat her while she sucks you down?” The question comes from the mousy brunette as she sniffles and wipes her nose. Neither one of them are really anything to write home about; they just happened to be here cleaning when I came back to the house looking for Zeke. Now the fucker is avoiding me, and I’m trying desperately to escape all the thoughts racing on a continuous loop in my brain.

My mind is a dark place that I prefer not to be trapped in. Yet, lately, nothing seems to abate all the thoughts and memories that plague me, day and night. Nothing seems to be helping, not drinking myself stupid or getting so high I can barely see straight. Not even fucking various members of the staff until they are covered in my marks, and I am spent. The thoughts follow me into oblivion, like a desperate mistress who won’t be put aside.

“Get to it, bitches; my cock won’t suck itself.” I get more comfortable on the sofa as the two of them kiss back and forth, and then each of them licks down my shaft in tandem. The brunette wraps her greedy lips around my engorged tip and sucks hard, while the other one sucks one of my balls into her mouth and rolls it with her tongue.

Fuck, that feels good. I reach out and grab the redhead’s perky tit, pulling on the nipple and stretching it, and then rolling it between my thumb and forefinger until she lets out a little gasp. The other one starts to bob her head up and down on my shaft, but her rhythm is off. She’s moving too slow and not sucking me hard enough.

I need more. I need to feel myself throbbing down her tight throat while she chokes on my cock. I use my other hand to grab onto her chin, tightening my grip until her mouth opens over my cock in a grotesque ‘O’, and tears slide down her face.

The tears have my balls swelling and my cock twitching in her mouth. I love watching them cry. I love it when they beg me not to hurt them, knowing full well I will do it anyway. They know the deal when they come to me or Zeke. We get off on the pain, both inflicted and given. It’s better than any drug that we can get our hands on, and trust me, as a privileged son of a Founding Father, I have gotten my hands on all of them at one time or another.

As the heir to a Founding Father, there are no sins that I can commit that our good Lord won’t grant me absolution for. This depraved world our fathers and grandfathers built, from the ashes of the one they burnt to the ground, assures it.

Well, maybe there is one thing that wouldn’t be readily forgiven. I can never be with who I truly want, not with Zeke, and certainly not with the one who is now beyond the grave and unreachable to me.

FUCK! Once again, the image of his dark brown hair, wavy and long, reaching his shoulders, enters my mind. Large blue eyes, a mixture of sapphire and tinges of gray, refuse to leave the forefront of my thoughts. I can almost feel the texture of his soft skin and smell him in the air. His cinnamon and clove scent that used to make me hard just with one whiff. How his

body was thinner and smaller than Zeke's and mine, but made to take us both and provide us so much pleasure.

My mind is playing vicious tricks on me. Bringing up painful memories that I can't seem to fight, no matter how much I try. *Traitor. Betrayer.* The words whisper through the recesses of my mind, tormenting me.

The brunette before me takes me deep into her throat, and I slam my palm down on the back of her head, forcing her to take me even deeper. My fingers tangle in her thick chocolate hair and hold onto her tightly, as she thrashes on my lap and tries to come up for air. Maybe if I close my eyes, I can pretend it's him and not this useless cunt instead.

Ugh, the grunts and cries are all wrong, and the fucking cunt just used her teeth. I slam my palm into the side of her face and then use my other hand to grab her friend around the throat, squeezing my fingers around her until the sound of her harsh breathing is music to my ears. "If your fucking teeth touch me again, I will choke out your friend until she goes to meet our Lord and Savior. Do you understand me, whore?"

I squeeze my grip even tighter as the redhead latches onto my arms with her claws and scratches at my skin, marking me everywhere that she can reach in desperation. The sting of her nails tearing into my skin is exactly what I need, in order to push me towards the euphoria I'm seeking.

Just as the tingling in the base of my spine starts, a loud boom is heard outside that rattles all the windows. The sound makes the house seem like it's coming down around me. I

push off the one sucking my cock, and release my hold on the other one until she falls back to the floor with a surprised, pained cry. I propel myself off the sofa and dash to the window, scanning for the source of the sound. My hard cock bobs through the open folds of my pants, the cool air and the loss of warm lips surrounding it making my erection start to disappear.

The minute I look out the planes of glass, I'm greeted with a fiery sight. My fucking precious Mustang is on fire at the side of the house where I left it parked when I came home, frustrated and angry from dealing with my father's constant bullshit, about our religion and upholding values that neither one of us genuinely believe in.

I watch as all the car windows shatter, throwing glass in every direction, and the red paint looks like a fiery inferno that belongs on a depiction from hell. *Jesus, fuck.* How did that happen? Just as I'm about to turn away from the window, the reflection of my chest, still covered in my white shirt, catches my eye. There's a red dot right in the middle of my chest in the image reflected back at me.

I throw myself to the ground, almost landing on top of one of the bitches. The window glass shatters, and glass sprays everywhere. Fuck, someone just tried to take me out! Right here in the safety of my home. Not only did the fucker try to shoot me, they destroyed my favorite possession aside from Zeke's cock; my precious Mustang. They don't make them anymore in this godforsaken world. This asshole has really pissed me off now.

I rise from the ground to my knees and slowly peek cautiously over the windowsill just as Zeke comes storming into the room, guns drawn and like a bat out of hell. “WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?” He shouts at me.

“Get the fuck down; someone is using a sniper rifle and shooting through the fucking windows!”

The two maids crawl on their hands and knees naked, crying as they try to maneuver through the glass and escape the room. Fuck, I should have grabbed one of them and used them as a shield. Too fucking late now; they’re running out the door as if they are being chased by all the demons of hell.

“What do you mean someone is shooting through the windows?” Zeke falls to his knees and makes his way over to me.

I stare out the window at the tree line directly in the window’s sightlines. That doesn’t mean that is where the shot actually originated from, but I’m not seeing anything else with a high enough elevation.

“Someone just blew up the ‘Stang. Fucking coward bombed my car and tried to fucking take me out through a window,” I utter with complete aggravation as my eyes again trail the tree line, this time more thoroughly.

Wait, what is that? A dark shadow moves stealthily down the tree trunk to the left. The moonlight is almost gone, and daybreak will be here soon, dissipating some of the deep shadows. I swear there was a hint of pale skin for a brief

moment. *Fuck, this asshole might actually be a damn ghost after all.*

“There in the tree line, I think I see someone. It’s him, the fucking ghost.” I point with my finger toward the left. Zeke doesn’t even hesitate; the reckless ass stands up and runs for the door. Fuck, here we go! I get up a little more cautiously than he does and run out the door, chasing him.

There’s chaos in the halls leading out to the front door. The two maids are still naked, clinging to each other and crying in a corner, while the cook tries to understand a word they are saying through their hysteria. The two guards assigned to the house are checking their weapons. Dammit, I need to stop them asap from calling this in. The last thing we need are more armed Order guards, and our two fathers here.

I force a fake laugh out of my mouth, and my body releases its fight-or-flight tension, and I grab onto the back of Zeke’s shirt, yanking him backward and almost off his feet. The sound of material ripping is loud in the air, accompanying the sound of crying. “You fucker, you had to blow up the ‘Stang? That’s not a very funny bet, Zeke!”

Zeke looks at me over his shoulder for a moment with confusion, but catches on quickly, and I release the breath that is strangling my throat; the sound of blood rushing in my ears is almost deafening. “Should have paid up, motherfucker. I always collect my debts, one way or another.” He forces a tight smile across his face while his green eyes flash with malice.

“Are you two kidding me right now? You blew up a priceless car as a bet? A fucking bet?” Myles, my father’s spy and chief pain in my ass, snarls with anger and disbelief.

I shake my head and force another cackle from my lips. “Zeke takes his bets very seriously.”

Zeke pulls from my grasp and moves towards Myles, all cockiness and swagger with aggression vibrating across his frame. He’s looking for a fight, for someone he can make bleed, and this motherfucker is about to become his target. I need to pull him back from the edge; beating the hell out of my father’s minion will not keep eyes off of us; if anything, it will invite more.

One look at Myles tells me he knows he just fucked up, and that Zeke is mere moments away from sending him to meet our divine God and Savior. If his body language didn’t blare the message, the damn gun he still has in a chokehold does.

“Come on, Zeke, let’s go see the mess you made, you’re gonna owe me a new fucking car.” I shoulder-check Zeke as I head to the door, ignoring everyone else in sight.

As I step out the door and onto the driveway, the smell of burning rubber, soot, and destruction greets me. I walk quickly toward my burning baby, stepping over shattered glass and mangled pieces of metal. A part of me wants to cry at her loss. Heavy footsteps next to me confirm that Zeke has made his way out of the house. I run my hand through my thick hair, yanking on the strands in complete devastation.

My eyes trail the tree line before us, but I no longer see any moving shadows. In fact, the pink and orange hues of the night sky, waking up to meet another fucked up day in this hell we live in, are breaking across the sky. *Gone*. He caused this massive destruction, tried to shoot me, take my life, and got away. FUCK!

Zeke moves away and starts walking quickly toward the thick bushes. My eyes catch the moment he pulls the gun upwards, his fingers tightening around the grip, his finger already on the trigger. I turn my body and follow him, feeling useless without a weapon in my hand. I bend down, grab a short, thick branch from the ground, and carry it like a bat behind Zeke.

He stops at the edge of the clearing, and I finally notice what he's spotted. Tied around the base of the tree where I thought I had seen the 'Ghost' is a red ribbon, and hanging from it is an envelope. Zeke reaches forward and yanks on it, while I watch all the thick foliage surrounding us that could be hiding a killer.

I hear the rustling of paper and watch, as he stashes his gun in the back pocket of his jeans. He pulls out a sheet of paper, and I move closer, wanting desperately to see what is written. The sight that greets me causes chills to race down my back.

"For their iniquity the House of Israel was exiled, because they betrayed Me, and I hid My face from them, and I delivered them into the hands of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword."

Ezekiel 39:23

A large bellowed laugh leaves Zeke's lips as his grip on the paper gets tighter. The warning was unmistakable, etched once again in blood. This motherfucker certainly has a flair for the dramatic, it seems. "He's quoting my namesake now. Threatening us! This fucker has a death wish that I am aching to grant."

He hands me the scrunched-up paper and walks further into the foliage, his arms rising and stretching out wide. "I'm not fucking afraid of you, asshole. You don't get to pass judgment on us. Stop fucking hiding, and come out and face me like a man!" He shouts into the deep treed area but gets no response. Not even the sound of a bird can be heard at his proclamation.

Every line and muscle in Zeke's body is tight with fury and tension. He really hopes that this maniac appears before him, so that he can fight him one-on-one or put a bullet through his head. I know there is no way that the '*Ghost*' will appear. No, he's been too careful thus far. Whatever his ultimate plan is, it's not fighting us directly.

"We have to get this mess cleaned up before our good old dads make it out here, and make no fucking mistake, Zeke, that cunt Myles has already called them. We need to devise a viable excuse right now, and not just that it was a simple bet. You know that shit is not going to fly with my old man. He will get on us about '*spare the rod, spoil the child*' and how we abuse the privilege that the Brotherhood provides us."

Zeke rips the branch that's forgotten in my grip from my tense hands, and slams it over and over with aggression on the

base of the tree in front of him until it snaps in two, and then he throws both pieces into the woods.

“I’m going to murder this asshole *painfully* when I find him, and I will find him, Abe.”

He strides away from me back towards the front of the house. Each of his steps is filled with violence. I shove the note into the pocket of my pants, doing up my zipper now that I realize I ran out of the house with my cock hanging out, like some unhinged depraved creep, and stroll back towards the place I call home, but which is really my prison. I need to come up with something believable to get us out of this mess.



Chapter 11



The Sinner

Dinah

I watch them both walk away from my position in the thick foliage with a mixture of satisfaction and hunger. What am I hungry for? Is it destruction? The blood of those two fuckers who betrayed me and my family, or is it something else? I can't pinpoint exactly what it is. Maybe it's the dissatisfaction of seeing them alive, when the person I loved the most trusted them and is now rotting in the ground.

Eight months ago...

The phone rings sharply, ending the quiet and peaceful silence that Sammy and I are enjoying inside the house I call a lavish prison. You don't see the bars that enforce my unwilling confinement but trust me, they are there.

I'm lying on the sofa reading a relic of the old world, one that speaks of other prominent religions before the world went nuts and up in smoke. The fact that there used to be so many different choices, before the Order of the Brotherhood took power, both saddens me and makes me angry at what we allowed to happen to us as a populace.

Sammy's working on his stolen laptop, helping to move funds around for the rebellion. Well, actually, I think it's more like he's stealing funds from the Founding Fathers' accounts and

funneling them to the uprising. Either way, he's doing the Lord's good work.

Sammy reaches over and answers it while I roll my eyes at him, and the obnoxious rule that I cannot answer the phone as a woman. Fucking assholes. The stupid Brotherhood and all their nonsensical rules. Like, what if he wasn't here? Would I just be expected to stare at it ringing? I swear, all their brain cells left their big heads and made their way to their little heads when they took power. Bunch of cunts.

"Yes." He clears his throat while giving me a severe look on his handsome, scarred face. One that says 'behave' as he raises a thick eyebrow at the smirk appearing on my own face. I have an urge to lick that very scar while he talks to them, just to get him all riled up. Maybe I will drop to my knees and suck his cock down my throat, to see if his words stutter. The thought alone of hearing him grunt deep in his throat has my body heating and my thighs tightening.

Sammy's jaw tenses at whatever they say back to him, and I watch as his whole demeanor changes instantly. He places the laptop on the coffee table in front of him, and I'm positive I see his hand shake when he pulls it back. Gone is the relaxed and easygoing man from just a few moments ago, and in his place is the soldier—the cold warrior, rigid and unflinching. I can almost see his hackles starting to rise. This is the image of the Sammy I first met when I came here. The man who I thought would never smile or I could ever come to trust.

Almost six years later, reappearances of him are few and far between, but right now, that's all I see. Uneasiness starts to fill me, because it takes quite a bit to frazzle Sammy. This can't be some soldier on the other side of the phone giving him orders. No, this has to be someone high in authority calling.

Maybe they are telling him about another visit here, to check on their captive and well-protected Sacred Daughter. A snort leaves my lips; if they only knew what I have been up to in captivity, and how well Sammy has been keeping me safe. In my bed and between my legs, teaching me all the things a Sacred Daughter shouldn't know.

"I understand." A long pause follows as he continues to listen to whoever is on the other side of the conversation, and I watch his jaw clench tightly. Unease moves through my body at the tension in his.

"When? Fuck! My apologies. How long?" He questions, his eyebrows rising and his dark blue eyes staring intently at me. "Do you think it wise, sir? Her mind is not as stable as you would wish. She is still prone to acts of deep hysteria and violence. This may push her over the edge."

Not stable, my ass. That's the bullshit nonsense that Sammy has been uttering for years to keep me safe from the Brotherhood. I am sure the psychotic, violent, and depressed vision of me he depicts to them is the reason I wasn't collected when I turned eighteen, unlike most Sacred Daughters on the date of their birthdays.

A present, wrapped up in chains for the men of the Order. Handed off to her husband with goodwill and cheer to be used up, bred, and abused by her spouse, and those they choose to share her with. Every girl, for her eighteenth birthday, gets her virginity robbed from her, her life taken away, most likely a gangbang she doesn't wish to participate in, and the blinders taken off about what kind of world she really lives in. All while having to accept the words of God shoved down her throat.

If only society really knew what befalls a Sacred Wife. Perhaps, then, the other classes wouldn't so readily part with their sons and daughters to keep this new world order running. No, millions would join the uprising and the rebels, to fight against the Brotherhood, if they found out how genuinely unholy the Order was.

"I understand, sir. No, she hasn't attempted to self-harm in a while, but this may push her to do that again. Yes, she is still violent with me and the staff. Yes, I understand my duty." Sammy slams the receiver down with frustration, not even saying goodbye to whoever was on the other end. Staff? The little old lady who comes in once a week to clean? Like I would ever be violent with her.

He gazes at me with fear and horror, causing my breath to catch and my palms to sweat. I sit up, observing him, bewildered by the situation. His lips part, but no words emerge. It feels as if a colossal boulder has plummeted into the pit of my stomach. Dread begins to seep into my limbs, rendering them heavy and sluggish.

From his grave expression and his speechless demeanor alone, I sense that whatever he's about to utter will shatter my world. Are they finally coming for me? Will they snatch me away from here? Away from Sammy, and hand me over to some psychopath to be used up like a dirty washcloth?

"Just...fucking...tell...me." The words struggle to leave my clenched teeth as I prepare myself for the very worst. Being handed over to a Founding Father, or one of his spawns, is akin to being sent to my execution. I won't go quietly. I will fight with everything that I have in me, and pray that one of the guards shoots me before they can get their hands on me.

"Nightstar...I...ah." He clears his throat and firmly grasps both my hands. I attempt to pull away, but he tightens his grip. My heart thunders so loudly that I can hear and feel it echoing within me. No...whatever this is, I can feel that it will break me. I don't want to listen to the words he's going to utter. I don't want my world to change from my safe cocoon with Sammy.

You were never safe, idiot. You have been playing pretend for far too long and have forgotten the world you are bound to. The words slither through my mind, filled with malice and contempt.

"Nightstar, there has been a death." He clears his throat. I watch as his lips thin out to a straight menacing grimace. Lips that I love. Lips that bring me endless amounts of pleasure, but that will now be used to hurt me with his words.

“You are called forth to attend the funeral as a Sacred Daughter. I have to bring you back to the capital.” His golden skin has paled dramatically, and I can see the little lines at the corner of his eyes becoming more profound and prominent somehow. It’s like he has aged years in just a few short minutes.

His words come stumbling out, and his face is filled with regret. What is he regretting? That he has to take me back to the capital? Once again, I will have to stand before the Order, and play a meek and obedient Sacred Daughter. I won’t do it. He has portrayed me as a psychopath, which is what I will be in front of them.

Just in front of them, my mind questions. Who are you trying to fool, girl?

Wait, he said, a death? “Whose death?” The words leave my lips before I can stop them. My mind shrieks that we don’t want to know the answer. Alarm bells clang inside my head, and my entire body tenses as though bracing for an assault. What is coming will tear what’s left of my heart out; I can feel it.

Fear slithers down my back; I have only two living family members left in this world. While they could demand my presence for another Founding Father’s funeral, they haven’t in the past, content to leave me in captivity, hidden away in the shadows because of my unhinged and deranged behavior. One that I play into every time one of those fuckers comes here to inspect me.

“I’m sorry, Nightstar.” He pulls me into the circle of his thick arms, crushing me against his chest. His scent of mint and sage is not having its usual calming effect. I can feel his heart thundering against his chest. He’s scared. No, more than that, he’s terrified.

“Gabriel is gone.”

The words make no sense as they leave his lips. I can’t make my mind understand them. Three words. Three fucking words to destroy my world. No, they have to be false. There is no way I heard him correctly.

“YOU’RE LYING!” I scream and try to extract myself from his tight grip. No, he has to be lying. I would know if Gabriel was gone. I would feel it deep inside of me. We aren’t twins, but we have always felt things deeply. A connection between us that has two souls intertwining. I would know if he was in trouble. I would know if he was no longer walking this earth. Wouldn’t I?

He called me last week. We spoke, and he was his usual charming self. I love hearing the sound of his voice every week. I look forward to it every single week; it is literally the highlight of my time in captivity. The opportunity to speak with him, to hear how he and mom are doing. Never once has he complained about all my questions, nor has he indicated he was unwell or in danger.

How? How could this happen? No! It’s all lies. Fabrications from the Order to make me insane. I would know. I would fucking know if he was gone!

“Dinah...fuck!” Sammy shouts as I slam my fist into his back, and anywhere I can reach, as he tries to restrain me without hurting me. I have no such qualms. I want to hurt him like his words are destroying me, one grave syllable at a time. My fury rises inside of me at his gentle attempts to counteract my violence. How could this have happened? How could my brother, a massive part of my heart, be gone? Dead.

I finally pull away from his grip and stumble from the sofa, my chest heaving with the effort to catch my breath. I feel like I just ran a million miles. I end up having to squat with my head in between my legs. I can't seem to get enough air into my lungs, and my head starts spinning rapidly.

He's gone.

My brother, my protector, my confidant, and my best friend. Gone.

I raise my head and stare at Sammy with disbelief and despair. I can feel pieces of my heart-shattering in my chest like delicate glass, splintering into so many tiny, clear shards that there will never be a way to put me back together again. I will bleed out from each and every cut until I am empty. A shell left to rot in the world the Brotherhood has created.

“How?”

“Officially it's being called an accident.” The angry sigh that leaves his lips tells me all I need to know. It's complete bullshit—another fabrication of the Brotherhood. “Unofficially, they say he killed himself, Dinah. That he wasn't

mentally well, and he hung himself at his house, and your mother found him.”

NO!

My brother would have never hurt himself. Mentally unwell? There was nothing wrong with Gabriel’s mental health, other than the fact that he was forced to take our father’s place as the head of our household, and uphold the sins and duties of the Brotherhood, all at the age of seventeen. Could all of their bullshit have pushed him over the edge?

No. He wouldn’t have left my mother and me vulnerable and unprotected. He would have known the consequences of not having a founding male to protect us. He was the only thing standing between the Brotherhood and their depravity against women, and against the women of his immediate family, sacred women. He would have known what would befall us, that we would be given away as prizes to anyone who would claim us, regardless of our name.

He was the one to stop them from forcing my mother into another marriage the minute they killed my father. He was the reason we weren’t strung up in the middle of the great cathedral and beaten for the sins of my father, for his betrayal against the Brotherhood. He took on the mantle of our house. He pledged himself and our family back to the Order. He saved us. How could he then go and leave us, by doing something so out of his character?

“LIES!” I pick up the lamp on the closest table and launch it against the wall, where it shatters with a loud crack. The same

sound emanates from inside my chest, where my heart is doing the exact same thing. Splintering with the loss of hope. With the words that are ripping me apart, piece by piece.

Sammy warily moves towards me, his hands open, palm up, and placed in front of him as if he is attempting to approach a wild animal. In this instant, the description fits me to a tee. There is a tornado of emotions twisting and rising inside of me. All of them are fueled by anger and hate.

“I’m so sorry, Nightstar, so very sorry.”

Hot tears cascade down my face at his words and their soothing tone. My body shakes as a huge, ugly sob escapes my lips, and my knees give out. It causes me to drop to the floor, where Sammy catches me and pulls me tightly into his embrace. His arms secure around me, promising me a safety that he cannot guarantee.

“We have to go, Nightstar. They will drag you kicking and screaming if we don’t go willingly, and you need to see to your mother.” His words are mumbled into my hair. His lips pressed against my thick strands, causing even more tears to slide down my face. “You need to appear to do your duty.”

My mother, I haven’t seen my mother in almost six years. Not since that day they forced me out of our house and into a van and sent me here. A hostage used to punish my father for his malicious sins. A prisoner forced to watch daily through a video feed as they tortured her father, killing him slowly, one brutally inflicted injury at a time. I was a card they held onto,

the virginal Sacred Daughter of one of the original founding families. A prize worth my weight in gold.

My mother was used up at that point after all the years of being a Sacred Wife, of having to endure punishments and sexual deviance from its Founding Fathers with my father's acceptance. She would not fetch the same price despite her name. No, she would be handed over to some lowly member, perhaps not even a founding family, as punishment. As a warning to other families of what befalls a traitor.

Gabriel was the only reason that didn't happen. He was too young to have taken over the head of the household, but they'd allowed it. They craved his pledge and loyalty, and needed to save face with not only the entirety of the Brotherhood, but to keep their hold on a society that was just aching to revolt against them.

A society that was quickly realizing that the peaceful and holy world that was promised by the Brotherhood of the Sacrament worldwide was not as it seemed. That peace would be granted only on the backs of the less fortunate. That the words of the benevolent God they professed and used as their reasoning were filled with lies and twisted, so that they would only benefit one group—the Founding Fathers.

My father's betrayal, and public questioning of the Order and their commitment to God, was a bleeding wound they had to stem and suture quickly. They couldn't allow it to fester malcontent and spread amongst the privileged class and, more importantly, the serving class. They knew they would be

outnumbered. They could not afford a revolution or to further entice the rebels. My family could not, under any circumstances, become a martyr to their cause.

They had my brother denounce him, and side openly and loudly with the Order. To label his own father a traitor and a heathen, and agree to scatter his remains to the four corners of the earth so he could not be buried on sacred ground, or given last rights. My captivity and removal from my home, and my mother's forced servitude and penance, were other measures used to ensure our place—the Order flexing their muscles and power.

My poor, gentle mother was brought down low, forced to serve as a reminder to the other women of the Brotherhood, mothers, wives, and daughters, of how she had no control over her own life. How she was at their male mercy. How she would now, even still as a Sacred Wife, be repugnant in society. She was forced to wear the color red everywhere she went as a visual sign of her sins. So that the other women, not only of the Order but of the lower classes, would be forced to shun her, and she would be a prisoner in her own home, left to die within its walls and only paraded out when an example needed to be made.

I sniff loudly, tears and snot running down my face and coating my lips. My head pounds with pressure, and my eyes can't stop the rivers escaping them. I want to crawl into a little ball and forget about the world. I never want to see another sunrise, now knowing that my brother is gone. How can my heart still beat now that he's no longer walking this earth?

How can my lungs still willingly force air into themselves when Gabriel is no longer breathing?

“Dinah, we have to go.” Sammy grasps my face tightly in his strong and large hands, forcing me to meet his sapphire gaze. His eyes are so filled with pain in their depths that I wonder if he is not also reliving his own sister’s death. “I will be there with you every step. I will protect you. You are mine, Nightstar.”

His words should soothe me; they should bring me a measure of peace that he is with me even in this moment of hell I am living through. The truth is he can’t save me from my fate. He can’t protect me from the hands of the Brotherhood, unless we run and go underground. I might be his, but I am also theirs. A Sacred Daughter, one day destined to be a Sacred Wife. A prize. My value is determined by my name and sex.

The only person who can save me is me, and I no longer want to, knowing that Gabriel is gone. Hush now, child. How can you give up? How can you let the Brotherhood keep taking from you? My mind questions with anger. Are you a coward, Dinah? Will you let them suffer no consequences for destroying your family? For corrupting all that you hold dear? For hurting Gabriel and your mother?

A spark lights deep inside the recesses of my body and soul, burning hotter and brighter with each admonishment that crosses my mind. A little fire begins to blaze and then spreads,

causing me to be filled with a fury like I have never felt. It soars within me, demanding retribution.

Demanding they pay for the harm they have caused against my loved ones. The Brotherhood of the Sacrament must pay. It must be destroyed and burned to the ground, so that it can no longer continue to hurt others.

“I will go, Sammy, but I demand one thing only from you. One thing that you will not deny me.” I stare into his eyes and watch as they widen with fear, anticipation, and dread of my words. “You love me; I know you do, in your own way. You say you will do anything for me, that you will protect me. I need this from you.”

“Dinah...fuck, please don't ask me to let them hurt you.” His grip tightens with a fierce desperation as his eyes trail across my face, and his breath skates over my lips.

This man has earned the right to have pieces of my heart. He has tried to protect, teach, and encourage my survival over the years. He is mine, and I am his. It's not enough, though. We can't just run to the underground and fight from the shadows.

What are you willing to risk? My heart questions. The answer doesn't hesitate to cross my mind. I know it deep in my soul, just like I know with a certainty the sun will rise again tomorrow despite feeling like my world is crumbling. I will risk everything for vengeance, even my own soul and the heart that belongs to Samuel Wendover.

“I need you to help me kill them all. As many Founding Fathers and their male kin as possible. I need you to help me

rid the world of the plague that they are, and bring the Brotherhood to its knees.”

Whatever he was expecting to come out of my mouth, the words I uttered weren't it. He falls back from me, releasing his hold as a stunned look crosses his face. “Dinah...are you...fucking insane? We cannot take on the Order; there is no surviving them.”

“I didn't stutter, Sammy, nor did I say anything about me surviving. I need vengeance for all that they have taken from me. I don't believe, for one fucking second, my brother killed himself! I know you don't either. Something happened there in the capital.” I swipe at the tears that won't stop trailing down my face.

“Something happened to Gabriel, and they are covering it up. I need your help to uncover what it is, and then I need you to help me exact my revenge on all of them.”

“Nightstar...please.”

“No, Sammy. You are either by my side or not. Either way, they will come for me. Either way, they are going to try to rip me from your arms; we both know that. There is no ending where you and I remain together forever; there never was. Help me try to end them, and then let me join my brother.”

“I love you, Dinah, more than you will ever understand. I cannot breathe in a world where you do not exist. I won't.”

A crystal diamond appears in the corner of his eye and then trails down his rough skin, disappearing over the scarred and

ragged edge of his jaw. His eyes meet mine, and whatever he sees there confirms that I will not budge nor bend from this path. He gives me a nod of his head, defeat displayed across his handsome and rugged features.

It breaks my heart to hurt him. It feels like a knife is slicing deep inside my soul, as I make him think that he would not have been enough for me had the circumstances been different. Had they not just killed a massive part of my heart, by taking my brother from this world.

The truth is he could have been enough. Loving him has been the best part of my life. These last almost six years, despite being a prisoner, have been the happiest and most at peace I have ever been since I realized the world I truly lived in.

I get up off the ground and move away from him. The trembling in my body is now slowly coming to an end with my decision. I will use all the skills that Sammy has taught me over the years to bring about the chaos and defeat of the Brotherhood. They won't see it coming from a frail and weak female. I'm about to show them how strong a female can actually be.

"Make contact with the rebellion, let them know that we seek their assistance, and see if you can get any intel on what really happened to my brother." I walk towards the doorway that leads to the bedrooms in the prison we call home.

"Where are you going, Dinah?" He gets up from the floor, and I hear his heavy footsteps approaching me. I take another

step forward. I don't want the comfort of his arms right now. I want to hold on to my righteous anger. If he touches me, I will melt. I crave him and his touch, but right now, I only need to hunger for violence, retribution, and destruction.

“To find something black to wear, we will attend multiple funerals, not just my brother's.”

As I walk out the door, the memory of two males who were supposed to stand by my brother through thick and thin enters my mind. Where were they when he was supposedly hanging himself? Perhaps they were the ones holding the other side of the rope. If I discover that is the case, Ezekiel Rothesay and Abraham Mercier will not survive for long, and will be just behind my precious brother to meet their maker.



Chapter 12



The Sinner

Dinah

8 months ago.

The black lace veil that obscures my face makes me itchy and hot. It's so opaque that it's hard to see clearly out of it, but it also ensures that others staring at me only get the briefest of glimpses. I need to be able to shield my facial expressions from the Order. I might be able to disguise my facial reactions if I try really hard to mask them, but my eyes will always tell the truth. That I hate each and every one of them and that given even the slightest of opportunities, I'll end their miserable, entitled lives.

Sweat trickles down my back, making the black, long-sleeved, high-neck, and ankle-length gown stick to my slick body like a second layer of skin. I sniggered at the black gown when Sammy first presented it to me. It looked like something one of the pilgrims of the old world would have worn, or something straight out of a Victorian age.

Sammy insisted that it was proper attire for a Sacred Daughter to wear and had, in fact, been shipped directly from the capital for me. The only bonus of the hideous gown was that it covered and disguised my curves, and every inch of my tattooed skin.

Tattoos that, as a Sacred Daughter and wife, I am not allowed to have adorning my skin. The only exception to that controlling rule is that one day, I will be expected to have my husband's ownership inked or carved unwillingly into my flesh. I could be put to death for allowing the beautiful graphic art put on my skin by Sammy's hand. Art that I love and cherish that carries meaning behind each and every piece. How's that for fucked up shit?

In this new world order, only male members of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament are adorned with tattoos. Each of them receives their sigil tattooed on their skin when they reach sixteen years of age. The rest of the society, guards, maids, cooks, etc., are branded with the class they were born into at the ripe age of ten.

While some may have tattoos hidden underneath their clothing, but not visible to the eyes of the Order and their vast disapproval, most abstain. It's funny because they said our parents' generation before the Order took control, might have been the most tattooed populace in the existence of the world. Now, we all have to hide the evidence of a world long gone.

Sammy bears his class's horrific molten skin mark on the palm of his left hand. A visual reminder of how they perceive him as 'less than'. If they only knew the pleasure I garner from that rough skin touching my own soft flesh, trailing down my limbs, and gripping my throat. There is nothing 'less than' about my Sammy; he is greater than all of them.

I'm forced to slowly walk down the long corridor leading to the chapel with demure feminine steps. My head bowed low, and my shoulders rounded. Every few seconds, I allow the sound of sobs and sniffs to be heard escaping me from below the thick veil. The sounds of grief that the Brotherhood both want to hear and expect. In my mind, however, I am murdering all of them, one after the other.

My grief is there; it's not a fabrication, but at this moment, it's buried deep under the need for violence. The hate I feel for those who have repeatedly harmed my family, caused horrific abuse to women, and took control of a world that just begged for peace, only to bring it more suffering.

Sammy walks behind me, leaving a few paces between us in his navy Guard of the Order uniform. His heavy booted footsteps echoing off the stone floors are a welcome reminder that he is with me, and I'm not alone in facing the Order. His words repeat in my mind over and over again.

"Don't show them your anger, Nightstar. Only show them your grief. Show them weakness so that when you rise up against them, they won't suspect you of anything."

I rub my hands together, the thick black lace gloves making them sweat and itch. How I long to remove these gloves, this veil, and this farce, and slit all their throats with the blade strapped to my thigh. How pretty their red blood would look against all the white walls and stone floors surrounding us. It would provide some solace to quell the wrath that has wound

me up tightly since my brother's passage into a heaven I don't believe in.

I reach the chapel, and my gaze falls upon the dark wood pews adorned with red velvet cushions. It's almost comical how the founding fathers and their offspring refuse to sit on anything less than plush comfort. Entitled bastards. A derisive snort escapes my lips at the thought.

The sound of multiple male voices in the room catches my attention, and I lift my head slightly to assess them through my thick lashes. Before me stands the Brotherhood, Founding Fathers, and their sons, all gathered for my brother's funeral. They're cloaked in embroidered black robes, draped over their extravagant suits. Quite the theatrical display, dramatic much?

Who amongst them is guilty of leading Gabriel to his death? For sending him to meet his maker at the ripe old age of twenty-three? The information Sammy gathered through the rebels paints a different picture than what the Brotherhood likes to tell.

My brother's body was covered in bruises and lacerations, proving he had been recently beaten before his death. There was evidence of him being sexually assaulted, and none too gently. Who here raped my brother before tying a noose around his neck?

Was it those cowards who called him their best friend? Was it their fathers or another member of the Brotherhood who sought to end my brother's life, and hold on to power?

The rebellion confirmed that my brother, despite his age, was growing in power and influence. The sons and heirs of the Founding Fathers could relate to him better than the older members. His voice was gaining support for changes to come. Changes where my brother sought for more freedom and better treatment of, not only Sacred Wives, but of the serving class. Someone wanted to end that. Someone went out of their way to ensure he could speak on it no longer. The question is, who?

One of the maids who worked in my brother's house was a mole for the rebellion. She was present when my mother found my brother hanging naked from the wood beam in his office. She stated he had been having many recent arguments with his best friends, Abraham and Ezekiel. They would be locked in the office for hours, and you could often hear the sounds of violence and things breaking. That when they reemerged, they would all be bleeding or disheveled and angry with each other.

She stated that neither of his best friends since childhood seemed to support his radical thoughts on change. They did not support him and even outwardly opposed him at Order meetings. The relationship between the three of them became more strained in the months before his death. I was often the topic of angry, loud conversations that would lead to violent arguments. The staff could hear the furious shouts through the walls.

She told the rebellion that my mother often pleaded with my brother to keep me safe. To not allow the Brotherhood to take me and force me into the servitude of a Sacred Wife. She begged him to help me escape, to make me disappear. She

could not bear to know I'd suffer the same fate she had to endure when my father was alive.

“Ah, there she is, my goddaughter.” The voice accompanying the words makes my skin crawl. How long has it been since I had to endure it in my ears? Two or three years since he last attempted to visit me in my prison?

It didn't go well for him then; I threw a vase at his head and tried to bite his face and neck. I screamed profanities, and thrashed in Sammy's tight restraining hold. Some of it was part of my act of being insane and unhinged; most of it, however, was my truthful reaction to his disgusting presence.

Black shoes and fine fabric slacks with the thick, open velvet robe of the Order, trimmed in red, are the first things that greet my sight. A shiver of disgust runs down the length of my body, causing all the hairs on my arms and the back of my neck to stand. I do my best to disguise my unease at being so close to him, the scent of his strong cologne invading my nose and causing my stomach to turn. I refuse to raise my chin and look at him. I know what I will see when I do.

The green eyes of a monster, the boyish smirk of an evil but charming man. One who used to bring me sweets as a small child, and then one day forced me to watch as my mother was repeatedly and brutally gangbanged against her will. Effectively ending my childhood, innocence, and belief in God, all in one fell swoop.

“My dear, it will be alright. Gabriel is with his righteous and benevolent Lord and Savior. He is seated at the Father's right

hand, awaiting a day when he can return with trumpets blaring to usher us all into the kingdom of heaven.”

I want to roll my eyes at his proclamation; what a fucking asshole. Nothing will ever be alright again. No one is coming to save us, and if there was a God, no way would he allow any of these men into his kingdom. He would smite them all on the spot for using his name to abuse others.

I don't acknowledge his words with my own, only slightly nodding and assuring my hands are neatly intertwined in reflection. I hold tightly to the gold and black rosary in my grip. I want them to see me as a good girl, weak and devoted to her God, when nothing could be further from the truth.

I could strangle him with this beaded leash with just one quick movement, tying me to his God. I could end his life with one of the tools he uses to profess his false faith. My fingers tingle with anticipation, and a throat clearing behind me loudly makes me release the breath I'm holding. Fucking Sammy is a killjoy; it's almost like he can read my mind.

Harsh, loud cries sound from before me and have me sidestepping Noah's form, and moving further down the aisle toward the haunting and anguished sound. My brother's casket is laid at the end of the aisle. The frame finished in a shiny high gloss black, with red and white roses cascading down its sides. White candles surround every available surface, making it seem to glow within the chapel. The thick smell of frankincense and roses fills the air, and helps to hide the smell of decay.

Everything about the sight in front of me is hideous and wrong to me. I shouldn't be here. Gabriel shouldn't be in that box. He hated roses and called them old lady flowers. Why did they cover him with something he hated?

As I step closer, a wretched sob breaks free from my lips uncontrollably at the sight before me. His casket is open for viewing, but I can't bring myself to look at the features I once loved and cherished more than anything else on this earth. Features I hadn't been allowed to see in person for years, thanks to the Brotherhood's orders.

A petite figure draped in black fabric kneels before his casket. The agony of her pain echoes in every sob that escapes from her trembling form. The sound is so wretched that it threatens to make my knees buckle. Like me, she is covered from head to toe in shapeless black. I make my way to her side, my hand trembling as I reach for her shoulder. She doesn't feel real, even though I know she kneels before me. It's been so many years since I last stood next to her, since I was allowed even to hear her voice.

As a damned woman, she was not allowed to speak to a Sacred Daughter, not even her own. They sent me away, and I didn't even get to say goodbye to her. To tell her I understood everything she had suffered, and that I would one day avenge her.

The Order must really be feeling charitable, or perhaps it's the need for this charade to hide the truth that they killed my brother. They allowed my mother to wear black mourning

attire rather than the forced red. I lower my eyes to her face, covered by a less opaque version of my own veil, and her bright blue eyes mirror back at me with despair and horror.

I take in the rest of her as she stands up. She appears smaller and more fragile since I last saw her, as if a strong wind could shatter and whisk her away. The way her body hunches in on itself draws attention to her newfound slender frame. Gone are the curves she once had, the ones like my own that made her attractive to the parasites of the Brotherhood, and my traitorous father. They have managed to destroy all that she was. All the sparks and beauty that once resided inside her are long gone, withered away. She is but a shell of the woman I grew up with and knew.

“Dinah...may the Lord...bless and praise you. The Brotherhood...honor you and keep you sacred.”

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” The words leave my lips in an automatic response that leaves a sour taste behind in their wake.

Just then, a commotion behind us has our eyes parting from our mutual gaze and our bodies turning around, to stare at the two large figures entering the chapel. One has a tight grip on the other's arm as they stumble down the aisle toward us. What. The. Fuck.

“Bloody hell, Abraham! Not even on this day could you behave like the gentleman I have raised you to be.” Peter's

harsh voice rings out as he walks quickly from the side aisle towards his son.

The wrath on his face is palpable; he's not even attempting to disguise his disdain for his only offspring. The one currently swaying on his feet, with his clothes disheveled, his robe barely hanging on to his frame, and his eyes bloodshot. The smell of alcohol is so strong that it makes its way down the aisle to where my mother and I are standing, transfixed by the sight before us. Did he fucking bathe in that shit? My lip curls in disgust at the sight before me.

"Gentleman? Is that what you thought you were raising?" A scowl crosses Abraham's whiskered face.

A face I haven't seen in six years, since I was barely a teenager. I'm taken aback by the way his face has changed. Gone are the boyish good looks and the sparkling, mischievous amber eyes, and in their place is a hardness I don't recognize.

He's so large now, his presence menacing as he attempts to stand there. He was always tall, but now he seems a giant, even towering over his father's impressive height. His body went from that of a gangly, slim teenage male with long, skinny, uncoordinated limbs to that of a broad, muscular man.

Even in his disorganized attire, I can see how he fills out the fine, expensive black fabrics. His hair is a mess of brown, wavy locks that fall across his forehead. Tattoos peek from underneath his black dress shirt collar and up his neck, until they meet his impressive square jawline. I can see more of

them decorating his forearms, where his rolled-up shirt does nothing to disguise their placement.

I wonder if he's covered everywhere else between his neck and arms. The random thought has me biting my lip hard with annoyance at my curiosity. It doesn't matter if he's covered or not. He could be responsible for Gabriel's death.

My eyes shift slowly over the figure bracing Abraham and keeping him standing. Bright emerald green eyes, framed by long, dark, thick lashes, stare in my direction. Their intensity and undisguised rage make me want to squirm in the awful dress I'm wearing.

Ezekiel.

He stares back at me with an unreadable expression. His facial expressions masked from those watching him. He was always the more controlled of the two. I see some things don't change. His features have also evolved since I last saw them. They are more manly and menacing now.

A dark five o'clock shadow graces his golden skin and encases a pair of pouty, thick, pink lips that are in a straight, rigid line. His high cheekbones somehow give a slight femininity to a rugged appearance. He's tall, over six feet, yet not as tall as Abraham, but maybe an inch or two shorter. His size can be perceived as imposing to the other men in the room. Not to me, however, the bigger they are, the harder they fall, and the slower they die.

His clothes aren't in the same haphazard condition as Abraham's, but they're not much better. His body filled out

over the years too. Gone are the gangly shoulders I used to ride on as a child; now, they are wide and filled with muscle. The top two buttons of his black dress shirt are open, and I spy black swirls below them, meeting his thick neck with a design I can't make out from here. The hands that hold on to Abraham with force are covered in tattoos, each finger decorated in black ink. His dark hair is neat and closely cropped to his scalp, with longer pieces in the front and top. I'm not sure if it's a trick of the light, but his scalp might also be sporting a tattoo under his hair. My eyes crave a closer look, but I hold myself firm.

He's breathtaking.

He's my Ezekiel, but also someone completely different. Gone is the boy who was kind to me, the one I had a crush on for so many years, and in his place is an angry, large man. A man who is currently looking at me with hate blaring in his eyes. I'm so taken aback by the ferocity in their bright green depths that I take a step back without meaning to. The corner of his lip curls at my actions, and the sight makes me fist my hands tightly. Fuck.

"What is the meaning of this, Ezekiel? You were to keep him on a tight leash. This is a goddamn funeral for a member of the Brotherhood, not some party at the House of Brothers. Why is he not sober?" Noah rounds on his son, taking him to task for their inebriated and disheveled state. His nostrils flare, and a red tinge crosses his features with frustration and, no doubt, embarrassment. Personally, I'm loving the humiliation they're inflicting on their high-ranking fathers.

“Always such a pleasure to be in your presence, Father,” he snickers, the word ‘Father’ leaving his lips with obvious distaste.

“We are fully aware that we are here for a funeral. He was one of our best friends, or have you forgotten that?” Abraham is demonstrating his grief. “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” He quotes scripture to his father’s face like a man with a death wish, with a smirk across his lips.

“Ah fuck, don’t forget this one; it always makes me feel better. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. I’m not feeling very blessed or comforted. What about you, Zeke?” Abraham snorts as he tries to pry Ezekiel’s firm grip from his arm.

“Enough of this nonsense! The two of you will pay your respects to his sister and mother, and sit down and stop making a spectacle of yourselves, before the Holy Father arrives to proceed over the mass.”

A zing of electricity zaps me at Noah’s words, forcing me to disguise my reaction. Hmmm, the Holy Father is proceeding over the mass. Interesting. I wasn’t sure he would. I didn’t know my brother was high enough on the food chain to demand his presence at his funeral mass.

I don’t know who he is. In fact, very few know the true identity of the Holy Father. He wears a white and gold mask whenever he is in public—only making appearances a few times a year, and only for the truly most important events and

people. I've always wondered if such clandestine actions were needed because of privacy, fear, attempts on his life, or just dramatics.

My eyes meet Sammy's from across the room, where he is now standing against the wall with the other guards in attendance. His expression never changes, but it doesn't have to. If Sammy can read my mind, I can also read his. He's just as confused and intrigued as I am by the announcement of who is presiding over the mass.

"Yes, by all means, let's pay our respects." Abraham moves forward, stumbling over his feet and nearly taking Ezekiel down with him. He manages to hold on to him and pushes him down the aisle towards where my mother and I stand as stunned statues.

Movement all around us shows different Founding Fathers and their offspring making their way into the velvet and wood seats. Peter and Noah both follow their sons down the aisle toward us. When Abraham and Ezekiel are no more than three feet away from me, they stop. Both their heads turn toward my mother's trembling form. A look of regret and sadness passes across both their features, and they nod their heads in respect toward her.

"Mrs. Camrose...we are deeply sorry for your loss. He...he was very much loved...and...he...he will be truly missed." Ezekiel bows before my mother, and urges Abraham to bend forward and do the same, as the Brotherhood requires when greeting the grieving family.

Tears run down Abraham's face as he raises his head and meets my mother's covered features. "I will always remember him. He was my best friend and brother. I...I...will miss him deeply."

I wait with bated breath for them to turn towards me. Ezekiel's eyes try to penetrate through the thick fabric covering my face. He studies me from the short distance, his body tense and stiff. He takes a step forward, his arm reaches out and lifts the bottom of my veil, raising the swatch of fabric over my head and uncovering my features. A gasp leaves my mother at his actions, and I hear his father release a curse word. All the other sounds around us become muted.

I examine his face as his breath hitches in his throat and his jaw slackens. His beautiful eyes grow large and wide before he can shut down his reaction, and the cold mask reappears.

Abraham turns to stare at me at that moment, and a snort leaves his lips. "Of course, she would look like that. Those fucking eyes," he mumbles, and then a menacing look crosses his features before he kisses his teeth at me in complete disrespect. The sound is loud and offensive in the quiet air surrounding us. My mother watches the whole interaction without moving an inch or making a sound, but shock is clearly present on her face beneath her veil.

Neither of them says another word to me as they stumble into the front pew and sit down. Neither bothers to bow or pay me the proper respect due to my station, and for my loss. Their blatant disrespect causes my blood pressure to rise, and my

spine to straighten. How fucking dare they, I'm going to enjoy cutting out their traitorous tongues and making them bow at my feet.

I raise my hand to lower my veil, but before I can, Noah raises his to capture my hand, his touch bringing an instant chill to my body. "You are stunning, Dinah. You have grown into such beauty, one even more beautiful than your mother was in her prime." His words should be charming, but they fill me with revulsion and hate. He enjoyed abusing my mother's beauty. He must be thinking that he will have the same opportunity with me. I'll see him in fucking hell first.

A sound leaves my mother's lips that signifies her horror at hearing his words, and I watch from the corner of my eye as she grips one of the pews to keep standing. My poor mother, who has suffered so much at the hands of the men in this room.

"I look forward to welcoming you into the Rothesay fold, Dinah. You will provide my son with many heirs, and hopefully, we can pass down your stunning features to the next generation of Sacred Daughters."

What the fuck is he talking about? Welcoming me into the Rothesay fold? Fear races up my spine, making my hands tremble and my head spin with dizziness. I dig my long sharp nails, covered by the crappy lace, into the palms of my hands to steady myself, the hit of pain helping to bring me back to here and now.

Is he talking about me still marrying Ezekiel? Surely he can't be gibbering about that? I'm sure Zeke already has a Sacred

Wife, like most men his age who come from affluent families. They wouldn't have waited all these years for him to marry me still, would they? In their eyes, I'm unhinged and a psychopath. Why would they want me to marry him?

"I see that your brother did not mention your upcoming nuptials before his untimely death. It's regrettable and unfortunate timing. Of course, we will have to allow for the proper mourning period, but after that, I am sure Ezekiel will be thrilled to wed you, as was arranged many years ago."

Each of his words are like knife wounds being embedded underneath my skin. Sharp, barbed, and painful. Piercing the armor I wear, and causing more sweat and unease to slide down my skin. Bile races up the back of my throat at the thought of being a part of his family, and I have to force myself to swallow it down.

No! No, this can't fucking be right. I always knew that I would have to wed. It's part of being a Sacred Daughter. I knew of the arrangement between our two families, between our two fathers who were once close as thieves. But I truly believed, with my father's betrayal and death, that there was no way Noah would still want to align himself with my family name. I was fucking wrong. I was devastatingly wrong, and it looks like my brother was keeping secrets from me.

I don't respond to any of his words, because I don't trust myself right now. Instead, I control every single bone in my face to give him no reaction. I force myself to keep my eyes steady on his, even though I can feel various pairs of eyes

staring at me. They feel like insects crawling along my damp skin. Noah raises an eyebrow in question, but still, I give him nothing of my thoughts on his words.

I wonder if Sammy could hear this fucking travesty from where he stands. I wonder if he's ready to kill them all at this very moment. The moment when they declare me as someone else's rather than his. I almost want him to pull out his gun and start shooting at each of them, ending their miserable lives once and for all. Except I won't risk losing him to give in to my need for violence, and he won't risk me with reckless behavior—an impasse, always an impasse.

“Yes, well, we can discuss that all afterward. The Holy Father is about to arrive, and both of you should take your seats, ladies,” Noah utters and nods towards the first two seats in the front aisle. My mother moves forward on shaking legs and sits down in the first spot in the pew, another loud sob leaving her lips, and I am forced to take the one between her and Abraham, who is sitting sprawled out and wide-legged in the other seat. Disrespectful asshole. I wonder if I can reach down discreetly, grab my blade, and stab him in one of those muscular thighs.

I lower my veil as I take the seat, sitting on the edge with my back straight and my head lowered. I force myself to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth to calm my thundering heart.

“Such a good, obedient girl. I wonder if you're obedient in all things, Atasi,” Abraham whispers to me as he moves even

closer, his thick, hard thigh rubbing against mine. "I bet you'll cry like a little bitch when Zeke tears into that tiny cunt of yours. I can't wait to watch you scream and cry, Atasi. You're going to look beautiful covered in his welts."

The combination of his dirty and harsh words, and the nickname he used to call me, has my breathing stuttering in my chest. I turn my veiled gaze towards him, narrowing my eyes in his direction, and bare my teeth.

A wide, salacious grin crosses his mouth. "Maybe not such an obedient, good girl, after all. I look forward to tasting your fear, little one."

The sound of tinkling bells interrupts any further discussion. The members of the Brotherhood rise from their seats silently, their heads bowing as two guards draped in gold robes make their way down the aisle ahead of the Holy Father. My mother's form shakes so severely that I hear her teeth chattering. She rises from her seat unsteadily and lowers herself to her knees, her head bowed in subjugation. I follow suit but keep my head slightly bent to watch the man of the hour enter the space.

The first thing that accosts me is the smell. It flows from his presence and attacks all my senses: pine needles and deep earth. The scent is so strong that if I didn't know better, I would think we were surrounded by thick trees. His pristine white robes slither and drag along the stone floor, the sound loud in the silent space. He doesn't seem to even walk but

glides like some omnipresent being. Everyone is holding their breath and not daring to make a sound.

My eyes trail up his form, surveying the most powerful man in the Brotherhood. The most powerful man in the whole world, not more than a mere ten feet away from me. White robes embroidered with rich gold thread depicting doves, crucifixes, and burning bushes are the first to meet my gaze. His hands are clasped in front of his body, a diamond and gold rosary clutched in their meaty grasp. His fingers are adorned with various gold rings and priceless jewels.

So much adornment and wealth for a man who is supposed to represent God and all of his people, even the downtrodden and poor. While they starve, he wears riches that could feed small countries. Hypocrite, that is what he is, what all the men in this room are.

My eyes rise further until I meet the white and gold mask. The lips are painted bright gold, and the nose has two small holes allowing for air and two cutouts for eyes. The rest of the mask resembles something out of a Venetian Renaissance. Beautiful, elegant, and eerie. The top of the mask is covered in gold, precious jewels, and diamonds, and is finished off by soft-looking gold feathers that meet the hood of his white robes.

I can't see his eyes properly from behind the eye holes. The light makes them look like two dark pieces of black Obsidian. They seem to glow from within, a spark calling to me, urging

me to fall into their depths and not to seek refuge from the dark storm they promise to unleash.

He is completely obscured from the prying eye. The only flesh visible is his fingers, and they don't answer any of my questions about his identity. He stops in front of my mother and me, the material of his robes rustling as he reaches out and lays his palms against the crown of each of our veiled heads.

“Sacred Daughters, the Lord said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

His words echo in the chapel space, which is so silent that not even a breath can be heard. His palm is warm, heavy, and almost comforting on my scalp. For a moment, the words flow through me; they tease at my mind and senses, and bring forth feelings of comfort, love, and warmth. My heartbeat slows, my tense muscles relax, and my eyes flutter closed of their own volition.

What is happening to me? Why is my body reacting in this way? He is just a man. A false prophet filled with corruption. One who brought further suffering to the world with the promise of unity and peace. The tone of his voice is so soothing, the timbre not thick or light, but somewhere in between. It even has a musical tonality to it, one that, given the opportunity, I might sit and listen to for hours.

“May the Lord bless and praise you. The Brotherhood honors you and keeps you sacred, beloved daughters of our sacred Father. Find peace in his arms and know that you are loved.”

His words fill me with peace and warmth; gone are the moments of suffering. Gone is the insurmountable grief that I feel at losing my brother, at everything my family has endured at the hands of the Order. Even the rage that lives within every cell of my body seems to cool, and be gentled with his words.

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order,” my mother and I utter in complete unison, transfixed by the Holy Father before us.

Is it witchcraft? Superpowers? What the fuck is happening to me? What now, do we believe in the supernatural? My brain snarks back at me. The question helps to pull me out of the soothing and calming fog I seem to have found myself in. The need to shake my head of the fog is present, but I restrain myself.

The Holy Father steps away from us and faces the casket, raising his hand in the air and demonstrating the sign of his faith. I miss the feeling and warmth of his touch immediately. It’s a loss that hits me deep inside, reaching into my heart and squeezing it. He mumbles a few words in Latin, bowing his head to the casket before moving forward to stand at the pulpit.

My eyes settle on my brother’s face. His eyes are closed, his long dark lashes still across his high cheekbones, and his

features in eternal rest. His naturally pale skin is almost luminous in the lights from the chapel. They have him wearing his Brotherhood robes in the casket, and a ribbon is draped with the seal of our family across his chest. Pain lashes at me, digging deep at my loss. My best friend. My protector. My brother who is now gone.

“Brothers, we are joined here in this solemn occasion to usher the body of one of our fallen brothers back into the hands of the Father. May he find the peace he sought here on earth while surrounded by our Lord’s angels.”

Deep voices rise in unison, chanting. “The Lord is mercy. We serve the most high. The Lord is peace. We serve the Brotherhood. The Lord is forgiveness from sins. We serve with glad hearts.” Over and over, they chant the words, their voices rising until they practically shout them.

From the corner of my eye, I notice that neither Abraham nor Ezekiel participates in the chanting. They both stand there stiff as marble statues, eyes directed at the Holy Father and not bowed in prayer.

For a brief moment, I admire their insubordination, their lack of desire to even pretend to be sheep like the rest of these men. Then Noah elbows Ezekiel in the back quietly and with a warning glare from below his lashes, Ezekiel lowers his head, followed by Abraham.

Interesting. Neither of them seems to be true believers. Not only that, but they didn’t seem to be under the same thrall that even I found myself in. Now that I have pulled my gaze away

from the Holy Father, I can breathe and think again. I don't know how he was able to control the crowd, to control me, but he was.

“Gabriel John Camrose, we send you back to the kingdom of heaven, where our Lord will welcome you with open arms. Your sins are forgiven and discarded. They will perish with your earthly flesh, and you will be reborn in our God's image. The sound of trumpets welcomes you home and into the waiting arms of our most merciful Father. May the Lord bless those you leave behind. May the Lord find praise for the sacred females you leave in our trust. May the Brotherhood continue on the path you have been called from.”

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” All of our voices combine in response, filling the room with sound. A sound that now sharpens my senses further. My mother has stopped shaking next to me. In fact, she is sitting up straight, her body filled with purpose.

“Come forth, Sacred Daughter and Sacred Mother, and bestow upon this son of the Brotherhood your last kiss, sending him to his final destination with our blessing and peace.”

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.”

My mother and I rise from our seats, heads bowed, and walk towards my brother's casket. I can feel various pairs of eyes on my back; they cause me to feel itchy and irritated. My mother

moves to the head of the open casket, sniffles and sobs making their way through her veil. She stops and lifts her veil, pushing the black fabric above the crown of her head and giving me my first real unobstructed look at her face in six years.

She has aged significantly; her pain and suffering are etched into her pale skin's deep lines and grooves. Her bright blue eyes, with just a hint of gray, are filled with tears that slip down her wrinkled and blotchy skin. Her lips are dry, chapped, and bleeding. I watch as she bites down hard on her bottom lip until a drop of blood rises on its surface.

Her hand rises, and her fingers touch my brother's face gently and reverently, the face that I am now forced to stare at. His pale skin, which I thought was luminous, now that I am closer, actually appears ashen—his closed eyes and a false peace glare back at me. Calling my name in a voice I will never hear again.

I watch her fingers caress his cheek, the bridge of his nose, over his eyelids, and across his forehead. She leans forward, pressing her chapped and bloody lips onto his forehead. Her whole body is flush against the side of the casket, and for a moment, I'm afraid she might fall inside; she seems so frail.

She pulls back, and I see the drop of blood now smeared on my brother's pale forehead. The sight of her bright, red blood against his cold and pale skin causing me to want to recoil instead of moving forward.

Someone clears their throat in the crowd at my momentary hesitation, and I have no choice but to take a step toward my

mother. I inhale a deep breath and take another step, but she shifts away from the casket before I can reach her side.

Her body shakes like a leaf as it brushes against the casket's side, causing some of the roses to drop their thick red petals onto the ground. The sight is macabre, making me think of huge red blood drops hitting the stone floor. A sense of foreboding fills me, and my stomach clenches with dread.

Something in my gut tells me to keep my eyes focused on her. I watch with horror as her arm slowly rises towards her head, her hand gripping tightly to a black gun she must have had concealed in her dress. Her eyes, identical to mine, are large, panicked, and unhinged. Her teeth are gripped onto her bottom lip again. A blush color rises up her thin neck and into her cheekbones. Bloody drops begin to well on her lip and trail down her chin. Making her seem like a creature straight out of a nightmare.

There are shouts from all around us, and movement, but I can't look away from the vision before me. The vision of my mother, broken and lost in her grief, lost in her pain and fractured sanity.

"Mother, please." My voice comes out too soft, too low, as I plead with her. I let her see into my eyes, into my very soul, that I don't want her to do this. That she will leave me an orphan with no family left to call my own. "Please put down the gun."

There is shouting happening all around us. Brotherhood members leave their pews and scurry like rats as far away

from us as possible. I can hear orders being issued in the background, but it's all nothing but brown noise to me. My focus is solely on the woman who has suffered so much, and for so long, at the hands of the men in this room.

“You have taken everything from me! You are demons, not holy men! You have taken my life, that of my son, and even my worthless husband! You corrupt everything you touch! There is no goodness in any of you! I will not watch as you destroy my last child!” She screams as tears pour down her face.

She turns towards the Holy Father, who has moved further away from the pulpit, still holding the gun flush to her head. “You are a false prophet, a devil, and the biggest sinner in here. I will not watch as you corrupt more of God’s children. I will not watch you destroy any more of my family.”

She presses the barrel of the gun hard to her head as two guards move closer to her. I spy Sammy moving towards me out of the corner of my eye, but Abraham and Ezekiel have put their bodies between my mother’s and mine before he can reach me. I can barely see her through their thick shoulders. I push against their large and restraining forms, trying to get to her. Trying to stop her from doing this to herself, to me.

“NO! MOTHER, PLEASE!” I beg, even as someone’s arm wraps around my shaking form.

“I love you, Dinah! They killed your father! They killed your brother, and now they have killed me!” Her voice sounds high-pitched and full of hysteria. “Avenge me, daughter! Avenge all of those who cannot save themselves from this Order!”

A gunshot rings out loudly in the air. The sound is deafening and echoes off all of the walls. I am dragged hard down to the ground, my breath leaving my lungs as a crushing body lands on top of me, forcing all the air out of my lungs.

“Stay down, Snow,” Ezekiel grunts above me as his weight crushes me to the stone floor, and his large hand gently cradles the back of my neck. I try to thrash and push against his hold, needing to get to my mother. I need to stop her, to save her. She can’t leave me alone in this miserable world. Everyone I have ever loved is already gone.

“She’s gone, Atasi. She’s gone,” Abraham’s raspy and panicked voice breaks on the words near my ear. An animalistic sound leaves my lips, a cross between a snarl and a wail. The sound being ripped from my very soul.

She’s gone.





Sammy

Dinah has been lost in thought ever since we made our silent escape through the densely wooded area, leaving those two bastards behind a few hours ago. The drive back has her somber and morose, quite the opposite of the jubilant mood I expected after fucking up that cunt, Abraham's, beloved car.

I keep tearing my gaze away from the desolate back roads to observe her unmoving figure, and I'm unsettled by what I see. Fear creeps like a chilling, slithering worm up my spine, a telltale sign that things are about to take a turn for the worse instead of improving.

I can sense that her thoughts have drifted back to her mother, brother, or perhaps both. There's a distinct expression that graces her stunning face whenever either of them crosses her mind. Her mesmerizing blue-gray eyes carry a hint of profound sorrow, and her jaw clenches as she grinds her back teeth. Her slender, swan-like neck tenses, muscles straining as they attempt to restrain the rage that dwells within her, constantly seeping to the surface and taking control, like a relentless parasite yearning to invade and consume its host.

I wish I could erase all the pain and suffering the Brotherhood has inflicted on her. I wish she had let me conceal her, and flee with her into the depths of the underground.

Together, we could have joined with the rebellion, shielding her from the clutches of the Brotherhood. It would have meant a life on the continuous run, but it would have been better than the alternative. I should never have made that promise to assist her in seeking revenge. I was a fool and weak, and now I only hope that the decision won't ultimately cost us our lives, and if it does, it's a quick death.

She was utterly devastated after her mother's public suicide. She didn't even have to fake how out of control she was for the benefit of the Brotherhood cronies. Her high-pitched screams and agonizing wails continue to haunt my nightmares to this day, months later.

Their sound haunts me and ignites unending waves of dread. Fear for her well-being, for her sanity, and for my own existence. If something were to befall her, I would follow her into the afterlife without hesitation. There's nothing left worth living for, nothing worth drawing breath for, without my Nightstar.

It still grates on my nerves that those two bastards reached her first, shielding her from the gun her mother brandished with their own bodies. I yearned to make them suffer immensely for taking that privilege away from me. To slit both their throats from ear to ear, and pull them apart piece by piece, until there was nothing left of either of them for laying their fingers on my Nightstar.

By the time I reached Dinah, it was over. Her mother was gone, brains splattered all over the casket and her brother's

corpse. Abraham Mercier had positioned himself as a human shield to protect Dinah and Ezekiel Rothesay from further harm. Dinah was screaming and struggling against Ezekiel's form, which enveloped her entirely in a protective embrace, and pressed her against the cold, unyielding stone floor.

I had never felt the depth of jealousy that I possessed within me until that very moment. A scalding rage surged through me in a mere moment and traveled through my body like molten lava. The moment I watched two men touch what had been exclusively mine for six years. The way they shielded her from harm, a duty that had been exclusively mine all these years.

She is mine. She will forever be mine. Those two bastards believe they have a claim on her. I'll see them in hell before I ever let her go.

Before I could control myself, before my mind even registered with how my actions would look to those in authority surrounding us, I picked up a wooden pew in a fit of hot, molten rage and threw it against the wall, then rushed both of them to reclaim what was mine. I dragged her sobbing form away from them, cradled her in my arms like a child, and walked right out of that fucking chapel door. No one dared to stop me, but I'm certain I raised a few eyebrows that day. I've been waiting ever since for the summons to face my superiors and account for my actions.

I heard Noah Rothesay's crushing words that day—the revelation that the marriage contract between Dinah and

Ezekiel remained intact after all these years. That he had not wed anyone else in anticipation of marrying Dinah.

My Dinah. My heart. My soul. My Nightstar. *MINE*.

Just the thought, the damn possibility, tightens my grip on the steering wheel until my knuckles turn bone-white. I'd always wondered when they'd come to retrieve her, to tear her from my arms.

When her eighteenth birthday came and went with no collection, I breathed a strained sigh of relief. The years that followed with no summons caused me to believe that we had truly done it. We had convinced the Order of her insanity and violent nature, and they had forgotten about her. Absolved her of her Sacred Daughter duties and left her to live out the remainder of her days in forced captivity.

I would have been delighted if that had been the case. I would have Dinah to myself for the rest of our lives. I could have kept her happy, sane, and safe, while the world crumbled around us. Of course, that was never going to be our reality. The Brotherhood would never allow her, a high-ranking Sacred Daughter with a prominent name, some peace. No, they have always planned to use and abuse her. Breed her like an animal and discard her when she is all washed up and insane from their cruelty, just like they did to her mother.

“A penny for your thoughts?” I clear my throat, attempting to draw her away from her own mind. She slowly turns towards me, scrutinizing my face, the intensity sending a tingling sensation through my skin.

What does she see when she looks at me? Does she see the man who would set this world ablaze for her? The one who will follow her into the afterlife. Does she see the soldier, the Order guard who was assigned to keep her a captive in a pretty gilded cage?

“My thoughts are worth more than that. In fact, they are worth every gold cent the Brotherhood has hidden in their coffers.” She reaches forward and turns on the radio; at first nothing plays as she fiddles with the various empty stations. No actual radio stations are left, just those controlled by the Brotherhood. The only music that ever plays is what they deem the masses should listen to. Mainly anything with a religious or servitude undertone, propaganda for their message.

There is a whole generation now that has never heard rap. Never listened to the likes of musical geniuses like Biggie Smalls, Tupac, or even Eminem. Never been exposed to the Rolling Stones or even the Beatles. Music that could be used to inspire the masses to fight back against their oppressors. Only those of us who know how to hack the old world’s databases are now privy to this great knowledge.

“I can make that happen, Nightstar. Do you want me to bathe you in their stolen money? Cover those perky tits in gold coins?” The corner of my lip lifts at just the thought of all her creamy, gorgeous skin covered in gold. Gold I would steal back from the Order with glee.

“I would rather you bathe me in their blood. It would be more satisfying.” She lets a wistful sigh leave those pouty lips, and I have the sudden desire to see them wrapped around the head of my cock, as she makes that noise vibrate up my shaft.

“Are you in the mood to play a game? It doesn’t seem like setting fuckhead’s car on fire brought you satisfaction,” I question with genuine curiosity.

I slow the car down into a densely wooded section, obscuring us from anyone else who might be passing down these desolate back roads. Only a few people live outside of the metropolises now. The Order prefers to have all their serving population close by and easily controlled. The only exceptions are the farms that provide our food and energy sources. Those are all we see in the distance as we travel.

I put the car in park and turn to her in my seat. Her azure eyes brim with curiosity as they lock onto mine, and I swear I detect the faintest glimmer of excitement. I have to find a way to divert her attention, to steer her away from the haunting memories of her family, and quell the simmering bloodlust within her. My eyes pull away from hers and survey the area around us. Nothing but pine and evergreen trees, and thick bushes surround us. We are two hours from the nearest main city and still forty minutes away from our house.

My hand darts out, my fingers grasping her throat and pulling her over the middle console. My fingers tighten as I watch her lick her lips in anticipation of the violence and lust she craves. My little Nightstar is probably soaking her skimpy

panties right now. I lean forward and take a deep inhale of her scent, letting my nose trail along the side of her face before snapping my teeth in her ear. “Are you getting wet, my little depraved slut?” My tongue trails out and licks a thick line down the side of her face. *She tastes delicious; she tastes like mine.*

A moan leaves her lips in answer as she reaches forward and digs her nails into my arms, puncturing them with her long black nails and causing the sweetest hit of pain to travel through my system. We are the same, two joint, fucked up souls, Dinah and I. We love the madness of pain and violence with our pleasure. Very rarely can there be one without the other between us.

“Take off all your clothes, Dinah. I want you to spread those sexy legs wide on the back seat, slip your fingers inside of your pretty cunt, while I watch you make yourself cum.”

For a moment, nothing but silence greets my words. Her face heats as a pink hue rises on her cheekbones. Her breathing quickens, and I can see her chest rapidly rising. She’s turned on. The question is, will she obey me? Her eyes meet mine, and I see the dark desire and heat in their depths.

She unbelts herself and crawls between the two front seats. It’s awkward and tight, but her petite frame manages to do it. I watch as she pulls my black hoodie over her head, and then the old t-shirt with the character of a dog smoking a blunt, that we salvaged from an underground rebels meeting. She loves that worn-out shirt and refuses to part with it.

Her luminous skin appears before me, one delectable inch at a time. Her light brown-colored, puckered nipples stand rigid, causing my mouth to salivate with the need to suck them deep. Her boots, pants, and panties follow the path of her shirts as she displays all her soft skin that is begging for my teeth and mouth.

She raises her socked feet, placing one on each of the front seat's headrests and spreading her legs wide. Her pretty pussy is on display, the slit gleaming in the interior lights, and that small runway of dark hair leading me to my pot of gold. I can smell her musky and sweet scent in the air, the smell of her arousal, causing me to inhale deeply with pleasure. My cock is so hard inside my pants that I can feel my zipper digging into my commando flesh, a wet spot already making its presence known against the fabric.

“Get to it, Nightstar. I want you to slip three fingers inside and stretch that hole wide for me. Show me what a dirty girl you are.”

She trails her hand down the soft skin of her neck and across her tattooed chest, reaching for her right breast, squeezing the round, full globe before her small fingers pull on the nipple. I watch her body tighten with the pleasure she is causing herself, the heat in my own body rising with every stroke of her sinful digits. She slides her hand over to her left breast and gives it the same treatment, a moan escaping her lips. I unbutton my pants, sliding the zipper lower as my eyes keep track of her movements. Fuck, she is stunning, so sexy and powerful, reaching for her own pleasure.

The sound of the zipper, our combined heavy breathing, and the little moans leaving Dinah, are some of the most beautiful music I have ever heard. My cock springs up the minute it is released from his harsh confines. I grasp tightly to the thick length, stroking it from root to tip and feeling the drops of precum trailing down from the throbbing, engorged head.

Dinah's palm trails down her tattooed ribs to her toned, flat stomach. The black roses and swirls of art that I decorated her flesh with are bright against her luminescent skin. It brings me so much pleasure every time I see all my artwork on her skin. My brand. My calling card. My ownership.

Her black nailed fingers reach her swollen pink pussy lips and begin to rub circles with purpose against her clit. She's slick as she spreads her lips for me and exposes herself; my mouth fills with saliva and with the need to run my tongue through her folds, spearing it deep into her cunt. So that I can feel her spasm against me as I drink her down like a parched man leaving a desert.

She slips two fingers inside herself, pumping slowly until they're covered in her slickness, and pulls them out, raising her hand before my face between the seats. I lean forward and suck them into my mouth, swirling my tongue around them and enjoying her taste. A moan leaves my lips and causes a smirk to cross her face.

She pulls them back from my lips with a naughty smile and slips her fingers back inside of herself. Fucking her cunt a little deeper, faster, eliciting moans from both our lips. She

pulls them out again and, this time, slides them between her own lips, sucking her taste off of them and moaning deep. Shit, that's so fucking hot that I'm ready to blow my load just watching it.

“You taste so good, don't you, my little Nightstar? Like the sweetest drug, the sweetest sin.”

She nods, her eyes at half mast, thick, dark lashes framing seductive blue eyes that call to me with a siren song to drown in their depths. And like the lunatic I am, I would go willingly into their depths for one more hit of her taste.

She slides her hand back down, softly running the pads of her fingers across her perfect flesh and digging her long nails into her skin. Leaving raised, red lines along her flesh with a map to where my treasure awaits.

She dips three fingers inside her hole, widening her legs until her ass is off the seat, and she's sprawled along the leather. My vision is ensnared by the movement and speed of her digits. She no longer fucks herself leisurely or gently, picking up speed and forcefulness as the sounds of her increased wetness surround us.

“Show me that gaping hole, Nightstar. Let me see how that pussy spreads for me.”

She pulls out her fingers and spreads herself wide for my view, her hole clenching and gaping with the need to be filled. I lean forward and spit inside of it, and a breathy moan leaves her lips. I do it again, this time making sure it slips down her

pussy and to her puckered hole. “Slip a finger inside that ass for me, baby; let me see how you clench for me.”

Her head moves against the seat, her dark waves trailing over her soft skin as she slips three fingers back inside her waiting drenched cunt and slips her thumb inside her ass. A deep groan leaves my lips at the beautiful and sexy sight before me. Dinah spread wide, and two of her holes filled for me.

I reach forward and rub my thumb across her clit, rubbing it in deep circles as my other hand reaches between us and pulls her nipple hard. The cry that leaves her lips has a hint of pain in its undertones but is drunk on lust. Her breathing is picking up, and her beautiful flesh is staining blush along her chest and neck. Her skin is covered in goosebumps, and she shivers and pants simultaneously. She’s close, so very close to exploding and finding her own euphoria.

I pull back and slap her breast with the palm of my hand, hitting it once and again in rapid succession before moving to the other one and delivering the same blows. Her wetness is slipping down her fingers and coating her hand and the seat. Fuck, what a beautiful sight. I want to lick up every single drop. I want to get down on my knees and worship at her altar—the altar of sin and pleasure.

“Fuck, oh my God. Fuck!” She screams as her body is pushed over the edge. Her back bows off the seat. Her teeth dig into her plump bottom lip, and her hair sticks to her face and neck in sweaty, slick tendrils. Her eyes close as she

reaches her peak, her fingers moving so fast now inside of her, pushing her over the edge and forcing her to detonate.

She is stunning. A star exploding with energy before me, streaking across the sky in a spark of fire that threatens to send my world into a raging inferno. I stroke my cock hard, so close to erupting with the sight before me. She finally stops shaking, her body slackening before me. She opens those exquisite eyes, and they are filled with drowsy satisfaction.

I move between the seats, pumping my cock like a madman that needs to explode, needs to conquer what is his. The electric current racing up my spine and through my cock has my cum erupting and spurting all over her pussy lips, stomach, and chest. Her fingers trail through the mess languidly. She picks up some of the cum on her fingers and spreads it across her plump pussy lips, before pushing her fingers deep inside of her with a groan. Her other hand slides through more of the creamy fluid and coats her forefinger and middle finger, then she brings them to her lips and sucks them clean.

“You taste so good,” she moans with satisfaction, the little savage, while she picks up more of my semen and slides it inside her warm pussy. My cock is painfully hard; in fact, I don’t think it even went down for a second. I watch as she coats herself in my essence, making sure to catch every drop by either feeding it to her mouth or slipping it inside of her pussy.

I want to fuck all her holes. I want to ram my cock into her throat, stop her from breathing, then ravage her swollen pussy

until she screams my name, and loses her voice. Then fill her ass with my cum until all her holes have had a taste of me, are filled with me and my stain of ownership. She is mine, and I plan to paint her insides with my ownership.

First, though, I want to see her run. I want to see her scream, and then I want to see her bleed. She needs it just as much as I do, and I won't deny her the pleasure I can give her. Give us.

“You have a four-minute head start into the woods, Nightstar. You had better make use of it, my sexy whore. When I catch you, and I *will* catch you, I'm going to fuck you into the dirty forest ground and carve my name into that pretty flesh.”

Her eyes widen dramatically at my words. She reaches over to grab her clothing, but I bat them out of her hands and throw them over the seat so she can't reach them.

“Naked.”

“But...Sammy.” She doesn't get another word out of her lips before I squeeze her chin and mouth in my tight grip.

“Go. The clock is starting.”



Chapter 14



The Sinner

Dinah

“Go. The clocking is starting.” His words have me scrambling out of the car and heading towards the thick bushes surrounding us. The night air is cool as it meets my overheated flesh, my socked feet giving me minimal protection against the forest floor, every twig and rock digging into my soft skin.

My breath quickens, my chest rising and falling with anticipation. I’m giddy like a small child on an adventure, rather than a woman running naked through the woods, waiting for a man to capture her and bring her to her knees.

My eyes quickly scan the landscape before me, looking for a place to hide, even if it’s just for a moment from Sammy. I know it won’t take him long to track me. He’s the one who taught me everything I know about stalking prey. I grab onto a fallen pine bough and drag it behind me, trying desperately to hide my light footprints. I have no intention of making this easier on him.

He wants to play, and I am keen to give him a merry chase through the woods. Call me *Red Riding Hood*, with the big, bad wolf chasing me down. The truth of those fairytales they tell little girls, is that the charming prince will never make your blood sing like the villain will. You want the wolf. You want him to capture and devour you, until nothing is left but a

puddle of your needs and wants. The prince is not going to supply you with the same depravity and carnal ministrations as the villain.

Do I want Sammy to catch me? *Eventually.*

My body fills with excitement and competitiveness. As much as I want him to hunt me and bring me down to the forest floor, rutting me into the ground like a fucking animal, I also want to evade him, so his temper rises, and his frustration mounts.

I want him to lose that precarious control he always carries around with him like a shield by the time he finally gets his hands on me. Sammy, completely undone and unhinged, is one of my favorite sights, and so rarely lately have I gotten to experience it.

Up ahead, I see a small hill with thick Sumac, Dogwood, and Sedges growing on the hillside, disguising the ground and giving someone small like me a place to temporarily hide. I know I will have to climb to higher ground to keep out of his reach eventually. The knowledge doesn't make me feel better, or fill me with confidence, with my swollen pussy and breasts exposed to all that rough tree bark. Fuck it, I'll deal with that when I need to.

I quickly rush into the thick foliage, dragging the pine bough with me and using it to erase all my steps. I pull dead leaves and branches closer to me, using them and dirt to help disguise my pale flesh from the fading moonlight and the coming dawn. The scents of nature all around me fill my senses and

help to drive the rush of the chase to chaotic levels in my bloodstream.

A twig breaking in the silence of the forest is my first indication that he is making his way on almost silent feet toward me. I can't see him; he's purposely trying to stay out of my view and catch me blindsided by his large presence. It's actually amazing how such a large male can hide in plain sight. It's also what makes him so dangerous to our common enemies.

The call of birds overhead in the thick trees indicates that he is moving so slowly that even they don't sense the predator amongst them. I bite hard down on my lower lip, forcing myself to swallow any sounds and regulate my breathing. I have to be prepared to run at a split second's notice.

The sound of something scurrying to my left has my eyes searching the deep, thick green branches around me. My skin stings from where various branches have scratched me in my attempt to run and hide, and I'm pretty sure I'm bleeding now. Not that it matters; Sammy's promised to carve his name into my skin, so one way or another, there will be blood.

The scurrying sound is getting closer and louder. My eyes spy a small brown Pine Marten closing in quickly on me. Its dark eyes are large and wide as it, too, tries its best to hide in the thick foliage from the perceived threat.

I squeeze my frame closer to the ground, trying to stop the squeal that wants to escape my lips as the damn weasel hides in the bush right next to me. The little fucker is making a

ruckus and dragging attention to my hiding spot. I try to bat at him without disturbing the leaves, but he ignores my attempts to shoo him away. *Asshole.*

Out of the corner of my eye, I spy Sammy's dark clothing, like a shadow moving through the forest floor. I can barely hear his footsteps as he moves from one tree to another, staring up at the tall branches and trying to determine if I have taken to higher ground. *Fuck, I should have done that first, rather than trying to hide in the dirt.*

“Come out, Nightstar. Let the big monster ravish you.” His words come out almost song-like, with a melody filled with humor.

I keep my mouth shut and my movements still and quiet, waiting to see if he passes me so I can backtrack toward the car. He won't expect me to do that. He expects me to run further into the forest so he can chase me. He's almost past my hiding spot when the fucking Marten darts out of the bush and runs between his legs, leaping from the base of one tree to another in a zigzag pattern to avoid capture.

A deep belly laugh escapes Sammy's lips, as he watches the small animal scurry away to safety. Once the little shit is out of sight, he turns his eyes and attention back to tracking his desired prey. *Me.*

He pushes his arms against the thick foliage, looking into bushes and increasing his pace. He moves past me, and I hear the sound of more branches and twigs snapping further ahead. He's being less careful now, allowing me to hear his

movements. I hold tight to my spot, knowing I must let him get further into the forest if I want to escape.

All the sounds of his searching suddenly stop. No further movement can be heard, and the only loud sound is that of my blood racing in my ears. *Shit, is he backtracking?* Has he sensed that I didn't go any further into the woods? My fingers connect with the thick, rough bark of a small fallen tree branch. I grasp it tightly and prepare myself to dart out of my hiding space and run.

“I know you're here, Nightstar. I can sense you. I can feel you. You belong to me. I will always know where you are.” He's trying to seduce me with the strong, raspy sound of his voice. To lure me out of hiding and let him have his way with me. I want him to, but at the same time, I need the violence and the thrill of the chase.

He gets within two feet of my bush and turns his back to me, searching with his eyes up ahead and above. A smirk crosses my lips as I rise silently from my spot, raising the branch. You should never turn your back on an enemy. *Poor Sammy has forgotten his own teachings.*

I slam the branch down on his shoulder, and shove him hard with my forearm and shoulder, until he falls forward and slams into the nearest tree. His breath rushes out of his lungs, and a loud, painful grunt makes its way to my ears and brings me nothing but satisfaction. I turn on the balls of my feet and run further to the left, climbing the hill and sliding down the other side.

“You’re going to pay for that, Nightstar. Each wound you inflict on me, I’ll take out on your ass when I catch you.” His gruff voice makes its way to me as I continue to run like a psychopath through the forest. He gives chase, no longer caring about disguising his steps, as he tries to catch up to me.

Sammy’s quick, but I’m smaller and faster. I run five miles daily to maintain my endurance, with a thirty-pound pack strapped to my shoulders. In a race, he will never catch me. He suddenly dives towards me, missing me by mere inches, and lands hard on the rough ground. A pained, disgruntled sound escapes him and causes me to let loose my laughter.

“Nice try, fucker, but you’ll have to do better than that!” I scream back at him as I keep running through the trees, avoiding fallen trunks and smacking into thick branches that seem to appear before me out of nowhere.

I can hear him fast on my trail. I look back for a moment over my shoulder and catch a glimpse of him, no more than ten feet behind me. His face is smeared with dirt, and he has an annoyed look across his features. I guess he’s no longer enjoying his own game. I turn back around and narrowly avoid taking a thick branch to the face. I duck low and end up slamming to my knees, the harsh, rough dirt greeting my exposed flesh, and a sharp pain stinging from my shin. *Fuck, that hurts!*

I try to rise and start running again, but Sammy manages to grab a fistful of my loose hair and yanks me back down to the ground. He winds the thick strands around his wrist, pulling

my head back and causing a scream to leave my lips. I try to push against his hold and feel strands ripping right out of my skull. *Fucking asshole, if he's not careful, I'm going to be bald.*

His other arm wraps around my upper chest, restraining my arms that are desperately trying to dislodge his hold. He uses his body weight to push me forward, forcing my unwilling compliance. My chest and waist hit the ground hard. Rocks and twigs dig into my skin as he gets a better grip on my body and pushes his knee into the middle of my back, subduing me and preventing me from rising.

“You almost got away, Nightstar. Almost, but you weren’t aware of your surroundings enough. Now, I need to punish you hard, baby. First, for trying to get away in the first place, and second, for forgetting the lessons I’ve taught you.” He leans his sizable muscular body over mine, his knee painfully digging into my flesh as his hot breath skates across my cheek.

His tongue lashes out, licking me from the side of my eye, down my face, and to my jaw. “Your fear tastes delicious, Nightstar. You taste like death, wrath, and sin, all wrapped up in a pretty package, just waiting to be used for my pleasure.”

I hear the sound of his zipper lowering once again, and it causes my core and stomach to clench. His hair tickles my face. My nose fills with his delicious and intoxicating scent, causing all my neurons to fire at once and overwhelm my senses. He pulls his arm from around my trapped chest, and

my nipples meet the hard, rough ground, adding another element of sensation to the mix.

He pulls his body up, sitting down on the back of my thighs while dragging my head back by the tight hold he still has on my hair. A swishing sound is loud in the silent air around us, before I feel the sting of his large palm on my asscheek. *Slap.*

He soothes the hot spot on my flesh before delivering another slap in the same area. I can't seem to get enough air into my lungs. My body is wound tight and squirming underneath him. *More.* I need more, but I refuse to beg like the whore he wants me to be for him.

The chase through the woods, his words, and the promise of violence and pleasure are causing my body to riot and demand all he has promised. "Get off of me, you fucker," I demand through gritted teeth as I try to turn my head in his direction. His response to my words is to shove my face back into the forest floor, until I have a mouthful of dirt that I spit out with vehemence.

"Shhhh, my dirty girl, that mouth of yours always seems to get you in trouble." His hand lands again, this time lower, across the bottom of the globes of my ass and the tops of my thighs. The flesh immediately stings and heats with each painful and sharp blow delivered, and then he soothes it with his rough palm.

The mixture of pain, heat, and roughness, makes tingles race across my skin, and the beginnings of an orgasm rise. I press my hips into the ground, tightening my thighs and trying to

fight off the need to come on the ground like a debauched whore, but it's no use. I need to explode, and I want to feel more pain and violence before I do.

I try to kick out, managing to dislodge his seated position on the back of my legs. I push off from the ground and kick out again, catching him in the shoulder with one of my feet that has him falling backward onto his ass, and using his elbows to brace his fall. I'm on him immediately, launching my body on top of his and grappling for a fistful of his dirty blond hair, my other hand wrapping around his throat.

I sink my fingernails into his skin, his throat bobbing and the air stuttering out of his lips. I pull on his strands and yank his head up towards mine. My mouth reaches forward and bites on his bottom lip until the flesh splits and blood blooms. "You make me bleed. I make you bleed, asshole." I swallow the taste of his rich blood, letting it swirl around in my mouth and bring me to a feverish state of crazy.

His arm tries to wrap around my waist, but I shrug it off and dig my knee into his groin. "Fuck, Dinah," he groans as I push my weight down.

All the muscles in his body are locked tight, awaiting what I will do next. A smug smile crosses my face at how I managed to turn this whole situation around on him, making the prey the actual predator in the end.

In a move that surprises both of us, he forces his body to lift from the ground with me still entangled on top of him. My hand around his throat tightens until his face starts to go an

alarming shade of deep red, and my other arm tightly grasps his shoulder.

We land forward with me now trapped below him, my body crushed by his weight. The impact jars my body and forces me to release my hold on his throat. He grabs both my hands in a bone-crushing grip, and pulls them above my head until my body has no choice but to arch beneath him.

“That was a nice little attack, Nightstar,” he growls as he presses his hard pant-covered cock against my swollen pussy lips, the friction from his jeans rubbing against my sensitive folds and my throbbing clit. My eyes roll back into my head at the sensation. I can feel how wet I am. It’s dripping down my pussy and crack, and covering either side of my legs.

He reaches down and releases his hard cock from the confines of his pants, running the thick head through my soaked folds and bumping my clit mercilessly with it. My lungs struggle to get enough air with his heavy weight, and how excited my body is. “Spread your legs wide, my little whore,” he mumbles into my ear with his raspy voice before slamming inside of my hot core.

He fucks me like he hates me. Like he’s trying to push me into the deep ground with each of his thrusts. The sound of skin slapping harshly against skin is loud in the air around us. His hard, long cock pistons inside of me without mercy, chasing the animalistic need to control me, to rut me into the ground and prove that he is the victor. Low growls are escaping his lips with each rough slam inside of me, and his

gorgeous face is lit up with a ferociousness I have never seen before. If I didn't know he truly loves me, I would think he hates me with how hard he's fucking me.

My body slides across the forest floor; still, he doesn't slow down or stop his hips from slamming into mine. "You...are... fucking...mine."

His face finds the slope of my neck, and his teeth dig in, biting down hard on my flesh. My nipples harden painfully at the hint of sharp pain, and I can feel the electricity of my orgasm rushing down my spine. His pelvis grinds against my clit, each bump sending me further into the waves of bliss. His lips move down my chest and meet the top of my breasts, where his teeth bite down once again, and that's all it takes.

The orgasm barrels through me, a high-pitched scream leaving my lips as Sammy continues to fuck me hard through the waves. His lips meet mine in a messy, soul-sucking kiss that has me feeling lightheaded, and seeing shimmering colors before my eyes.

He cums with a loud roar that causes birds to flee the trees for the safety of the air. Even then, his hips continue to move against mine, until every last drop of his cum is saturating and painting the inside of my womb.

His breathing is harsh as he takes huge gulps of air and falls with his heavy weight on top of me, crushing me further into the ground. "You're...going...to...be the...death of...me," he grunts against my neck. I can feel his heart racing in his chest, pressed against mine.

“It’s...not...my...fault...you’re an...old...man,” I pant.

Our sweat-slicked and dirt-covered bodies slide across each other. I feel his cock twitching inside my pussy, and just like that, I know he’s not anywhere near done with me. He pulls out from inside of my swollen core, and pulls his body up and off of mine. His hand reaches for me, grabbing and hauling me to my feet before pulling me towards a fallen tree trunk.

“Bend over the trunk and place your hands on the back of your head, Dinah.” He shoves my body forward, and his large palm meets the middle of my back, forcing me to bend at the waist and over the large downed tree. The bark is rough against my battered, bruised, and overstimulated skin. I lean forward until my breasts and stomach are pressed tightly against the harsh bark, and interlace my hands on the back of my head.

“What did I tell you I would do when I caught you?” His voice vibrates off my heated skin as his lips trail across my right shoulder, before his teeth scrap across my flesh.

“Fuck me,” I answer with a breathless whisper.

“And?” He questions.

“Carve...my skin.” I can feel the wetness of our combined release sliding from inside of me and coating my upper thighs that I am desperately clenching closed.

“That’s right, baby. What should I carve into this pretty flesh, hmmm?” He licks a line from one shoulder blade to the

other as his hand makes its way down my spine and squeezes my asscheek in his firm grip.

I don't bother replying, it doesn't matter what he carves, as long as I feel the heat of his body and he makes me cum while he does it. The need inside of me is already rising once again, filling my body with molten lava, and the desire to explode like a million shards of priceless glass.

I hear the rustle of fabric and the metallic clink of his pocket blade sliding open. I anxiously squirm against the tree's bark, scraping more of my skin in the process. I love how sharp that blade is, how it feels as its cool metal slides across the planes of my skin. Goosebumps erupt all over my body, causing the hair on the back of my neck and arms to stand on end.

“Raise your ass, and spread your legs, so I can see my cum dripping out of your perfect cunt.” He moves back, giving me space to raise my hips and present my soaked hole to his waiting eyes. “Fuck, that's a beautiful dirty pussy, Nightstar. You look stunning dripping for me.”

He trails his fingers through the slickened mess leaving my core, and I feel the metal handle of the blade sliding between my folds. He coats it in our combined cum and then pushes it slowly inside my puckered hole, fucking me with short quick strokes as his hard, throbbing cock slides back inside my pussy. “Look at how well you take both your holes filled, baby. You're such a perfect slut. My good, dirty girl.”

My body is a live wire, overwhelmed with all the various sensations. I can feel the cool air against my hot, sweaty skin,

the rough bark of the tree digging into my breasts and shoulders. The feel of my silky, thick hair entangled in my fingers, and the heat coming off of Sammy's body as it presses against mine with each stroke of his cock pushing inside of me.

The blade handle's cool metal is warming inside my tight asshole as I clench around it. It's almost all too much. My eyes close and roll to the back of my head as each sensation brings me higher and higher, forcing me to rise up an impossible mountain ridge, where I will have to plunge down. It is a rollercoaster ride of emotions and pleasure that I welcome. My heart feels like it will jump out of my chest, and every nerve ending is firing with sparks.

Sammy picks up speed, fucking me with his cock and with the blade, both working together in tandem to bring me to the pinnacle of completion. "Please!" I beg, the word ripped from my lips. I don't even know if I am begging to come, for his blade to split my skin, or for my own sanity.

"What do you need, Nightstar?" His harsh growl sounds more like a wolf baring its teeth. The sound is being ripped from his throat as he stops the blade handle from fucking me. He pulls it out, and a whimper leaves my lips. The lapse of sensation inside me makes me want to beg him to put it back inside my tight, breached hole.

The first sting of the end of the sharp blade feels like a bird soaring in the sky. *Freedom. Exhilaration.* He presses it down on my asscheek as he continues to fuck my pussy with

powerful strokes. The blade point digs and moves along my skin, and I can feel the wet sensation of blood welling and dripping down my ass towards the ground. I can't tell what he's carving, but whatever it is, the letters are moving across my slick skin.

The pain is almost too much, combined with how hard he's fucking me. Despite the dopamine hitting my system, my body feels the cuts and pains all over my skin. Just as I'm about to explode again around him, he plunges the handle of the blade back inside my clenching ass and fucks me hard with it. *I let go.* Euphoria crests over me, and takes me for a powerful, thrilling ride.

My whole body is tightening and then spasming, and wetness leaks out of my core, soaking his cock and balls and the ground below us. A scream is ripped from my chest as I release my hands from behind my head, and brace to prevent my face from crashing into the tree and smashing all my teeth.

Another roar fills the air as Sammy cums inside of my clenching hole. He pulls the blade from my ass and drops it on the ground next to him, the sound loud in the silent forest. His sweat-soaked body drapes across mine, blanketing me with warmth, heavy weight, and the fantastic scent of a sweaty, satisfied man.

“Fuck, Dinah. So good, baby. So fucking good.” He kisses the back of my neck, then my jaw, cheek, and finally, his lips meet mine in a tender kiss that is all passion without any of the violence we just left here on the forest floor.

All too soon, he's pulling back from me with a grunt and helping me off of the trunk. My legs sway and tremble momentarily, my head feeling lightheaded from all of the delicious violent fucking. A huge grin greets me when I finally get a look at him. He's covered in dirt, his dark blonde hair looking like a rat's nest, and his blue eyes sparkling with enjoyment.

"I see someone is enjoying their moment of depravity," I sniff, wiping some of the dirt off my chest and stomach.

"Like you didn't, Nightstar. You can't fool me. You're just as depraved and dirty as I am."

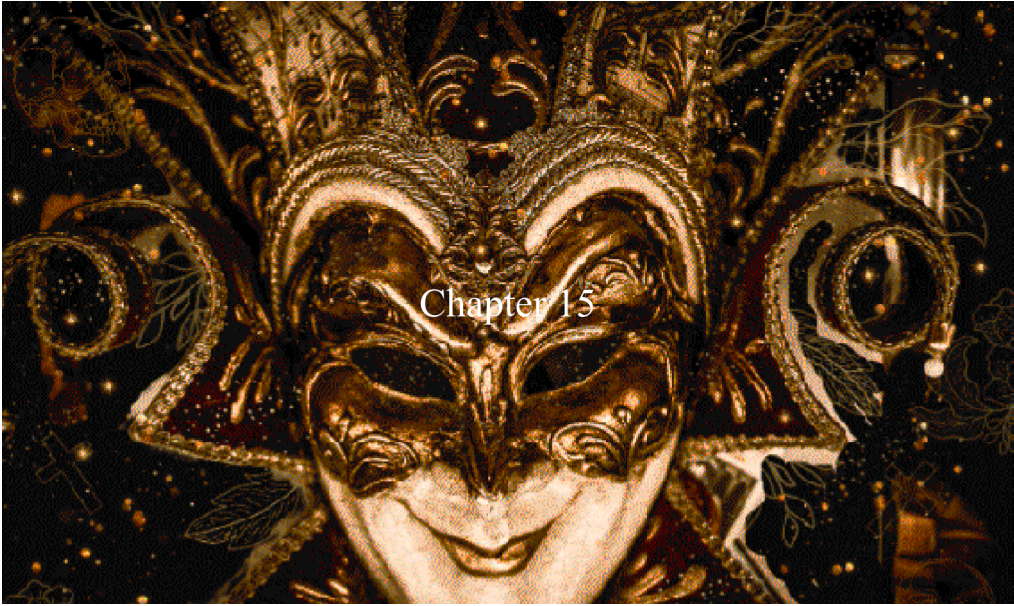
I don't answer him with words, rolling my eyes and allowing the smile I'm trying to hide loose from its confines. "What did you carve?" I question with curiosity and try to turn my body to get a glimpse of my asscheek, which now is stinging like a motherfucker.

The word '*MINE*' is carved into the flesh of my skin in neat, crisp lines. A gruff moan leaves my lips at the audacity of him writing that on my body, while inside, I'm preening like a fucking peacock. "You're a caveman, Samuel Wendover."

I move away from him and hide my face behind my thick hair, so he can't see how much that word actually means to me. How it fills me with sick satisfaction that he wants to own me. That he needs to mark me to lay his claim. As if he didn't already own every part of me. *Does he, though?* My mind questions in a whisper, causing two pairs of eyes, one green and the other amber, to rise in my mind.

“Let’s go home. I need a fucking shower.” I walk away without looking back. I can hear his footsteps following closely behind me as I make my way back to the abandoned car.

He will always follow me. He will always have my back and own me, just like I own him. Both of us fucked up with our obsession for each other. One feeding the other’s depravity and insanity. I wouldn’t have it any other way.





The Forsaker

Zeke

Abe has been on a massive rampage and drug binge, ever since the *'Unholy Ghost'* blew up his precious car. Even I can't seem to get him to stop snorting shit, and breaking all of our stuff here at the house. His actions are causing the staff to be even more fearful than usual and bringing unnecessary attention in our direction.

Hence the fucking meeting I'm now stuck in with my cunt of a father. The bastard demanded my audience first thing this morning, and I had to stagger my hung-over ass out of bed to accommodate him.

"You need to behave in a more delicate manner, Ezekiel. You are both important, high-ranking members of the Brotherhood, rising in power and responsibility. For fuck sake, you're sergeant-at-arms. You need to stop this shit! This immaturity makes Peter and I look like imbeciles to the rest of the Order!"

My father slams his palm down on my dining room table with force, causing all the glassware to shake and spill its contents. I watch one of the maids immediately scurry forward to clean it up. *So well trained, my staff, so full of fear.* Fear is an aphrodisiac to someone like me. It makes my mouth water.

My eyes narrow on the blonde. *Elizabeth.* I'm surprised she can even walk after the savage fucking I witnessed Abe give

her last night, while he was high as a kite. Never mind, I'm even more surprised she's still breathing, and he didn't bleed her out. He must not have been as far gone as I thought. *Pity.*

My father swats her away in aggravation, and his malignant attention returns to me. Fuck, I wish he would just leave, I hate being in his presence. Nothing he says is going to have me or Abe changing our ways. The time for correcting our behavior is long past. He can't control us, and he knows it. My face must reveal some semblance of my thoughts because the bastard jumps up and moves around the table towards me.

His face is vibrant and red with rage, his green eyes shimmering with malice and frustration. He's large like I am, built like a linebacker or a raging bull. The thought makes a chuckle leave my lips. I wonder if I waved something red in front of him, would he charge at me? I almost wish he would; that way, I could lay his ass out for once and make him understand exactly what I think of him.

“Are you even listening to me, boy? Do you think this shit is funny? Someone is out there murdering men just like us. Powerful men, killing fathers and sons, Ezekiel! Wiping out whole bloodlines!” Spittle flies from his angry lips, the sight repulsive, causing me to curl my lip in disgust. My eyes narrow on his face, and I let him see my disdain for him across my features. If death came for him, I certainly wouldn't try to stop it. The chances are excellent that I would stand back and applaud it.

“The Brotherhood is looking within its own ranks for a traitor to explain how this ‘*Ghost*’ is coming and going undetected. And here you two idiots are, giving them reasons to look in your direction.”

He leans forward, getting his rank, hot breath in my face. “You will marry that damn girl when her mourning period concludes, Ezekiel. Not a single day longer. You will breed her until her stomach is swollen with the next generation of our family. You will settle down and be the man you are supposed to be. The one who will take my place one day. You will stop shaming this family, or so help me God, Ezekiel, I will have you disposed of and knock up some young bitch to replace you.”

My eyebrows rise at his vicious threat. Seeing him so riled, and threatening me with death, amuses me deeply. Does he really think getting rid of me would be that easily accomplished? I don’t fear his threats. I haven’t been afraid of Noah Rothesay since I was ten, when I realized that he was weak inside that manipulative exterior.

He can try to dispose of me, but I plan to make that damn near impossible. If something does happen to me, all of the Rothesay skeletons will be coming out of the closet, neatly gift-wrapped with a fucking bow, and sent to the Holy Father. My father has lots to lose. He just doesn’t realize that I know about all his indiscretions.

As far as marrying that wisp of a girl with haunting blue-gray eyes goes. I’ve managed to avoid it so far. I don’t look

forward to being shackled to her deranged ass for the rest of my life. Never mind filling her with my seed and knocking her up, regardless of the long-gone memories of our youth and her pretty, mournful eyes that remind me of my anguished loss.

We could always kill her after she's provided us with a brat or two, my mind snickers, and the thought intrigues me. The picture of blood pouring from her mouth and her eyes large with fear as she struggles, has my cock twitching in the confines of my pants.

I can't imagine she will even be able to handle someone like me without it fracturing her mind, body, and soul. Someone with the types of needs, desires, and pragmatic afflictions that I crave. She seemed so broken, weak, and utterly lost, when I saw her at Gabriel's funeral. When I watched her not only lose her brother but the last living member of her family.

Beautiful. The thought enters my mind unbidden. Yes, Dinah Camrose has grown from a gangly, noisy little flower into a beauty. Even I can't deny that. *My Snow*. She always personified what the fairytale Snow White looked like to me as a child. All that dark hair, pale skin, and those expressive deep blue eyes.

Her features have both sharpened and become hauntingly delicate over the years that have separated us. Gone is the freckled, gap-toothed child who used to beg for our attention, and in her place is a woman.

The hideous and prim dress she wore at her brother's funeral hid all the curves that I felt when I tackled her to the floor, and

had her soft body beneath mine. I could smell her sweet scent of amber, bergamot, and a hint of vanilla, as I used my body as a shield.

Touching her, feeling her shake below me, made my blood sing. It made me desire to do terrible things to her. Things that would have her pretty red blood running in rivulets down her body and her screams filling my ears. *What beautiful anguished music Dinah would make for me.*

No, Dinah is definitely not a child anymore. My cock twitches and hardens in my pants at the memory of her softness beneath my own. The way she fought against my hold as if she could overpower me, the little fragile doll that she is.

I want to break her and put her back together again. Less perfect, filled with sharp edges so I can cut myself against them, so I can bleed red too, my blood mixing with hers until we are both drenched in our life-giving forces, one of us no longer breathing at the hands of the other. I crave to take her last breath and see her realize I am a monster and the horror of her nightmares, not the sweet boy who used to humor her.

The realization that she too might be a bit unhinged, piques my interest. I've heard that the years of captivity under the Brotherhood's rule have driven her to the brink of madness, rendering her violent and unpredictable. She lives with only the company of that guard who swooped in and took her right from under Abe and me. *Fucker, I will have his heart one day clutched in my palm.*

My jaw clenches at the memory of his actions. That was brave of him and also very stupid. It was apparent to anyone watching that he has feelings for her. Feelings that he can't have because he is a lowly guard, not worthy of a Sacred Daughter. *Not worthy of my Snow.*

I wonder if my little Snow is still as pure as a Sacred Daughter should be awaiting her husband. It would be pure insanity for her not to be. She grew up in this world, just as Abe and I did. She knows intimately what the Brotherhood does to traitors and what they do to fallen women.

The passing thought of them abusing her as they did her mother, and so many women in our society, brings a rush of anger to my body, lighting me up from the inside and demanding that I protect her. *Why? Why do I want to protect her?* Is it because of our childhood past, or is it because of the fool's promise I made to Gabriel to always ensure her safety, even at the cost of my own?

"You will make arrangements to go and visit with your betrothed immediately, Ezekiel. You must show the Order that you are ready to take your role seriously, and will become a functioning member of the Brotherhood." He pulls back from me and runs his hand through his thinning gray peppered hair.

"You need to keep a close eye on that guard of hers. Whispers have started spreading since his actions at the funeral. I won't have anyone questioning whether she was pure when she came to you. You will not accept any bastards into our line."

His thoughts mirror mine, and that causes my heckles to rise. I never want to have anything in common with this fucker; I would rather pluck out my eyeballs. *I know, I know. The irony of my thoughts, considering those very eyeballs are what I have in common with him.*

“I will arrange for Abe and me to visit my future bride today,” I spit out between clenched teeth, the words leaving a sour taste in my mouth. I’d literally rather do anything other than go and see Dinah. I would be content to leave her in confinement for the rest of our miserable lives and never marry. To never bring spawn into this decrepit world that surrounds us. Why punish another generation with the curse placed on this earth?

“Do you think it wise to take Abraham with you? She’s going to be your wife, not his,” he questions with a raised eyebrow and a dissatisfied look. His question both irritates me and amuses me. He’s never liked how close we are to each other. Where one goes, the other always follows. If he only knew how much I like fucking my best friend’s ass or pounding his tight throat.

I often wonder if he would kill me with his bare hands, or take the coward’s way out and order my execution?

“Peter should be looking for a wife for him. Not letting him fornicate with anything with a pussy.” The sneer across his face makes him look older, angrier, and ugly. I guess his insides are finally starting to reflect on his exterior. *Malicious asshole.*

His objection can't be to fornication. The man spends most of his time gangbanging his friends' wives and the maids. No, his protest is to Abe being allowed to do as he pleases, because Peter doesn't try to control him like my father does me. If Peter tried, he would most likely end up with a blade in his throat, and he knows it. Abe doesn't like to be ordered around by anyone but me, and even then, it's only when my cock is involved.

“Do you ask yourself those same questions when you share mom with Peter? The way I see it, he probably spends more time between your wife's legs than you do.”

I throw the words at him with unsuppressed malice. A smirk crosses my lips at his immediate reaction. His head snaps back like I've just slapped him, and his cheekbones and neck flush with a deep magenta color at my words.

Did he really think that he was being discrete? Everyone in a position of privilege knows that most of the Founding Fathers shared their wives amongst themselves. Heck, I've known for years that he enjoyed fucking Dinah and Gabriel's mom, Maria, more than he enjoyed sleeping with my own mother.

It's a well-kept secret amongst the Brotherhood. Ensuring that the masses and lower classes don't realize what really happens behind the closed doors of those who profess to hear and speak the word of the Lord.

He calls me depraved and irresponsible. He tells me that we need to grow up and act more mature. To take our responsibilities in the Brotherhood more seriously, all while

having raging orgies and dubiously consented gangbangs with other members' wives. What a fucking hypocrite he is. What fucking hypocrites they all are. *Men of God, my ass.*

"He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." The thought makes a snort leave my lips, further aggravating my father.

As much as I am enjoying riling up my father, my thoughts trail back to the blue-eyed girl who has been on my mind for longer than I care to admit. It's been just over eight months since I last saw her, and as per the Brotherhood commandments, she's entitled to a full year's worth of mourning for Gabriel and her mother.

The problem with that scenario is that Brotherhood members are dropping like flies around us, thanks to the *'Unholy Ghost'*. The fact that he has taken a particular interest in both Abe and myself is not good, either. I might not be alive at the end of the next four months to claim her.

Then what happens to Dinah? She's past the age of marrying at twenty-one. I was content to leave her in the safety and obscurity of her confinement at Gabriel's urging and insistence. If I had my way, the arrangement would have been null and void when her father died.

For Gabriel, I never forced the issue and never tried to disavow her. She was a minor inconvenience at the time, a worry for much later in life. Gabriel always knew that one day I would have to marry her. That there was no other way out of

this life for her other than death, or marriage to a Founding Father or an heir.

My father, being the power-hungry asshole that he is, meant there was no way he would walk away from a prize like Dinah, and let some other man of the Order swoop in and take her. Her name alone is worth her weight in gold to the Holy Father.

Even her psychotic behavior never truly deterred him. What did he call it when he returned from visiting her a few years ago, with a swollen gash across his forehead where she had thrown something at him? '*Growing pains*'...yes, that's right. He called her tantrums and violence, growing pains.

“What I do and don't do is of no consequence to you. I am a Founding Father. I have done my duty to the Order all these years. I have provided them with an heir to my name. You must do the same, Ezekiel. If you don't, the consequences will be your life and hers.”

He walks away from me, slamming the door in his wake and making the art on my walls tremble. My teeth grind, and my fists clench with the need to destroy everything in my sight. I restrain myself from grabbing hold of the table and throwing it against the wall.

Every single time I'm forced to entertain him, the urge gets stronger. I should just murder him myself, rather than hoping that the '*Ghost*' does it for me. Maybe I can do it in such a way that I can pin the actions on that fucker who is stalking me.

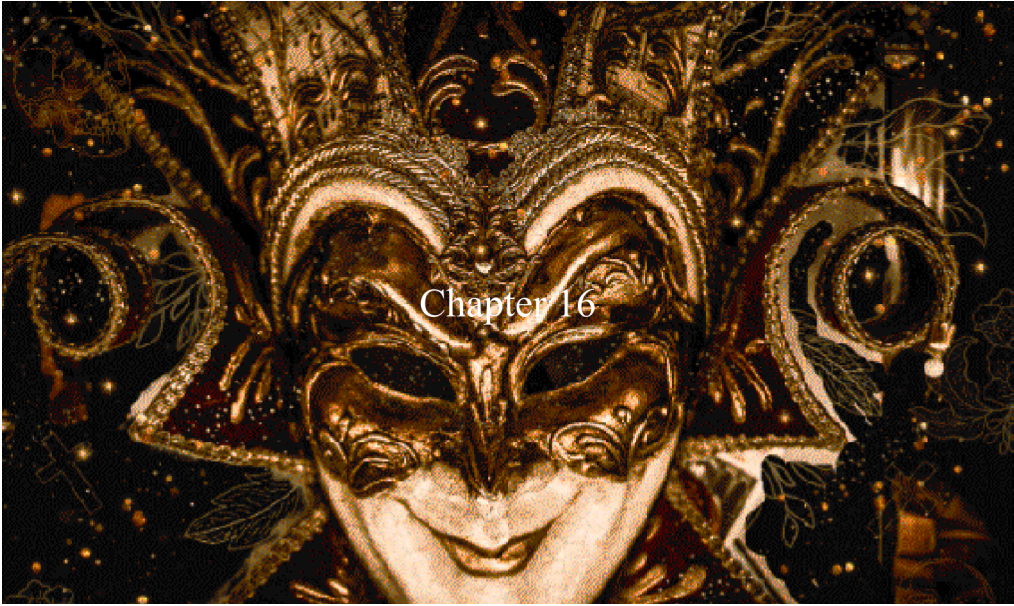
Now, there's a thought. This bastard going around hiding in the shadows might be helpful to me after all. I could use the cover of his actions to commit patricide. Perhaps even take out Peter, too, freeing Abraham from dealing with him further. A rush of giddiness fills me at the thought of murdering our fathers, and freeing us from their demands.

Maybe once I kill both of them, we can run off together. Perhaps, even join the rebellion and help bring down the Order. *Do I want to end the reign of the Founding Fathers?* I haven't really endured any hardships in this life, having been born into the privileged class, even before the world up and lost its fucking mind. In fact, I've pretty much had everything handed to me: wealth, drugs, power, and women. Do I really want to give all that up and go underground with the rebels?

Maybe not. Maybe I'll just murder both of them, and we'll take their places as the founding members. *Yeah, that sounds like a much better idea.* I'm almost salivating at the idea of slitting my father's throat, and watching him bleed out all over my lovely, expensive hardwood floors.

First, however, I have to go see about a wife I don't really want. Scratch that; first, I have to ensure that Abraham hasn't snorted so much coke that he's sent himself to an early grave and a trip through hell, and left me here all alone in the world. Then I have to convince the big, jealous fuck to come with me to visit my new possession, all while hoping that she hasn't completely lost her mind.

When it rains fucking chaos, it pours fucking chaos.



Chapter 16



Zeke

I'm fucking annoyed. No, that's an understatement; I'm fucking livid, and ready to light a whole bunch of shit on fire. It's been six days since that shitshow of a meeting with my father. Six days since I called to make arrangements to see Dinah at the location she has been a captive under guard since she was fifteen years old.

At first, my calls went nowhere. I called, and it rang over and over, and no one answered, despite the fact that she is confined to her fucking home and should be there. Then, when finally that asshole of a guard answered, he told me that she was indisposed and not receiving visitors, like she had a fucking choice in the matter. The next time I called, she was having a manic episode and was trying to hurt herself. In fact, every time I call to advise them of my coming visit, I get an excuse.

I'm not stupid. This bastard doesn't want me anywhere near her. He forgets that I watched him sweep her up in his arms, like some kind of gallant white knight, and take her away from us. He either hopes and prays that I'll be dissuaded from marrying her by feeding me these little tidbits about her behavior, or too frightened to do so. *I won't.* I don't have any real choice in the matter, and neither does she.

If that wasn't enough irritation on my plate, another founding family was found brutally murdered not too far from the capital that we live in. The message left was inciting panic and rage amongst the Brotherhood. There have been nonstop meetings and calls to arms, ever since the Kingston family was discovered.

This '*Unholy Ghost*' is now not only a menace; he's a serial killer with a penchant for torturing his victims to death. This time, he didn't even spare the Sacred Wife. His body count is over twenty now, with still no way to stop him in sight. To say the members of the Brotherhood are now afraid of what lurks in the shadows is an understatement.

Add Abraham killing another '*Gift*' and one of our maids in a fit of rage and intoxication, and you can see how my week is going, and why I am almost at the end of my patience. My head is pounding with a headache that won't cease. The throbbing is making my blood pressure rise, nausea to roll around in my stomach, and my temper to become easily inflamed.

I've already shouted at half my staff, and punched one of the pansy-ass guards my father has following me around like a goddamn shadow. Then I started a fight with Abe, who is now up in his room sulking like a little bitch.

FUCK! I just need a moment of peace. Just one goddamn second with no hysteria. With no one calling me, no one demanding anything of me, and just leaving me alone. *Is that too much to ask for?*

It's past midnight, and the air is on the cooler side as I walk through the freshly landscaped garden behind our house. I can see the various armed patrols walking the grounds at a distance. By order of our fathers, we now have to have a team of guards patrolling at all hours, on the lookout for this *'Unholy Ghost'*.

This guy is starting to get on my nerves and cramp my style. I didn't really care before who he was out there killing, because Abe and I can barely stand most of the other families and their superior righteousness. Now, however, I am personally being affected. I am now a walking prisoner—an insect behind a glass case, every one of my movements surveyed and tracked.

That now makes him enemy number one for me and Abe. Leaving me that psychotic message in blood while I slept, taunting me, and then blowing up Abe's car while we stood there like two lame ducks. Naw, that shit is fucked up. This guy needs to be taught a lesson at the end of my sharp blade.

I walk down towards the thick treed cliffs that jut out of the end of our property. The sound of the rushing water below calls to me and encourages my path in its direction. The smell of clean ocean water, salt, and nature, helps to soothe some of my building rage. When we first hit the age of majority at eighteen, we were gifted this house that once belonged to my mother's family. I was so excited to be out from under my father's controlling thumb, that I took all the privilege and beauty surrounding us out here for granted.

Now, I wonder how long I'll get to stay here once I marry Dinah. Will we be able to return here? It's not really a house meant to raise a family, more like an expensive and spacious bachelor pad. A place to have wild parties, raging orgies, and be out of the prying eyes of the populace. Will she want to live in the city after being kept in quiet seclusion all this time? *Does it really matter what she wants? She is nothing. A beautiful sex toy for you to use, fill with your cum, and breed.*

I drag my hand through my thick hair, pulling on the strands. What the fuck am I going to do about Abraham when I marry Dinah? My father says it's entirely out of the question for him to continue to live with me once I'm married. That his own turd of a father is actively searching for a proper match, so they can marry him off as soon as possible.

Two huge fucking problems with those scenarios.

One, I can't live without him. In fact, I refuse to live without seeing him daily and having him close to me. The second problem is that he most likely will kill whoever the poor unfortunate cunt is who ends up forced to marry him, if he's left unchecked. His need for perverse violence, degradation, and pain, won't be able to contain itself if I am not there to pull him back from the edge. It's not like the bitches of our world know how to fight back. The asshole will be a widower before the honeymoon is even over.

A huge sigh leaves me at that thought. I'm exhausted; all this shit is like a ten-ton truck sitting on my shoulders. Not even fucking Abe's ass, or forcing my cock down one of the maids'

throats, has helped to ease any of my tension. So much shit is happening at once, and all of it seems out of my control. My fists tighten with the thought of my lack of control. How I long to set fire to this whole world for trying to take it from me.

My feet meet the cliff's edge, the sound louder now that I am closer. The water moves quickly and harshly below me, looking like dark liquid ink. The smell of brine fills my nostrils, along with the scent of damp earth and pine needles. I take a deep breath, holding it inside my chest before releasing it in a guttural groan.

My eyes move over the dark, foreboding waves, wondering if there is anywhere I can escape to with Abe, and rid ourselves of the obligations of the Brotherhood. Somewhere, I could be free to show him how much he means to me, without the constant worry of being put to death for my emotions and desires.

I hate this fucking world that we live in. I hate that I have to hide my feelings for him, because a bunch of malignant old men don't understand that it's completely normal, an inherent part of nature, and not something they can dictate or corrupt, with words from a God I don't honestly believe in.

They twist and misshape the words of a benevolent higher power for their own needs. Using them to incite hate and fear, which makes me rage inside. There is no being out there watching and passing judgment. No God would deem the affection and love between Abraham and myself evil.

The true evil is man. They defile everything around them. How many times must the world burn and rise again from its ashes, before they understand? How many more will suffer before this world is finally free? *Too many...* my mind answers. *We will be long gone before that happens.*

All these melancholy thoughts soar through my mind, causing me to be morose, angry, and stressed about what will happen next. I shove my hands deep in my pockets with frustration and survey my small piece of paradise. The one that soon I will lose, along with my sense of self.

A slight sound comes from the left side of the wooded area surrounding the cliffs. I'm not even sure I actually heard anything, as I tip my head and scan that direction. Maybe it was a small animal chasing its dinner in the middle of the night? How free it must feel to hunt its prey without judgment and consequences.

The night air blows across my face, caressing my skin with its coolness. My ears perk up as my body stills, and I hear a twig snapping on the ground twenty feet from me. Nothing moves, not even a branch, as I strain to listen to any telltale sounds of someone walking this way. I wouldn't put it past one of the guards to be sneaking up and watching me. Hoping to catch me doing something that they can then report back to my father, and earn them some favor. *All of them are maggots.*

My skin prickles with the sensation of eyes on me. Unease races up my spine. This doesn't feel like just one of the useless guards anymore. Someone is stalking me in the trees like a

panther hunting its prey, and using the darkness, and the thick foliage, to disguise their exact location.

I still my body while slowly allowing my eyes to trail across the landscape. My heart rate has sped up, my breathing is harsher, and sweat is starting to trickle down the back of my neck. A sense of foreboding invades my body, making each muscle lock up tightly.

I barely hear the swooshing sound of something sailing through the air towards me. My heightened reflexes save my life as I duck down, crouching as a large silver blade embeds in a tree trunk directly in front of me, where my head would have just been seconds ago. The harsh thunk of the sharp point digging into the tree has my heart rate skyrocketing, until I can barely drag a breath inside my lungs. Adrenaline floods me, and makes all my senses go on alert to protect myself from whoever is hunting me.

I jump swiftly to my feet and start checking the bushes closest to me, for whoever is trying to kill me. I have my suspicions on who that might be. I'm cursing myself for leaving my blade inside the house. I reach forward and yank the embedded knife from the tree, holding it tightly.

A slight movement thirty feet from me in a thick bush has my ears straining for further threats as I approach it. I dart quickly into the bush, prepared to wrap my hands around the fucker's neck or stab them with their own blade, only to find the spot empty.

What. The. Fuck. I could have sworn the noise was coming from that direction. I move out of the thick greenery, the scent of dirt and crushed vegetation in my nostrils. My breathing is coming in rapidly, and I'm trying hard to quiet the harsh breaths that are escaping me; I know they are giving away my location.

A shadow flies towards me quickly out of the corner of my eye. I'm too slow at moving away, and a sharp pain sears into my shoulder. Fuck, this asshole has sliced me! I can feel the cool air now on my exposed skin where the sharp blade has cut my shirt open, and my skin, and I feel my warm blood already sliding down my back.

"Show yourself, you fucking coward!" I shout.

This menace is toying with me, playing games like some sick predator who thinks I am his dinner. Fuck that shit; I'm no one's prey. I charge into the bush, scattering leaves and everything before me as I search for this demon's hiding spot. A faint noise is my only warning before my left calf is sliced. I fall to my knees, clutching the sharp pain in the back of my leg.

How the fuck did he get behind me without me hearing him? Is this fucker truly a malicious, angry spirit? I rise from the ground; the sharp stinging in my leg will have to wait. I can't make myself more vulnerable by being on the ground. I turn and move out of the deeply foliated area and back towards a more open space, where I might have a chance of defending myself.

“Come on, motherfucker! Fight me like a man! You’re no ghost, you’re a fucking coward, attacking from the bushes,” I shout, spittle flying from my furious mouth as I wave the blade around, hoping to stab him with it. I clench my other fist tightly, ready to beat this motherfucker to death with my bare hands if I have to.

Another blade flies towards my head, and this one, luckily, I hear coming and dart out of the way. It falls to the ground a few feet before me, and I slide down to grab it, my body slamming into the dirt. This bastard wants to be throwing knives at me. I’ll fucking cut him open with his own blade, and tear out his fucking heart.

A dark shadow darts a few feet from me. The moonlight does nothing to help me determine his size or facial features. I catch a slight glimpse of a pale hand before it disappears back into the shadows. I’m pretty sure that he has another blade he’s readying to throw at me.

No sooner than the thought crosses my mind does the blade come flying at my head, and barely misses me. It grazes the side of my scalp and cuts my ear before embedding into another tree. The feel of wetness down the side of my neck causes my heart to feel like it’s going to escape right out of my chest. I drop the blade, slap my hand on my ear, and it comes away wet with my dark blood. Anger rises further inside of me, a volcano waiting to erupt.

Is this psycho trying to actually kill me, or just fucking with me, and attempting to scare me? Why a blade? He could have

easily shot me, and I would have never seen the bullet coming my way before I was dead and heading to meet my ancestors.

He wants to play...he wants me scared and running for my life. My lips curl into a snarl as I stand to my imposing height and hold my ground. I will not run; I will not fucking cower. He wants me; he can come out and get me.

This time, I hear him moving. It's subtle, and if my senses weren't already heightened, I wouldn't. This guy is good, really good. *Deadly.* The blur of motion comes from my right this time, the glint of the blade reflecting in the moonlight as it arcs in my direction and tries to slice my shoulder. I sweep out my leg and punch the air to stop the motion. My fist connects with a body part while my foot does too. A muffled sound of surprise ripples through the air, music to my ears.

The deranged psycho drops and rolls away from me, diving for the security of the bushes to the side, but not before I see a white mask with only the eyes cut out. Blue. No, not exactly blue, more blue-gray, and large with thick dark lashes. I try to take in the shape of my attacker. He's on the smaller, leaner side. This asswipe will barely reach my neck.

Rage courses through my veins as I pursue him, recklessly diving into the shrubbery, consumed by the desire to catch and rip him apart, riding me hard. At this moment, nothing else matters. Just me and him going toe to toe, monster to monster. I want to see his evil as it meets mine.

He's almost out of my grasp, running rapidly into the woods. His footfalls are not making as much noise as mine as I chase

after him, with no regard for my safety. He tries to get to higher ground, but I'm not having it. I tackle him hard, getting my arms around his legs, bringing him down with a hard shove, and losing my hold on the blade in the process.

He kicks at me, momentarily hitting me in the face and dislodging my grip. My head spins, and my vision fleetingly blurs, with the solid hit he manages to land. *Slippery motherfucker*. He's up and trying to get further away from me, but I dive and land on his lower back, taking him down and landing half on him, half in the dirt. The air is knocked out of both of us, and I can't breathe for a moment. The only sound is that of my blood loudly rushing in my ears.

I shake off the ringing in my ears and grasp tighter to his shirt, hauling my large body further on top of him and pushing him into the ground. I was right; this guy is barely a buck twenty wet, if that, and maybe just over five feet. He struggles against my hold, trying to buck me off. I can't see any more of his features. His hair is hidden tightly behind the hood of a black hoodie. His whole body is covered in thick black fabric, and the only flesh on display is the brief glimpses of skin not covered by his gloves—pale flesh encased in leather with long, slender fingers. Ones that are currently doing their very best to gouge my eyes out.

I fight to maintain my hold on the slippery asshole, as he does his best to buck me off. His foot kicks back, getting a solid hit on my shin before hitting me again, this time higher and just on the edge of my groin. The pain radiates through me and makes my stomach lurch as he tries again to kick me in

the balls. I refuse to release my hold, even though my stomach threatens to bring up my dinner.

He tries to arch up and slam his head back. He manages to clock me in the chin with his head, and I can taste blood in my mouth where my teeth bite down on my tongue with the impact. I slam my fist down hard on his lower back, over and over, until I hear a small groan. I'm hitting him repeatedly with kidney shots, and this fucker is still trying to get away from me. *Go down, motherfucker!*

I slam my fist into the back of his head, and he momentarily stops moving, his body collapsing below me into the dirt, as I try to use my own to blanket all of his. A sharp elbow strikes back, getting me in the corner of my eye and causing me to release my hold. He tries to scramble from below me, dragging his thin body through the dirt.

I shake off the hit and grasp onto his legs, wrapping one of my arms around his thin waist and trying to lift him from the ground, so I can pile drive him back down and hopefully knock him out. I get another elbow, this time to the Adam's apple for my effort. I start choking on my own breath and have to release him.

He crawls from below my heavy body, breathing in harsh pants and wheezing. He's trying to stand, but I watch as he sways from all the painful shots his body received from my fists. Satisfaction soars through me, knowing he's hurt too, that I gave as good as I got.

I reach for his abandoned blade and try to scramble back to my feet, one of my hands still around my own throat, begging my body to allow me to breathe in oxygen, as I try to reach him. He looks over his shoulder, the white mask still covering his face but slightly askew. I can see a sliver of pale skin on his chin. His eyes meet mine, and I see a dark rage in their depths. This guy wants to hurt me. No, he truly wants to end me.

“Who...are...you?” My voice is garbled and harsh as I struggle to get words past my throat. I can taste copper, and my tongue feels swollen in my mouth.

He makes no attempt to answer me but moves forward. He never takes his eyes off of me as he tries to escape me. It's like a dance of two poisonous snakes swaying and getting ready to attack each other. Every time he moves, I do too. His slender hands clench as he raises them in a fighting stance. Impressive. This guy actually looks like he knows what he's doing. However, it won't stop me from ending his life here on the forest floor.

“Why are you...killing off members... of the Brotherhood? Are...you a rebel?”

I get a loud snort from him in response to my questions. He steps back just as I take two steps forward, trying to make up ground between us. A growl escapes his lips, vibrating through the mask and making the hairs on my body stand on end. We are closing in on the cliff now, and soon, there will be nowhere for either of us to go except to drop to our deaths below.

He takes another step back, glancing quickly over his shoulder, and I witness the moment he realizes I will have him unable to run from me. *Trapped*. The menacing cliff drop at his back, and I, his adversary, ready to kill him at his front.

I lunge forward, taunting him with my fist and almost landing another blow. My leg and back protest my movements with stings from the knife wounds, but I ignore them. Adrenaline runs through my system, giving my body the much-needed boost to keep going. To fight this fucker to the death. Mine or his, as of yet to be determined.

“There is nowhere to go, fucker. You will die here.” I breathe through my nose, trying to get as much oxygen down my abused esophagus as possible. I lunge forward again, this time slicing his arm, pale skin immediately appearing before me before red covers it. “You bleed; you’re no ghost.”

I lunge forward this time with my fist, which connects to the mask’s side, causing it to slide upwards and reveal a small pale chin. His head swings backward just in time to avoid the full force of my hit, and he stumbles closer to the drop. He’s now mere inches from it. I can hear the gravel moving under his feet and his harsh breath.

Fear. I hope he’s feeling fear. I’ve never felt more alive than now. In this moment, as I fight for my life, I’ve found a strange sense of peace within the darkness that consumes me. I battle not just for survival, but to be the monster that ends another monster.

Just as I am preparing to slash again, to end his life, something hits me hard from behind, and I buckle to my knees, releasing my hold on the blade. The '*Ghost*' immediately moves forward, kicking it away from my reach.

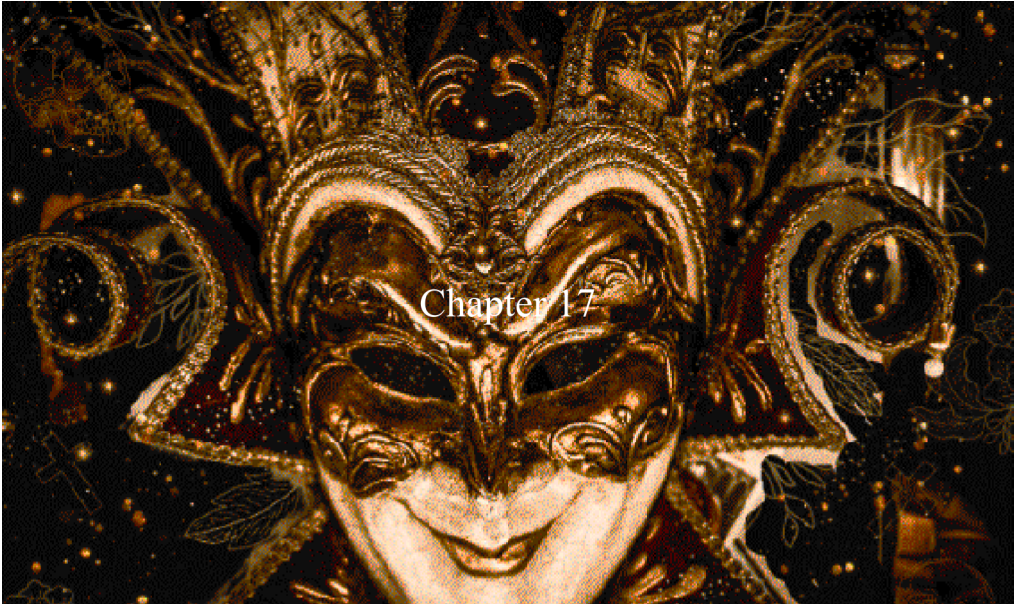
“Get the fuck away from her, you maggot.” Another hard blow is delivered to the back of my skull, this time threatening my vision with blackness. I try to shake it off, but end up receiving another blow to the head for my trouble. The fucker behind me grasps tightly to the back of my head, yanking on my hair and making my head and neck arch backward, until I am forced to stare up at the dark night sky with blurred eyes.

I make out another white mask with the eyes cut out, and another figure wholly draped in black from the corner of my eye. This one seems larger, more menacing than the '*Ghost*' before me. A forearm wraps around my neck, tightening his hold and choking me. I try to fight his grip, scrambling to lift myself from the ground, when I feel a blade slice my upper thigh. My eyes try to look forward, and I catch the '*Ghost*' out of the corner of my eye. He's the one slicing me. Ensuring I can't rise to my feet and fight back.

Darkness starts to descend on me, my breathing slowing and my blood loud in my ears. Will I ever wake up? Is this the end of me? Will I die here, two hundred feet from my house? The only person I love inside of it, angry with me, and not realizing that I am taking my last breath?

My final thought before blackness takes me is, he said, '*her*'. '*Get the fuck away from her, you maggot*'. The '*Unholy Ghost*'

is a woman.





The Forsaker

Zeke

I awake with a groan and the feeling of painful fire across all my limbs. I try to crack an eyelid open to get an idea of where I am, and if I am a captive of those two psychopaths. Soft yellow light immediately accosts my vision and makes my stomach lurch with the desire to vomit. My head spins, and I struggle to sit up, the pain intensifying. I'm instantly forced to turn my head to the side of the bed, and expel the bile that's burning its way back up my throat.

“Take it easy, Zeke! I'm pretty sure you have a concussion, and I'm not sure if your ribs are broken.” Abe's gravelly and agitated voice greets my ears, and I've never been so relieved to hear it. I'm alive and somehow not in their clutches. I don't know how that's possible, but I am so thankful that I am.

I crack my eyes open wider and meet his concerned amber gaze. He's trying to prevent me from face-planting off the side of the bed, his firm grip keeping me steady before guiding me back down onto the soft pillows. I see him clenching his teeth, as I release a groan in response to the pain coursing through my body. *Those two bastards got me good.*

“How?” My voice croaks as I ask the question, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand. He hands me a glass of cold water, and I attempt to hold it in my trembling grip. However, he smacks my hand away gently, raising the glass to my lips so

I can take a few sips and cleanse my mouth of the unpleasant aftertaste of vomit. I consider protesting his nurturing gesture, but truthfully, I find myself rather enjoying it.

“I was angry with you,” he says, rolling his eyes. Well, that’s nothing new, I think to myself. It seems like he’s always angry with me lately.

“I went looking for you in your room so I could punch you in the face, but you were gone. One of the guards said you walked towards the cliffs, so I came to find you.” He places the glass on my nightstand, his eyes filled with concern. “Lucky I did, asshole. You were out cold a few mere feet from the cliff’s edge, and bleeding like a stuck pig.”

The image he describes sends a shiver racing up my spine. I came perilously close to death tonight, closer than I’ve ever been. Why didn’t they finish me off? They could have, and no one would have stopped them. Why am I still alive?

“Who did this to you, Zeke?” He leans closer to me, his hand trembling as it touches the side of my face. “Who am I going to kill for touching what’s mine?”

I pause for a moment before responding to his questions. Thoughts and images assail me rapidly. The vision of blue-gray eyes and a glimpse of pale skin flashes through my mind. *It couldn’t be.* My mind vehemently rejects the notion. *No, there’s no way it’s a woman.*

Her. The other fucker said her. The ‘*Unholy Ghost*’ is a female. Now, looking back at the size and shape of my attacker, there is no doubt in my mind that it was, in fact, a her.

Holy fuck. A woman has been bringing down the members of the Order, one powerful family at a time. Shivers race through my body at the reminder of how many people she has killed already, with no sign of stopping any time soon.

Again, the question of why didn't they finish me enters my mind. They could have pushed me off the cliff, and then I would have fallen to my death. Instead, they left me there bleeding. Did they hope that someone from the house would find me, or was it a matter of allowing fate to do its work? If I died, I died; if I survived, they would attempt to kill me again. Is this all some sick, depraved game?

"Earth to Zeke! Are you in there?" Abe waves a hand in front of my eyes with unsuppressed annoyance. "Jesus, maybe we should get the doctor back here?"

Fuck, he had the doctor here to tend to me. I hope he bought the bastard's silence; otherwise, our fathers will descend like vultures, ready to lock up their precious heirs. Right now, I'm not even sure if that is my biggest concern; once again, a pair of blue-gray eyes enter my mind.

"The 'Unholy Ghost' paid me a visit last night, and not a welcome one." The corner of my lips lifts upward at the shade of crimson that immediately tints Abe's face, the rage in his eyes causing the amber color to glow like liquid honey.

"WHAT? What do you mean the 'Unholy Ghost' paid you a visit? That's who attacked you?" He begins to pace in front of the end of the bed, his hands clenching and unclenching at his

sides as his breathing quickens. “I’m going to murder that fucker. I’m going to enjoy skinning him alive!”

A sadistic grin spreads across my lips, a sense of enjoyment filling me as I prepare to turn Abe’s world upside down. “Her. You are going to enjoy skinning *her* alive.” I watch as my words penetrate his skull, and he realizes what I just said.

“What do you mean ‘her’?” His movement comes to a complete halt, shock racing across his features.

“It’s a woman, Abe. The killer is a woman. A strong and highly-trained woman.” My words send a shiver down my spine as I recall how well-trained she was, and how vicious and cold she appeared. I remember the painful blows she landed on me with that blade, and the menacing intent in her attempts to end my life. Would she have slit my throat with one of those sharp blades?

She had the opportunity, didn’t she? And you’re still here, aren’t you? My mind questions.

“That’s not possible, Zeke. How hard did you hit your head?” He moves towards me as if he’s going to check my skull for injuries, and I push him away. I know I sound insane right now. I know the possibility of the ‘*Ghost*’ being a woman has never entered anyone’s mind, much less ours.

Why would it? Women are weak, vulnerable, and easily disposed of when one grows tired of them. The fact that it is an actual woman is almost comical, and too good to be true.

In a male-dominated society of corrupt men who take all they want, and use women as nothing but holes to fuck, a woman is out here killing off its most influential members. I would almost want to high-five the cunt, if she weren't out here trying to kill Abe and me. *But she didn't, did she?*

“Trust me, I was just as shocked, asswipe. It's a woman. A small, slender woman who has been highly trained to fight and move like a shadow.” An annoyed grimace crosses my face at the disbelief on his face. “That's not all; she's not working alone. There was a second attacker. A large male, that's who choked me out.”

Abe drags his large tattooed hands through his thick hair, pulling on the strands with evident agitation and force. If he's not careful, he's going to end up bald. I'm not sure I would find him as appealing bald. *Who are you kidding? You would still enjoy his cock if he was missing half his face,* my mind snickers.

He looks like he's about to start pacing again and then seems to change his mind, sitting beside me on the bed. His weight forces the mattress to dip and causes my stomach to roll once again with the motion. *Shit, maybe I do have a concussion.* His amber gaze centers on mine, intensity burning from within its golden depths. The worry is clear as day to see on his features.

“Two of them. Fuck, Zeke.”

My feelings exactly, *fuck, indeed.* I watch him trying to process all the information we know about the ‘*Unholy Ghost*’ and why he's been killing high-ranking members of the

Brotherhood. We always assumed it was either a disgruntled Brotherhood member, or someone who had been harshly impacted by the Order. Looking over the information, I can see that it's both.

Do I voice my suspicions out loud? Do I tell the one person I trust, and hold dear, my insane thoughts? The image of those blue-gray eyes through the holes in the mask stays at the forefront of my mind. The glimpses of pale skin through all the black clothing. The slender but strong body underneath mine when I held it down.

Dinah.

My little Snow has been naughty. She's picked up some deadly skills while away in captivity. Skills that have her hands soaked in the blood of the Brotherhood. She's had six long years to learn to be a killer and over twenty people to practice on. If my thoughts are correct, and the more and more I think about what I know, I believe they are; *my little Snow is a serial killer.*

Is she out there avenging the death of her father? I know he was tortured, and she was forced to watch from captivity through horrific live feeds, ensuring they broke her of mind and soul, just like they did her mother. The Brotherhood and their malicious and psychotic ways to keep women under control. Even Abe and I disagree with that shit.

What can be worse than watching someone you love be carved apart piece by piece? Watching as all their lifeblood pours down their body, and saturates the ground around them.

Hearing their screams for mercy and pleas for death? They made her watch. They made her listen. They are the reason she has become what she is. The reckoning that they deserve.

That type of torture would be enough to make anyone a killer. To have them seek revenge against the people who destroyed their family. To have them lose part of their sanity and desire the feel and smell of blood, of chaos and destruction. To have them crave death. Fuck, I haven't been subjected to anywhere near what Dinah has, and I crave destruction.

Gabriel raged against both of their treatments, and look where that led. He's gone, his mother is gone, and Dinah is all alone in this world.

Is she, though? She has you and Abe. She has whoever the guy is who's helping her, my mind questions. No, I want to rebel against the very thought. I don't want to be responsible for her. I don't want to have our childhood attachments reacquainted.

Liar, my mind and heart scream. *You promised Gabriel. You promised to keep her safe. She is ours.*

The thought of the other man aiding her in portraying the 'Unholy Ghost' causes a seething surge of anger to course through my veins. She's mine, and she will always be mine. Even if I don't want her, she still belongs to me, discarded or not.

The guard.

I'm positive it's that guard who was with her. When I see him next, I'm going to cut off both his fucking hands for touching what's mine. My mind screeches with laughter at my thoughts. *Those sound like mighty possessive thoughts, asshole.*

You're dealing with two killers, two vicious predators, and you think you can just take her back? Control her? For all you know, she's been out there killing people for years. How are you going to control a killer?

I rake my fingers down my face in frustration. My head throbs with the cacophony of memories, all jumbled together, causing my ears to ring. Suddenly, a single thought pierces through the mental chaos, sending a shiver down my spine and raising the hairs on my arms.

The killings didn't begin until after Gabriel and her mother died. In fact, until that happened, only the rebels had been targeting the Brotherhood in attempts to overthrow our government. No, the first killings began soon after Gabriel and Maria passed.

The last eight months have been filled with prominent families being targeted and killed. Some close to the capital, and others states away. Shit, wasn't there one in another country? How? How has Dinah pulled this off while she has been under lock and key?

She hasn't been under lock and key, fucker.

Her fucking white knight. He must have trained her. Dinah went into captivity an innocent who didn't even know how to

throw a punch. Now she's this trained fighter and killer; he did that. He has had years alone with her to prepare, help, and groom her. He has to be how she has been able to escape her captivity, stalk, and kill all these men. *No, not just men. Corrupt members of the Brotherhood.*

The knowledge that the guard has been alone with her, training her to be ruthless, toughening up the sweet and soft girl she was and comforting her, makes me irrationally angry. I want to tear out of my house and go after him. I want to painfully slice every part of his body up, rip out his heart, and eat it. He's had what is mine all these years. He's changed her, taken my Snow, and made her a killer. A villain. A fucking monster seeking revenge.

Did he do that, or did the Brotherhood?

Abe and I had done a little digging. All of the founding families targeted so far were original members - right from the very beginning, when the world was taken over by the Brotherhood of the Sacrament. When the world fell at their feet with promises of a better world to rise. All of the men, in some way, deserved death. Is my little vigilante out here cleansing the world?

The memory of her holding that blade so confidently, before attacking me with it, has my cock twitching in my boxers. That was so fucking hot, how ruthless and cold she was. She was willing to hurt me, make me bleed, maybe even kill me. My cock starts to stiffen further with each thought.

Another memory soars into my mind. Dinah's mother holding the gun on herself, tears cascading down her weary and distressed face, with Gabriel's cold body lying in his casket in the background. The shock and fear on my Snow's face as she watched the last member of her family commit suicide. What was it Maria screamed at Dinah? A shudder runs down my body as the words enter my mind.

“Avenge me, daughter! Avenge all of those who cannot save themselves from this Order!”

FUCK! Her mother, with her final words, egged her on. Made her think that this was the rational next step, that she had to avenge all of them. To cleanse this world by death and destruction. She's going to keep killing. She will keep going after the high-ranking members of the Order, one by one, until they are all gone, or she's dead.

“Dinah.” The name leaves my numb lips as my heart gallops inside my chest with the need to find her.

“Dinah? What about the cunt?” Abraham questions with confusion.

“She's the ‘Unholy Ghost’.” My eyes glare into his, letting him see my sincerity and belief that Dinah is the killer. That she has been the one out there terrorizing the Order, bringing death to its founding members, and the one stalking the two of us.

Fuck. She could have killed either of us at any point. She could have murdered me in my very bed. *Why didn't she? Why all the cloak and dagger shit, where we are concerned?* Does

she hate us? Does she want to see us die at her hands? Does she think the two of us were somehow responsible for the death of her family members?

“You’re not serious? Atasi is the killer?” He leans towards me, his hand capturing my chin and pulling me closer. “She’s just a girl. A weak fucking mouse. You are wrong, Zeke. It can’t be her.”

“And yet it is. It’s her, Abe. Her and that fucking guard of hers. He has had years to train her, to groom her. To mold her into the killing machine that she is now. He somehow must have manipulated her to want to go after the members of the Brotherhood.”

Even as I say the words, I know that’s not right. Dinah was always impossible to manipulate, even when she was young. She’s always been strong-willed. If anyone is doing the manipulating, it’s most likely her. “She fought me off and wounded me out there. She could have killed me.”

I rip my chin from his grasp and tighten my hold around his wrist, squeezing tightly. “It’s her. She’s trying to bring down the Brotherhood. To fulfill her mother’s last request; that she seeks vengeance on all those who hurt her family. On the Brotherhood of the Sacrament.”

“Jesus fucking Christ, Zeke.” He pulls away from my grasp and rises to his feet. His shoulders hunch up, and the tension coursing through his body becomes apparent in every taut line of his figure. He begins pacing back and forth. His fingers

sweep down his face, and his hands ball into tight fists at his sides.

“What if you’re wrong?” He questions.

“I’m not. It’s her.” I release a deep sigh. I would love nothing more than to be wrong about this. The way all this information has now come together, piecing the puzzle together to make the larger picture clear, makes sense. The ‘Unholy Ghost’ is the little girl I grew up with. The one who would ride on my shoulders and clearly had a massive crush on me. The girl who has always been predetermined to be my wife. *My Snow*. She’s a killer. No, not just a killer, a serial killer.

“If it’s true, and not a figment of your fucked up concussed brain, the Order will kill her if they capture her. Fuck, they will do more than just kill Atasi. They will prolong her death and torture her, as a savage lesson to anyone else who thinks to come against them.” I stand before him, meeting his amber gaze. I see the warring of emotions cross his features. Features that I love on a man who is my whole world.

The room is silent as he looks at me. I can see the gears in his head spinning, as he opens and closes his mouth as if to say something, but then second-guesses himself. His jaw tenses into a hard, straight line, and determination fills his eyes. “We have to get to her first, Zeke. We have to protect Atasi. Gabriel would have wanted us to. He would never have allowed any of this shit to happen. She was his everything.”

His words are daggers stabbing into my heart and soul. He's right, even if I don't want to admit it. No, Gabriel would have never let any of this happen. Nor would he allow the Brotherhood to ever capture her, even after all she's done. FUCK! I made him a promise to always protect her with my very life. The life the little bitch is actively trying to take.

I gaze at Abe, the sole remaining member of our trio, the man for whom I'd sacrifice anything. He is the most important person left in my world, except for a dark-haired, blue-eyed enchantress. A promise binds me to her, a vow to shield her from the countless dangers this world presents. Can I keep my vow and also keep him safe?

"No more waiting; we leave now. No entourage with us, just you and me. We surprise them. If I'm right, and I know I am, she will have bruises and cuts all over her body, from where I got in some good shots. She wouldn't be able to hide them." I grimace at the thought of the hits she took from my fists and blade.

"What about the guard?" Abe asks, already moving to grab clothes from my closet and throwing them at me.

"We fucking kill him," I grunt as I slip my pants up my pained legs. As I shift from one foot to another, the pulsing and burning from my calf reminds me of how talented my Snow is now with a blade. *Psycho bitch, I'm going to enjoy running my own knife down her pretty skin in payback.*

"Zeke, fuck. He's kept her safe. She's killed over twenty men." I get what he's saying without actually having to utter

the words. This bastard taught her what she knows. He's had six years of keeping her safe from the Order. He's out there helping her kill Brotherhood members in some deranged need to avenge her family. He has to have feelings for her and her for him. Maybe he doesn't deserve to die. *She would never let me kill him.* Anger flows through me once again.

"I don't give a fuck, she's mine. She's always been fucking mine. The only ones who will protect her from the Brotherhood are us." I drag my shirt over my head and release a harsh groan at the pain in my back from where Snow stabbed me.

Once we get to her, I am going to spank that perky fucking ass of hers and make it red like a goddamn tomato, for all the damage she has caused to my body. I might even let her enjoy it a bit before I choke her out with my cock down her vicious little throat, while she glares up at me with those stunning eyes.

"Ours, Zeke. She's fucking ours. You belong to me, and so does she." He storms out of my bedroom door without a look back.

Well then, fuck, I guess we are going to get our Dinah back. Whether she wants us to or not. The image of Gabriel enters my mind as I move towards the door. *Don't worry, brother; I will keep my promise and keep her safe. Even if the threat to her is her own self.*



Chapter 18



Dinah

Fuck, my back is killing me from where that son of a bitch pummelled me. The only thing that helps stave off the pain is the reminder of how many times I sliced him, and all the damage that I did to him. *You didn't kill him, though. In fact, you stopped Sammy from pushing him off the cliff,* my mind questions my actions.

My eyes dart to a furious Sammy in the seat next to me. He's driving through the back roads and wooded areas back to the place we call home. The place where I am as much a captive as he is, or at least that's what the Brotherhood likes to think.

"Stop fucking acting like a little bitch, Sammy," I yell as I push the seat back and lift my feet to the dashboard, trying to get more comfortable and straining to get a deep breath in through my lungs. *Fuck, Zeke got me good. Who knew the ass was such a good fighter?*

Sammy slams on the brakes, and the car shrieks loudly. And I almost end up with one of my booted feet going through the front window. "Are you fucking serious right now, Dinah!" He roars as he slams his fists repeatedly on the steering wheel with unsuppressed aggravation.

Honestly, I am starting to fear for the safety and stability of the stolen vehicle we are traveling in. I have never seen

Sammy so angry with me in our six years together. His beautiful skin is blotchy with red spots, his nostrils are flaring, and his hair is a disheveled mess, having fallen out of his hair tie during the struggle with Zeke. When he turns his dark blues towards me, they are lit from within with a raging inferno of blue fire. *Ah, shit, here we go.*

“He could have fucking killed you, Dinah! If I had been a moment slower, he would have. You’re fucking covered in blooming bruises already, and that cut is still bleeding.” He reaches out and grabs a fistful of my hair, forcing me to continue to hold his gaze. “How could you have been so fucking irresponsible? Why did you follow him to the cliffs?”

His anger is valid; I was irresponsible. I thought I could take Zeke, and I probably could have, had I not hesitated with my blades. I’m still furious with myself for my hesitation. Sammy is right; Zeke could have killed me. I could see it in his eyes that he wanted to.

It was never the plan to follow Zeke outside of the house. We went there to mess with both Abraham and Zeke a little more. The goal was to make them feel vulnerable in their space, maybe set fire to more of their shit. To leave another reminder that they were weak, sitting ducks, just waiting for the ‘*Ghost*’ to take them out. Was it immature? *Sure, but a girl has to get her rocks off where she can in this miserable world.*

When I saw Zeke start an argument with Abe and then storm off outside, I couldn’t help myself. I felt this intense need to follow him. To see where he went and what he did. That’s how

I ended up tracking him to the cliffs and lying in wait for him. A dark predator hunting her prey. I just never anticipated the prey would fight back the way he did.

Zeke looked so sad and conflicted out there, like the weight of the world was on his shoulders. For a brief moment, I witnessed the boy I used to know, and have a crush on, before me instead of the hardened man he has become—the monster who hides behind pretty tattoos and stunning green eyes.

Then, the memory of my brother lying in his casket invaded my mind, bringing with it a cold chill. The way that both those fuckers disrespected him at his funeral by showing up inebriated. How they treated me with no compassion or respect after all our years together as children.

They were supposed to have been his closest friends. His support system, his allies. He loved them. How could they have behaved that way? The thoughts that plague me incessantly on whether they were responsible for his death began to whisper to me like slithering, vicious tongues in my ears. The same rage that invaded me made me blind to my surroundings. The blade flew from my hand before I even had time to think or second-guess my actions.

After that, it was a fight between the two of us, each one trying actively to maim the other. Did I lose a sense of myself, and become more animal and predator than human out there? *I guess I did.* His scent surrounded me, along with the smell of the ocean below us and the rich aroma of the pine trees above

us. The night sky called to me, asking me to shed his blood in honor of my fallen brother and mother.

Brotherhood blood. Traitor blood. A monster's blood.

Each slice from my blade, each kick from my feet, and each punch from my fists made me feel alive. Adrenaline sped through my body, giving it a euphoric feeling similar to the one I receive when I'm slicing up the throats of the Founding Fathers. Every drop of Zeke's blood that appeared before me made me crave to see more.

When Zeke got the upper hand, I almost laughed at my own stupidity. Did I really believe taking him and Abe on would be that easy? Did I honestly think he was weak like those other preening, useless sons of the Founding Fathers? With my own two eyes, I had seen the violence and mayhem he was capable of. Zeke is as much a killer as I am. He enjoys the feeling of taking a life, just like I do.

His monster calls to my own in a sweet serenade of violence. The darkness in both of us is swirling and all-consuming, changing who we once were, who we were meant to be and rebirthing us into these depraved and unhinged beings we now are.

As he stared down at me, those emerald eyes sparkling with moonlight and his face filled with rage, I had never seen a more beautiful sight. Not even the sight of ruby blood pouring down from my victims could compete with the man trying to kill me, while I struggled to stay alive. A part of me wanted

him to complete his task, just to see if he would. I wanted to see how far the monster within him could be pushed.

Desire raced through my body in that perverse moment. At what could have been my final instance on this earth. Causing my pussy to be soaking wet and my core to clench painfully at the thought that he wouldn't stop. His would be the last face I saw before I joined my brother and mother in the afterlife.

Just when I thought that was my last moment, it all changed in the blink of an eye, with Sammy tackling him and the both of them fighting each other. When Sammy got the upper hand and choked Zeke out, a sense of relief and regret filled me simultaneously.

I know, I know. I'm one messed up bitch. Who goes around craving not only the death of others but their own? Apparently, this messed up girl right here.

I watched as Sammy dragged an unconscious Zeke to the cliff's edge, and prepared to roll him off it. My heart stuttered painfully in my chest at the thought of never seeing Zeke again. In that moment, I couldn't let it end that way. I couldn't let Sammy take Zeke away from me. I grabbed onto Sammy and yanked him as hard as I could. He released his hold on Zeke, allowing him to hit the hard dirt with a sickening thud.

"What the fuck are you doing, Dinah?" His dark blue eyes radiated confusion through the slits in the mask he wore. It was sitting haphazardly on his face after the struggle, and I longed to see his expression below it. To see the man who was

my everything for all these years. The man who would set the world on fire for me, and watch it burn with no remorse.

I reached up and pushed the mask upwards until all of his features were revealed to me. His mouth was in an angry scowl, his skin flushed with sweat from the fight with Zeke, and his scar that I love on display, making him perfectly imperfect.

“Don’t,” I pleaded, lifting my own mask so he could clearly see my expression.

“This is insane, Nightstar! He would have fucking killed you!”

“I know. Don’t, Sammy. Please.” I grabbed the fabric of his thick black hoodie across his chest and pulled him forward a step and then another. He hesitated momentarily, the fury of the moment still riding him. Then he moved with me further into the treeline. With one last look over my shoulder, I watched Zeke’s still form becoming more distant.

“I was careless, Sammy. I wanted to see what he would do after that fight with Abe. I...I’m not even really...sure why I followed him out to the cliffs. I wasn’t going to make my presence known; just stalk him.” I shrug, pulling back from his tight grasp on my hair.

“What the fuck changed then?” He releases me and turns in his seat until his body completely faces me with just the gear shift between us. I can smell his rich scent, a mixture of mint, sage, and sweat tantalizing my nostrils. The smell alone makes me want him, but the look of barely restrained fury makes me need him.

He must sense where my thoughts are heading because the corner of his mouth lifts in a mocking smirk. He knows that the violence turns me on, that it does dark and depraved things to me. He benefits more often than not from that depravity. I squirm in my leather seat, the wetness in my panties coating my already swollen pussy lips and making my thighs wet.

“No, Dinah. The time for me to fill that naughty cunt is not now. I will not fucking reward you for almost getting yourself killed.”

I pout and roll my eyes at him. “What changed, Nightstar?” His playful expression melts off his face, and we are right back to the exasperated look.

“Gabriel.” A huge sigh leaves my lips, making my chest and back ache as I turn away from him and stare out the front windshield. “I remembered the way they behaved at the funeral. That they might have been responsible for his death. One moment, I was holding the blade, and the next, it was flying through the air at his head.”

Admitting my loss of control to Sammy is a hard pill to swallow. I pride myself on always controlling myself in my hunting and killing. I never let the rage consume me entirely. Never forget my end goal: to rid the world of the Brotherhood.

His hand reaches out, smooths over my tangled hair, and then his fingers grace my cheek. “You’re only human, Dinah. A little psychotic, very much damaged, but still human.”

My eyes close at the feel of his soft touch that brings me immediate comfort; this man is my everything. My whole

world now that I have no other family left. How could I have been so reckless and stupid?

I exposed myself to danger. I exposed him to risk. Letting Zeke live is perilous. He now knows there are two of us out here hunting the Brotherhood, and I'm sure if the bastard has awakened from the beating we gave him, he has figured out that I am a woman.

How long before he puts all the pieces together? How long before he realizes that the girl who used to be his 'Snow' tried to murder him tonight?

"They will be coming for us now, Sammy. Zeke is a lot of things, but he isn't stupid."

He diverts his gaze from me, and within his eyes, I see an abyss of shadows that darkens the midnight hue until it almost appears black. I observe him clutching the steering wheel with a grip so unyielding that his knuckles whiten, and the leather protests with creaks beneath his fingers.

"I know, Dinah," he murmurs, voice edged with intensity. "I only pray that when the moment arrives, you'll make the choice to end him or allow me to. You're the only thing that truly matters to me. I refuse to lose you."





The Liar

Abe

As we drive along the deserted highway towards the house Dinah has been kept captive at for the last few years, all of the information I know about the ‘*Unholy Ghost*’ rolls around in my mind. There has never been any evidence of break-ins. The Brotherhood has never been able to figure out how the *Ghost* gets so close to his victims.

No, not his; the *Ghost* is a her. *My Atasi*. The little blue-eyed hellion with the big attitude. The one who used to have me wrapped around her little finger when we were younger. My little blue flower is now a killer. One who has taken many men’s lives, and has threatened both Zeke and me.

How was she getting in and out undetected? Could she have been using the fact that she was a woman to her advantage all this time? No one would have seen her as a threat. As a Sacred Daughter, she could have approached any of these houses without raising much of an eyebrow, especially if she was accompanied correctly. Would they have just let her walk right in? Not realizing that they were letting in their own killer? *Fuck.*

I glance over at Zeke from the corner of my eye and watch as he continues to grit his teeth. His jaw is tight, and his face is pale and sweating. The idiot for sure has a concussion, and the driving, and bright morning sunlight coming over the horizon,

isn't doing him any favors. We should have waited a few days for him to recover before going after her.

“Zeke, man, we should turn back. You're looking a little green.” I take my eyes off the road and catch the angry scowl he sends my way.

“We can't. We have to go after her now. They are going to run, Abe. She's not dumb, and neither is that guard. They have to know that I would figure it out if I survived. That I would realize that the '*Ghost*' was a woman. That I would recognize Snow's distinctive eyes.”

Shit, I know in my gut he's right. I refuse to admit it out loud, though. Nope, the fucker already has the fact that he unraveled who the '*Unholy Ghost*' is over my head. I refuse to give him any more to gloat over. “Where the fuck are they going to run to? The minute she goes missing, the Brotherhood will be looking for them. She's a valuable Sacred Daughter.”

“Underground, maybe? I suspect they must be getting help from the rebels. For all we know, they are part of the rebellion.” I watch as he rubs at his head and shifts uncomfortably in his seat. My little Atasi got him good with her blade. A smirk almost graces my face before I remember how Zeke looked, lying on the ground, bleeding near the cliff's edge.

What would I have done if I found him dead? Would I have been able to survive losing him too? When I lost Gabriel, a massive part of my heart and sanity went with him. What if I

lost the only person still keeping me grounded to this world?
What if Atasi had taken Zeke from me?

Would I be able to continue living? Would I have thrown myself off that cliff to join Zeke and Gabriel in the next life? What about Dinah? Would I have left her here, despite my promises to Gabriel to keep her safe? So many questions are circling in my mind simultaneously, that the three-hour drive to Dinah's seems to pass in the blink of an eye.

I look over at Zeke and see that, at some point, the fucker has fallen asleep. His head is pressed against the window, and a look of pain is clearly etched across his features. He's in no shape to do this right now, but there is no way he will back down. He's right, of course, Dinah and that cunt guard will run. They would be stupid not to. It's just a matter of time.

I'm not even sure they are still going to be here. They've had a few hours head start on us. I'm not even sure how long Zeke was lying there in a pool of his own blood before I found him. Then he was out for two hours as the doctor tended to his wounds. What are we going to do if she's not here?

I pull to the side of the road a mile down from Dinah's. There's nothing around here but thick trees. No other house in sight for the last couple of miles. This must be how they are coming and going without detection. There's no one around to keep track of them.

A thought enters my mind. What about the tracker every Sacred Daughter and Sacred Wife has implanted? The Brotherhood keeps track of all its valuable women. How did

they circumvent the Order's system? Maybe Zeke is right, and they are getting help from the rebels. I've heard of a few Sacred Daughters being able to run off without being tracked, and escaping their fate.

However they were doing it no longer matters. All that matters now is that we know it's Dinah, and we have to somehow keep that psycho bitch safe. Not only from the Order but perhaps safe from herself. What if she won't stop trying to kill members of the Brotherhood? What if she really is insane?

"Fuck, this shit sucks ass," I mumble as I slowly shake Zeke awake. "Morning, sunshine. We're down the road from where Dinah and that asshole are staying. Time to rise and shine, motherfucker."

"No offense, cunt, but I wouldn't fuck your mom if she was the last hole on this godforsaken planet. She's had more cock in her than a twenty-first-century porn star." He opens his bleary green eyes and grins at me.

"Ya, well, your mom's notches aren't any better." He's right, though. Thanks to my father's proclivities for sharing her with other male members of the Brotherhood, and even forcing her to have sexual relations with some of the other wives, my mom is no saint and has a notch count up there with ours. A fact that he isn't aware that I know about. My father, who gives me constant sermons about my sins, is a bloody hypocrite.

Is that what would happen to Dinah once she was forced into marriage? Would everyone get a taste of my little Atasi?

Anger blisters across my skin at the thought of anyone besides Zeke and me touching her, fucking her.

Atasi, who always appeared to share an unspoken bond with Zeke, even in our childhood. She used to trail after us with stars in her eyes, demanding to be included and not left behind alone. The little girl with the eyes too large for her face, and the fierce determination to wrap us around her little finger. I found her innocent crush on him utterly adorable and endearing. After all, I harbored a few crushes of my own, not only on Zeke but on her as well, if I were to be truthful.

She belongs to us. She has always belonged to us, even then; my little blue flower and Zeke's precious Snow. I would kill any man who tried to use and abuse her now, anyone who intended her harm, without the slightest reservation.

Have you forgotten the guy helping her commit mass murder? Pretty sure she belongs to him, too! The thought cackles through my mind.

I'm going to murder him slowly. Ensuring that every part of him that has touched my little blue flower gets cut off with my sharp blade, then I'm going to bathe her in his warm red blood. That way, she has a reminder of the consequences of someone else touching her.

My dick gets painfully hard inside my pants at the image of Dinah covered in blood from the top of her dark head to the soles of her pretty feet. The only thing visible through all that blood will be her beautiful blue-gray eyes. Eyes that have

haunted me for months, and made me crave something I didn't think I could have.

“Fucker, I'm the one who just woke up; why is your cock trying to break through your zipper?” Zeke questions with laughter as his hand approaches my pants-clad erection, the one begging to be unleashed from its confinement and buried in a warm, tight hole.

He grips my hardening cock, squeezing it in its encasement until it's almost painful. I thrust into his hold, loving the tight grip and the friction against my weeping tip. The feel of his fingers pulling down my zipper has all the breath leaving my lungs and my eyes meeting his.

“What are you doing, Zeke?” I question with a deep groan as he releases me from my pants and strokes me firmly, making my balls ache with the cum that wants to shoot desperately out of my rigid length.

He continues to stroke me, making my eyes want to cross and my breath hitch in my throat. His warm, strong palm caresses my length, rubbing against all my ridges and the thick throbbing vein on the underside of my cock. More pearls of thick cum seep from my slit, coating his fingers as he speeds up his motion.

“It looks like you need a little release there, buddy.” The laughter in his voice has a grin crossing my face.

“There is nothing little about me, and you fucking know it.” I barely get the words out of my lips before Zeke leans

forward and swipes his tongue across my weeping tip, lashing my slit and savoring my taste. “Fuck, Zeke.”

My hand digs into the back of his head, barely remembering that this idiot probably has a concussion, and I can't be rough with him. I can't grab fistfuls of his hair and force him to take my dick down his tight throat, until he can't breathe from my cock clogging his airway.

He continues to run his warm, wet tongue down and up my hard length, sucking on my throbbing crown and then taking me deeper into his throat, until he makes a satisfying gagging noise before pulling back up.

“Nope, you started this, now you need to finish it, fucker. Swallow me, Zeke. Swallow me down until I fill that tight throat and my balls are pressed up against your chin.”

I thrust hard into his throat while pushing his head down further on my length. He chokes again but doesn't struggle, and I feel his throat trying to relax against my tip as I start a punishing rhythm of fucking his face. The sounds of my grunts and his gagging and slurping sounds are loud in the small, confined space of the car. I shift my large body so he can take more of me, and his fingers can slip inside my pants and caress my aching balls.

He pulls his mouth off of my cock with a moan and sucks one of my balls between his lips, lashing it with his tongue as his hand continues to stroke me. I'm so close to cumming that I can feel a sizzling heat rising up my back and spreading through my limbs. The hair on the back of my neck and arms

stands on end as his mouth encases my throbbing dick, and my balls tighten. The first couple of spurts release from my tip, coating the inside of his mouth, but I need more. I need to cum down his tight throat. I want to feel myself filling him up, choking him with my goodness.

I grab on forcefully to the back of his neck and push him down on my cock, holding the back of his head until I am fully down his spasming throat, and he's swallowing me to the root. "That's my good, dirty whore. You love the way my cock fills your throat, don't you, baby? You love swallowing every delicious drop."

He moans at my words, his hands bracing on my thick, hard thighs as I continue to fuck and cum down his tight throat without mercy. "What a hungry cock whore you are, Zeke. You never get enough of my big dick, do you, buddy?"

Fuck, he feels so good swallowing my cock. Sucking it in deep pulls until he milks every last creamy drop from inside of me. He pops off my cock, and I release my hold on the back of his head. His tongue licks me from my thick root to my engorged head, sucking up any wayward drops that may have escaped. *Jesus, that feels so good.*

Once he's done, he pulls back and sits upright in his seat, his emerald eyes sparkling with mischief. "Ready to go get our Dinah? Maybe we can force her to give you round two?" His silly grin, and how he's wagging his eyebrows at me, has a chuckle leaving my lips.

I tuck my semi-hard dick back inside of my pants. The thought of Dinah's mouth doing what Zeke's just did, makes my dick refuse to go down. Fuck, if she gives head anywhere near as well as Zeke does, it will be worth it to save her from the Brotherhood.

“Let's go save our murderous princess, shall we?”

I put the car back in gear and start moving towards the house that has been her confined home all these years. Are we saving the princess or damning her further? Will she try to kill us or force us to kill her?

Only one way to find out.





Sammy

Multiple alarms start blaring in the house, signaling that someone is driving less than a mile away from us. I immediately race down to the computers and large screens I have set up in the hidden basement of our house to check them out. My control station is lighting up with alarms and blaring lights, like one of those old *Fourth of July* celebrations the world used to have.

Anxiety and anger war within me, one trying to overpower the other without success. The need to keep Dinah safe from her own actions is my top priority, and I refuse to fail. No one is taking her from me. I'll murder them all with my bare hands if I have to. I'll set fire to this whole fucking planet if they try.

Dinah is upstairs strapping weapons to herself, like she's ready to take on the whole of the Brotherhood army. The expression on her face, before I left her to run down here, tells me she is preparing herself to die in this fight. I can't bear the thought of that being our reality. I won't allow it even to be a possibility. We should have never returned here. I should have followed through with my instincts and common fucking sense, knocked her ass unconscious, and taken her to hide amongst the rebels.

Instead, what did I do? I fuckin' listened to her pleading to come back here and grab the last mementos of her family, the

only photographs and artifacts she has left of the life she has to leave behind. I curse my weak heart where she is concerned. There is only one person in this world who can get me to bend to their will, and she's upstairs getting ready to wage war.

Sweat pours down my back and makes my shirt cling to me as I stare at the image of the large, black, menacing SUV making its way closer to the house. It's not traveling at a rapid speed, and there seems to be only one vehicle, which causes me immediate unease. If I can't see them coming, how am I supposed to protect us? Where the fuck are the others? Are they circling around, trying to corner us like rats in a hole?

I won't let them harm her. I'll kill every one of them and end our lives, too, before I allow them to take my Nightstar, and make her life even more miserable. No, she will never suffer the fate that befell her mother. No one gets to have my Nightstar but me.

I quickly type on the keyboard, setting up the triggers for the defense system I have installed around our home. These fuckers are in for a surprise if they think they can just roll up in here and take us on.

The SUV rolls by one of the cameras I have set up hidden in a large tree, and I get a flash image of the inside of the vehicle through the windshield. It's those two idiots, Abraham and Ezekiel. Fucking figures those two assholes would come and hunt my Nightstar. I guess the promises that they made to her brother died with him.

She did just try to kill one of them. Actually...she's now tried to kill both of them. My mind reminds me.

I've known for months about what Gabriel made them promise him before he died. They would protect Dinah, no matter what, with their very lives, and keep her safe from the Brotherhood. It's the only reason they're still alive, and I haven't gone behind Dinah's back and killed them. I've been watching them both for years, and have had my own cameras and spies embedded in their homes, long before my Dinah even came up with this crazy plan to exterminate the Brotherhood.

Did I ever tell her I was watching her brother and his friends? *No. No, I fucking didn't.* It was for selfish reasons that I did it. After that first year together, I knew I could never part from her, at least not willingly. I started watching them more intently as the years drew closer to her age of majority, and the time they would claim her. Dread was running through me continuously, that I would lose her. That she would become some other man's property. *A Sacred Wife.* Untouchable and unreachable to the likes of someone like me.

To my surprise, her brother was adamantly opposed to her becoming a Sacred Wife. Not only contrary to the thought of it, but he made Zeke Rothesay promise to leave her in secluded confinement rather than claim her on her eighteenth birthday, despite Ezekiel's father's forceful demands that he go retrieve her.

Did I know what was happening between the three of them, Ezekiel, Abraham, and Gabriel, all these years? *Yeah, I knew.* I just didn't care as long as they left my Nightstar alone. Did I ever imagine we would be on the run now and hunted by those two fuckers? *Not exactly.*

I knew that once we went down this dark path of murder, mayhem, and destruction, the Brotherhood would come after us. They would have no choice with how many men we have killed. Hence, all the defense systems I added to the property without the Brotherhood's knowledge.

Do I believe that we can survive against all the odds stacked against us?

Odds mean nothing when you are talking about Dinah Camrose. She is the definition behind '*beating the odds*'. Each and every time I underestimate her, I'm reminded not to. She makes her own rules, and doesn't ever willingly play by the rules of others. No, my Nightstar is exactly that; a bright star blazing in the night sky, out of reach from mere mortals.

Another alarm sounds as they approach the black wrought iron gates that will lead them up our long driveway, and to the old Victorian house we call home. The minute they pass the gates, I engage the lock system that has the gates shutting firmly behind them with a bang. I hit the command on the keyboard that makes the gates a high-voltage wire. If they think they are leaving here alive, they are wrong. I'm going to make sure of it. They signed their death certificates when they decided to come after her.

The SUV slams on the brakes, and both of them storm out of its doors and approach the firmly shut gates. Abraham reaches out for one of the gate sides, and before Ezekiel can stop him, he receives a zap that has him flying backward and landing on his ass. *Take that, stupid motherfucker!*

I can't hear them, but the expressions on their faces are priceless, and fill me with unrepentant joy. I hit a few more buttons, and as Ezekiel is dragging Abraham back towards their vehicle, sprinkler heads pop out of the ground and douse the sides of the SUV with a clear liquid. The confusion on their faces is fantastic until they get a whiff of what I just unleashed.

Not water, gasoline. I watch them scramble away as fast as they can from the SUV when I open fire on it from the hidden electronic arsenal I have set up. It explodes in a massive twist of metal, glass, and fire all around them. It's a beautiful sight. The only thing that would have made it better was if those two had gotten back inside it first.

"What the fuck, Sammy! Are bombs going off in the yard?" Dinah screams as she runs down the stairs in the hidden wall panel.

Her body is strapped with so many weapons that there isn't an inch of her that isn't deadly. She is stunning with her violent energy, and rippling with the need to maim others. I don't want to take my eyes off her. There is no part of Dinah that I don't worship, but seeing her like this causes my heart and cock both to swell. Pride fills me at the vision of the

warrior queen before me. The one prepared to take on our enemies.

She doesn't wait for my response as she leans over me and stares at the various screens, getting a glimpse of the mayhem I have already triggered. I watch her face intently, and her expression wavers when she sees the image of Ezekiel and Abraham, still trying to distance themselves from the fire. Fear crosses her gorgeous features, making her eyes widen, and her red, pouty lips seal in a straight, firm line.

Is she afraid for our lives? That they have come after us, or is she afraid for them? I want to ask her the questions but, at the same time, dread the answers.

“Are they hurt?” She questions without ever taking her eyes off the screen. Her voice is tentative and not filled with her usual bravado.

“Not more than how you left them. At least not yet.”

“How many more men are with them?” She finally turns in my direction, and I watch as she bites down on her plump bottom lip. Her stunning gray-blue eyes meet mine, and I see the moment she has decided something in her mind. The question is, what has she decided? Will she allow me to murder them, or is she planning on saving them?

“From what I can see at the moment, it's just them. That doesn't mean the Brotherhood isn't coming or waiting on orders from them.”

“Do you think it’s possible that they didn’t alert them? That it’s just the two of them?” She questions with concern visible across her features. My body tenses, my shoulders locking tight as anger rises within me. A trickle of sweat prompted by fear and my uncertainty trickles down my back.

Is she hoping that my answer is yes? Does she want to believe that those two bastards still care about her? I’m not convinced that they care about anything except themselves. I’ve watched them since we returned to our home. They didn’t hesitate for a moment in coming after her. Do they mean her harm? I’m unsure, but won’t risk my Nightstar to find out. I’ll murder them both and relieve her of one more burden; *Brotherhood entitled scum.*

“Anything is possible, Nightstar,” I force the words through my clenched teeth, even though they taste like ash in my mouth. “Regardless, they have come for you, and I won’t let them take you. They are dead men walking.”

I turn back to the screen and watch as Abraham and Ezekiel stumble behind two large trees, trying to hide themselves from the main driveway area. It won’t help them. I have every square foot of the grounds visible from my cameras, and traps laid everywhere that I can activate at the press of a button. They have entered the lion’s den now, and I have no intention of letting them walk back out of it.

“We need to get you out of here, Dinah, and to the safe house.” I press a few buttons and watch the two maniacs run out of their hiding spots, as I unleash a hail of bullets from

above. They end up separating from each other and trying to hide. A smug grin crosses my lips at their actions. They are almost making it too easy for me. The thrill of the chase floods my body with more adrenaline, and makes me eager to go out there and slice their throats.

“No! I’m not leaving you here. I’m not running, Sammy. We are stronger than they know. I’m not running scared. I’m prepared to fight. To fight them for us.”

I stare at her fierce expression. It’s the same one she wears when she is out killing members of the Brotherhood. The one that makes a cold chill race down my body. She is ready to unleash the monster she keeps under lock and key. The one with no mercy, who lives off the pain and bloodshed of others. The beast I crave to fuck covered in our enemy’s blood.

“Then it’s time to hunt, Dinah.” I move back from the desk and check my weapons, ensuring my blades are firmly strapped to my body, and I have extra clips for my two guns. I see her moment of hesitation, and it causes my fists to tighten. I reach out and wrap my hand firmly across her throat, dragging her to me.

When her chest meets mine, she’s forced to look at me while I squeeze her neck in warning, making her breath hitch in her throat. The sound makes my cock twitch in my pants, demanding I release him from his confinement. “You are mine. They will try to take you from me, even try to kill you if they can. I’ll never allow that to happen. The only person who

gets to hurt you, my little psychotic Nightstar, is me. Do you understand me?”

I wait for her to process my words and the threats behind them. My grip tightens until her beautiful face starts to go a lovely shade of pink. How I wish I had time to throw her over my desk and bury my hard length into her. I would love nothing more than to pound into her swollen, tight pussy. Watch her perky tits bounce as I slam into her repeatedly like an animal, until she creams my cock before I fill her with my thick cum. I would leave every inch of her pale skin marked by my teeth and fingers, as a warning to others that she is mine. I am her master, the owner of her heart and soul; every part of her belongs to me.

She must get an inkling of my dark and depraved thoughts. Her eyes get more prominent, dilating as her cheeks flush, and her pouty lips part as her tongue peeks out to swipe across them. *Temptation*, that is what she is, standing before me.

“Sa...mmy...” she gasps.

I run my hand over the arsenal strapped to her front, my hand grabbing the full globe of her breast and squeezing. “This is mine.” I release her breast and move my hand down her stomach to her pant-clad pussy, stroking her over the material before forcing her to widen her legs and grabbing her crotch without mercy. “This pussy is mine. You are *my* dirty little slut, not theirs. Don’t you fucking forget it, Dinah.”

I release my hold on her neck and her pussy, and she stumbles backward a few steps, having to reach out to the wall

to brace herself. “Let’s go; we have princes of the Brotherhood to send to meet their Lord and Saviour.”

I don’t stop to see if she follows me out the door. Doubt is already niggling at the back of my mind on whether she will be able to kill them. She’s ruthless with others, but those two pull on the heartstrings of the girl she used to be. The one I wish she would leave dead in the past. That girl has no place in the future I have planned for us.

One thing is for sure. I won’t be fucking hesitating. If the opportunity to take them out presents itself, I’m going to murder both of them and send them off to hell. *Nightstar is mine.*



Chapter 21



The Sinner

Dinah

I watch as Sammy storms from the room after his caveman display of ownership of my body. Do I doubt for one second that he meant every word he uttered? *No*. Sammy is always direct. He never beats around the bush or gives me words of grandeur.

A shiver runs down my spine at the wrath that's wrapped around him like a deceitful and manipulative lover. He intends to kill both of those idiots. He won't stop until their souls have been delivered to hell, and their last entitled and traitorous breaths leave their bodies.

Will I stop him? I have no answer to that question. Confusion wars within me, causing further anxiety to rise. Anxiety that I loathe. That makes me believe that I am once again that weak young girl under the malignant thumb of powerful men. The one who I thought I buried deep under all the blood I have shed. *There can be strength in weakness*; my mind pleads with me.

Why are they here? Is it to kill me or for another reason? They have to have figured it all out by now. They must know that I'm the killer that they seek. Why come alone? Why not bring their army? My body trembles from all the emotions forcing their way past my defenses. Defenses that I've spent years building, so no one could ever hurt me again. No one is

getting the chance now, either. *Fuck them. Fuck Ezekiel Rothesay and Abraham Mercier and their toxic Brotherhood.*

Do they really think that just the two of them would be enough to subdue me? *Pfft, of course they do. They believe that they are invincible.* Let's see how invincible they are when I gut them like expensive fish, and watch them bleed out without mercy.

I stare at the various screens on the wall before me, the ones showing me what is happening outside of my Brotherhood-mandated prison in real-time. I can see Abe hiding in a thick crop of bushes about a hundred meters from the main gate. He's disheveled and bleeding from a cut on his forehead that he must have sustained in the blast. The blood runs down the bridge of his nose, over his high stubbled cheekbone, and to the corner of his mouth before dripping off his chiseled chin.

For a moment, I long to run my tongue along the length of his face, licking up that warm, red blood and tasting his pain, like the deranged psychopath that I am. Its vibrant color calls to my monster, tempting her to run free. Promising that he will taste delicious and that there's yet more blood to spill.

His menacing and deadly look takes my breath away, and makes my core clench painfully. I want him, even though I know I shouldn't. Even though he's dangerous. *Who am I kidding? Especially because he's dangerous.*

He was always handsome as a boy; now, as a man with his rugged features defined, he's stunning to behold. There has always been something that captivated me about Abraham.

While Zeke was the primary focus of my childhood infatuation, Abe was a close second. He called to a different facet of my being, resonating with the darkness lurking just under the surface.

Now, that darkness has surged to the forefront, adamant in its refusal to be denied or concealed anymore. The facet of him that once beckoned to me during our youth is now a tempting siren call, insistent and impossible to ignore.

I want to drag his heavy body to the ground, pull out his giant cock, and sheath myself on its length, all while my hands tighten around his thick throat and deprive him of air, while I ride him into the fucking dirt. Like an animal. Like the fucking monsters that we both are. These thoughts bring guilt with them. The desire for a man other than my Sammy, the one who is, even now, heading out there to defend me against monsters who would seek to cage me.

Abe's face is flushed a beautiful crimson, his wide-set, sharp, tawny eyes large and cautiously surveying the world around him. His mouth is rocking a deep scowl like somehow the fucker is offended that we have attacked him, when he came here to hurt us. He looks like the unrepentant killer that I know he is. *We have so much in common, he and I. Really, all of us.*

None of us seem to shy away from violence and bloodshed. *Killers*. That is what we all are. That is what this world has made us. The reason they kill isn't the same as mine or even Sammy's, but the underlying desire for destruction and death

is indistinguishable. There is something damaged in each of us. Something that craves the pain of others. That takes depraved satisfaction in taking a life.

Monsters.

Will I be able to murder both of them?

I would like to immediately reassure myself that I will, but the answer doesn't readily come to the surface. I once thought I could slit their throats and not lose a second of sleep. That they were no different from anyone else I have hunted and killed so far. Men who think they are at the top of the food chain. They take what they want without a thought to the consequences. *Thieves of freedom.*

The truth is that they *are* different from those I have hunted. I have to force myself to begrudgingly admit that, regardless of the internal anger that the knowledge brings. They've always been different, and I've been avoiding the truth all along. There is a reason I didn't start with them when I began killing off members of the Brotherhood.

Memories of a past long gone have always plagued me. Those same memories make me weak when I need to be strong. My purpose now is to survive and to avenge my brother and mother. To see the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament burn to ashes at my feet.

They killed your brother. Gabriel is gone because of them. The thought blares through my brain, much like the alarms that are still going off. Fire lights me up inside, cracking my tight hold on my leashed rage. The one that begs to be let

loose from the tight confines I keep on it. Let me out, it demands in vicious screams.

Those two fuckers are breathing while my poor brother lies six feet underground, being consumed by insects. My brother trusted them to have his back. He thought they were his brothers, his best friends, and in the end, they either didn't protect him or they killed him themselves. *They took his life one way or another.* I need to remember that whenever I have a moment of weakness where they are concerned.

Sins.

Both of them have sins that require retribution. Consequences must be paid in blood. As much as I want to remember them as the boys I once knew. Those boys are long gone, and in their place are demoralizing, bloodthirsty demons. It's time they met their match and were put down.

With one last look at the screens, I see Sammy making his way effortlessly out of the house and toward Ezekiel's location. He's hunting him through the thick foliage surrounding the property, careful not to set off his own traps. I watch as Ezekiel heads towards the old groundskeeper's shed on the side of the property. He's as good as dead if Sammy gets him. Sammy won't hesitate to end the threat he perceives to my life, nor should I.

It's time to let loose my monster and hunt these men of the Brotherhood. The men who did nothing to stop the further destruction of the Camrose family, and have been having their fill of their privileged life as the next reigning generation of

the Brotherhood. That life ends now. They will be greeting the devil before brunch.

I make my way out of the hidden underground tunnels that run below this property. The stupid Brotherhood never realized how close we were to the old abandoned silver mines. It took Sammy no time to figure out their underground labyrinth, and extend it right to the house, creating a failsafe for us. This is how we have been coming and going undetected for years, right under the Brotherhood's overconfident noses.

As I pass the room where we hide most of our arsenal, I step inside and grab the high-powered crossbow hanging on the wall, and some of my carbon arrows. This weapon is used to take down large animals when Sammy and I hunt game. It will come in handy hunting Abraham Mercier. Right now, he's one of the largest feral animals in my woods.

I strap the arrow pack to my side, sling the crossbow over my shoulder, sprint back down the tunnel, and head towards the hidden exit further down from the gate. It's hidden inside an old tree that Sammy hollowed out years ago, giving us an escape route if the Order ever came for me. There are two more exits, just like it, hidden up to a mile from the house. Sammy never leaves anything up to fate if he can avoid it.

I make the sprint in just a few short minutes, climb up the trim ladder strapped to the wall, and through the trap door. Once I'm inside of the hollowed-out tree, I pause. I drag air through my lungs, allowing my breathing to slow down, so

that I don't give myself away once I step out of the safety of the tree. *Focus, Dinah, we have a killer to dispatch to hell.*

My large, sharp hunter's knife is strapped to my right thigh. I have a smaller version strapped to my ankle, hidden by my boot, and six small titanium knives strapped along my left arm in my sheath. My shoulder harness holds two Hellcat sigs and two more magazines. If that wasn't enough of an arsenal, I have a small taser that Sammy created that will take down a grown elephant.

I'm ready to take on Abraham Mercier and Ezekiel Rothesay. Fuck, I'm prepared to take on the whole Brotherhood if I am being honest. I lower myself and move slowly through the bushes and trees closest to my exit, stopping every few seconds to listen to the world around me, and see if I can determine where Abraham is hiding. He's not used to hiding or running for his life. It will make my task easier to destroy him.

The forest is too quiet; no birds are singing, no sound of insects, no small animals going about their business. Everything is eerily still. That's my first warning that he's close. Nature knows when a predator is within its mix. The sun shines through the heavy clouds, trying its hardest to break through the thick tree canopies above us. The ground is still a bit damp from last night's rain. The scent of earth, leaves, and vegetation surrounds me, and gives me a perfect backdrop for hunting.

I know every inch of these woods. I could run through them with my eyes closed. Sammy has trained me in them for years, and part of that training included being hunted through every inch of shrubbery surrounding me. Abe won't be able to hide for long.

A small noise up ahead, and to my left, sounds in the quietness of the air. To anyone else, it would be inconspicuous. A small animal perhaps running through the ground, the wind rustling through the trees. I know, however, it's the first of many mistakes Abe has just made. He might as well wave a big fucking red flag that says come and get me.

I shift the crossbow silently into position, notching the arrow and adjusting the scope as I move noiselessly through the area, searching for my prey. Up ahead, a lower branch on a thick old oak moves. My eyes find the target through the scope. A shadow moves within my sightline, dark, large, and trying its best to hide from me.

The lyrics from an old song from the world long gone, sung by *Bing Crosby*, which my momma used to sing to me, enter my mind and bring a sadistic smile to my lips.

*“If you go down in the woods today,
you're sure of a big surprise.*

*If you go down in the woods today,
you'd better go in disguise!”*

Oh, Abe's in for a big surprise, alright. I press my finger on the trigger and release the first of my arrows, aiming for where

his shoulder should be. There's no sense in killing him too soon. After all, where's the fun in that? I might want to hang him from a fucking tree and let him swing like he did my brother. *Fucking dark, I know.* I want to hear his screams of pain, and his curses, before I hear the intoxicating sound of his last breath leaving his body. My whole body shudders with the anticipation of those screams.

A thud followed by a gasp of pain is my reward. The sound is an aphrodisiac to my senses. I quickly notch another arrow and let it fly in the same direction, but slightly lower. This time, there is just the hushed sound of a gasp of air as the arrowhead embeds into the thick tree trunk.

"Come out, come out, wherever you are," I sing the words to him as I move gracefully through the underbrush. "Abe, do you want to have a picnic in the woods with me? You're on the menu."

I get no reply from the spoilsport but let loose another arrow as I see a bush further up ahead twitch. No sound of pain greets my ears, and that brings me a massive sense of disappointment. I scan the area around me, straining my ears for his footsteps or his breath sounds. Just as I am about to take a step forward, something enormous and heavy crashes into me, making me lose my grip on the crossbow and go tumbling down to the forest floor.

"FUCKING CUNT!" He growls near my ear as he tries to grapple with me and confine my body below his. I shift my position and arch my back, getting one of my knees

underneath me and headbutting him hard. A gasp of pain is my reward, and I use it to my advantage, using my strength to take him off balance, while I grab the blade strapped to my thigh. I clutch it in my hand and strike outwards, catching his forearm and slicing him open.

He momentarily loses his hold on me, but tries to get his knees into my lower back and his other forearm into the back of my neck. A harsh breath mixed with a chuckle leaves my lips. I'm smaller and quicker than he is. I thrust the blade out again and catch the side of his arm before sliding out from underneath him. He grabs onto my ankle and yanks me back down like a damn savage, trying desperately to get his arm around my neck in a chokehold.

All he manages to do is grab onto my hair and pull hard, until I feel strands ripping from my scalp as I once again try to get to my feet. The pain is ecstasy to someone like me, and he doesn't even realize it. He slams his fist down on the back of my head and then on my hand, which is still holding the blade. The blade falls from my grasp and slides away on the forest floor.

For a brief moment, darkness fills my vision before I shake it off and continue to fight him. I'm trying to reach any of my guns so I can put a hole in this fool. His arm strains around, and his thick, heavy fingers manage to wrap around my neck, tightening immediately.

My breath hitches in my chest, but I refuse to stop fighting him. I get my fingers around the gun and yank it from its

holster as he simultaneously manages to grab one of the knives from my arm sheath, and presses it against the side of my eye. “Stop fucking fighting, Atasi, or I will stab out your pretty eye.”

My body goes still, my grip tight on the gun. I cock the safety and twist my arm, driving the muzzle into the side of his chest. “Go ahead, fucker, I’ll blow your heart out while you do it.” My voice sounds harsh to my ears, filled with unrestrained anger and a hint of insanity.

He stills completely at the feeling of the gun pressing against his chest. His weight is heavy on top of me, and my head is still buzzing from the punch he gave me. His tantalizing male scent is entering my nostrils, trying to confuse my senses. It makes my body heat up like an inferno from within and crave not only his destruction, but the pain that he could give me while he fucked the very life out of me.

To prove my point that he doesn’t have the upper hand, and I am not scared of his tactics, I press the gun harder into his chest at the same time as I press my face into the sharp knife, immediately feeling my skin open up under its metallic surface. I suppress the moan that wants to leave my lips at the acute pain. If there was ever a doubt that I’m truly and completely unhinged, that right there just proved conclusively that I am.

“WHAT THE FUCK, ATASI! Are you fucking insane?” He pulls the blade away from my face and raises his body a bit off of mine, until I can take a deep breath without him pressing

me into the hard ground. I can feel blood welling and sliding down my face from the wound. He releases a harsh breath and removes all of his weight from my body, and I scramble forward on my knees, holding the gun in my grip and pointing it at his head.

My hand trembles as I stare at him, never releasing my grip on the weapon. His golden eyes are large on his handsome face. Blood and dirt are smeared everywhere. His chest is heaving with ragged breaths as he watches me from the short distance, the small blade still in his hand.

His face is filled with bewilderment. He doesn't understand what he is seeing before him; the woman I am now versus the girl he remembers. I must be quite a sight to him. Blood trickling in rivulets down my face, and my long raven hair a tangled mess from his merciless grip. My chest heaving with strangled breaths, and my body vibrating with energy. Not to mention, all my tattoos are clearly on display through the arsenal I still have attached to me.

“What the fuck happened to you, Dinah? Who fucking hurt you to make you like this?” He tries to move a step towards me, but I hold my ground, unwavering. Refusing to bow or cower to this man of the Brotherhood. This man who has hurt me and my family and countless others.

“Your family did. Your Brotherhood did. This whole fucking world did. You did by being complicit in its actions. You abandoned me,” I answer, my voice sounding strong and fearless, even though nothing could be further from the truth.





Abe

“**Y**our family did. Your Brotherhood did. This whole fucking world did. You did by being complicit in its actions. You abandoned me,” she answers me, with no fear evident as she holds me at gunpoint. My Atasi, her beautiful stormy blue eyes shining brightly with the conviction of her words.

No, she’s no longer my Atasi; she has become some other creature—one who lives without fear, and revels in the acts of war.

I let my gaze travel from the top of her dark head, along her supple tattooed body, and down to her feet, cataloging all the weapons she has attached to her like some badass vigilante from some of the movies long before our time. Long before the world decided women like her couldn’t exist.

The pain in my shoulder from where the arrow landed, and I had to pull it out, throbs along with the various cuts and bruises I now have. My arm drips with blood down to my hand, making my hold on her sharp blade precarious.

Fuck, she is stunning. Dangerous, but stunning.

I stare up at the cut on her face that is trickling blood. The psycho pushed her own face into the blade, not knowing if I would back down. A shiver of unease races down my spine at

the knowledge that this woman before me is a warrior, unafraid to die. Refusing to cower or give even an inch. She says our world has turned her into what I see before me.

Strength. Bravery. Insanity.

When Ezekiel was adamant it was her that took him down, that she was, in fact, the killer, I had my doubts. I thought for sure the knock to his head made him delirious and imagining things. How could my Atasi be the killer? *The Holy fucking Ghost?*

Even on our journey here, thoughts and doubts plagued me. She was so gentle before, a ray of sweet sunshine that would brighten my day. My little blue spring flower, always sweet-smelling and delicate. Always begging to play games or sing songs. How did she change from my precious Atasi to what I see before me now?

“Atasi, please put down the fucking gun before you shoot someone.”

Her dark shapely eyebrows rise, and her beautiful blue-gray eyes glint as she points the gun at my feet and pulls the fucking trigger. The shot fires mere inches from my foot as I jump backward. My heart races in my chest, and utter disbelief must be evident on my face as my jaw drops.

“You mean like that?” She questions with an unhinged grin across her bleeding face.

Holy fuck, she's completely nuts. She's going to fucking shoot me. I'm going to kill Zeke when I get my hands on him,

for talking me into coming here to save this psychopath. She doesn't need saving from the Brotherhood; she needs saving from herself.

Zeke. Fuck. If she's here with me, holding me at gunpoint, does that mean her guard is hunting Zeke down? Zeke, who has a concussion and not enough weapons to fight these two assholes off?

"We are...not here...to hurt you, Atasi. We...don't want...to harm you." I try to convey the truth of my words with my expression, and lower the blade to my side. My breathing is coming harshly into my chest. Fear is starting to fly through my body for Zeke. I have to get to Zeke. I can't let that fucker hurt him.

A murderous rage fills my bloodstream at the thought of never seeing Zeke again. No! I won't let that happen. He is mine, and I am his, and no one gets to take him away from me. He's all I have left in this world.

What about Atasi? My mind questions.

My eyes meet hers, blue-gray clashing with amber. I can see destruction glaring back at me. She is not my Atasi anymore. If she forces my hand, if Zeke's life depends on it, I must take her life, as much as it will destroy me. My heart clenches painfully in my chest with the mere thought of that light in her eyes dimming, and then vanishing from this earth. Her features are so similar to her brother's, a man I loved, whose death nearly destroyed me. *Can I really kill her?*

“What a shame, Abraham, ’cause I definitely want to hurt you.” She snickers, her fingers tightening around the gun and her stance widening. She’s just barely over five fucking feet, but she looks terrifying. An angel of death standing before me.

“We came here to protect you, Dinah. To stop you from killing any more members of the Brotherhood before they realize it’s you.” I want to beg her to stop. I want to drop to my knees and ask her to be my Atasi, not this person she has become, but I can’t. I can’t show her any more weakness than I already have. She is a predator now, and I am her captured prey.

She lets out a high-pitched snort that would be adorable in any other setting. “Stop me? Protect me? I don’t need you to do either. Where were you when my brother needed protection? How about my mother, Abe?”

Her words pierce like daggers, inciting a tumult of emotions I struggle to contain. Once unleashed, they threaten to spiral into a red-hazed fury that could consume everyone, even her. The beast within me yearns to break free, seeking retribution for the pain she’s inflicted, and the venomous words she spews.

“You have no idea what you speak of,” I snarl back at her, my voice sounding animalistic and feral.

“No?” She questions with a raised, condescending eyebrow. “How did it feel when you saw my brother’s lifeless, battered, naked body hanging from that beam, Abe? Or did you string him up there with that coward, Ezekiel?” She fires the gun

again, this time just past the side of my knee, so close that I feel the material of my pants give way under the bullet's grazing.

“Ezekiel is not a coward. We had nothing to do with Gabriel's death. We loved him. He was our best friend. How could you even think that?” I roar, no longer caring about my own safety, as I take a step towards her.

“Did he find out what sick, deranged fuckers you both are? What the both of you do to poor women, to women conditioned not to fight back? How about what you do to each other? Is that what happened? Is that why you had to silence him? Or was it because he spoke out against the treatment of women, and you needed him to stop trying to bring change?”

Her finger tightens on the trigger once more, and I know her aim will be true this time. She's going to try to kill me, as I stand here listening to these blasphemous words leave her mouth. I lunge just as she fires and tackle her to the ground using all my weight.

The shot hits me in the side of my abdomen, and a sharp cry leaves my lips. The pain instantly burns through me and makes me clutch at my side with my already bloody hands. The blade I had is long gone now. I groan in intense pain as Dinah pushes me off of her and scrambles away from me. Her breathing is loud to my ears, along with the sound of my own blood rushing through my body.

FUCK! I can't believe that she actually pulled the trigger. She shot me without the slightest hesitation. Part of me is

filled with pride for how fierce she has become. The other part rages that we are about to die at the hands of a mad woman. One who we adored for a good portion of our miserable life. It's almost comical that this is how I will leave this cunt of a world.

My vision dims momentarily as I try to blink the darkness away and grit my teeth. I press hard into the wound to stem the blood leaving my body in a rapid river. "I loved Gabriel," I grit out between clenched teeth. "Loved...him. Not...as a... brother. *More.*"

My breathing has picked up, and I can barely get the words out with all the pain wracking my body simultaneously. My vision is getting dimmer and dimmer even though daylight is all around us. Sunlight shimmers off the green leaves before me, surrounding Dinah's form, weaving patterns everywhere it touches. It's beautiful here. *Peaceful.*

All the blood loss from my various wounds is finally catching up to me. I can feel my body getting heavier and heavier. My eyes try to meet Dinah's, but she's more shadow than anything else now.

Is this the end for me? Do I die here on this forest floor, murdered in cold blood by a girl I used to care for deeply? By the sister of one of the men I have loved the most in my life but betrayed. What a fucked up slice of fate I have been served.

My last thought, before darkness takes me is of Zeke. Is he, too, lying on the forest floor dead by the hands of her guard?

Will the two of us be finally joining Gabriel in the ever after?

“Love him,” my words slur out of my mouth as oblivion calls to me.





The Forsaker

Zeke

I move slowly through the thick foliage, a sense of dread invading my already battered and weary body. All the hairs on the back of my neck and arms stand on end. I can feel eyes on me, but I can't pinpoint what direction it's coming from. Is it Dinah getting ready to kill me or her protector?

The fucking white knight who thinks she belongs to him. The one whose guts I'm going to rip out of his body and strangle him with, while I make my little Snow watch. So she realizes what kind of monster she's playing with.

Does it fucking matter? My mind screams. They are both trying to kill us!

It matters. She could have killed me before, but she hesitated. Will she attempt it once more, perhaps this time see it through? I want to believe she could never go through with it, never genuinely inflict harm upon me. Alas, I know such thoughts are mere fantasies. Wishful thinking of a boy who once adored a little girl, a princess who looked like *Snow White*.

I don't know her anymore, the woman she has evolved into. This killer who is going around ending men's lives. She is no longer my little, untainted Snow. Her image in my memories is of a pretty girl with a gorgeous sun-filled smile that used to

bring nothing but warmth to my life. Now, I have to replace that image with one of a ruthless killer.

She is a murderer, a vicious one at that. Not only a cold-blooded killer but a serial killer. One who tortures her victims and leaves their bodies mutilated, and in grotesque forms. This is who she is now; this is my Snow. The sooner I make peace with it, the easier it will be to do what I know I might have to do. I can't allow her to continue to kill members of the Order, regardless if those fuckers deserve it or not.

Gabriel. The name enters my mind and causes me to stop moving. Gabriel would be horrified at what she has become. He would blame himself for not seeing the signs, for not keeping her safe. Did that guard corrupt her? Is he partially to blame for what she has become, or has everything she has endured at the hands of the Brotherhood led to this?

I have to try to save her, even if it means saving her from herself. Gabriel would want me to. He made me promise to protect her. I know now that I have failed him in every way that truly mattered. He gave me a precious diamond to hold, cherish, and protect, and I left her discarded, out in the world for thieves to take. They have chipped away at that rough, priceless diamond and shaped her into what she is now. Can I really blame anyone else when I am at fault?

My pain was too sharp then. It battered my heart with the loss of one of the few people I have genuinely loved. It felt like a part of my soul had been ripped from me and died with

him. My guilt at being unable to save him caused me to falter in my duties to Snow.

How much worse must it have been for her? She lost all of her remaining family in one fell swoop. How the loss must have brought her to the brink of insanity. It nearly destroyed me and Abe. How could I have been so self-absorbed, so ignorant, and reckless? *She needed me.*

She was mine. Given to me by rights as an heir to a Founding Father. By the Brotherhood of the Sacrament, whom I serve. More importantly, she was given to me to protect for the rest of our miserable, unyielding days by her brother and father. I have failed in all of my duties to her and my commitments to them. I have betrayed all my oaths.

A twig cracks in the silent forest that surrounds me. I move quickly in that direction as a small brown hare races from one bush to another in a blur of speed. I release all the air that is trapped in my chest. *Fuck, it's just a rabbit.*

I wonder if Abe has managed to find her yet? Shit, we should have never separated from each other. I should have insisted he stay by my side; I should have gone after him when that last bomb detonated. Together, maybe we have a chance to talk some sense into Dinah. To bring her back into the fold.

Do you really think she's going to listen to the two men who let her down? Who didn't try to comfort her in her time of need? You abandoned her, left her alone so that you could wallow in your own grief. Her loss was just as significant, if

not greater, than yours. He was her brother. She lost both of them in one dark moment in time.

The thoughts circle round and round in my mind, calling me out for misdeeds and my inactions. Proving to me over and over that I am indeed a coward, a cunt who let someone else take care of his responsibility.

This guard has her now entwined in his grasp. He's taken advantage of my inaction, my weakness. Made her believe that he is her white knight in the fairytales she so desperately clung to as a child. His hold on her must be powerful for her to be out here killing high-valued members of the Brotherhood.

The only other possibility is that maybe I was right before, and it's her who has him in her grasp. My Snow has always been a manipulative little thing. Her smile alone consistently garnered her anything she wanted. I know that Abe and I were never immune to it. Maybe neither is this fucker. Which one is the correct answer? That is the fucking question.

I spy a small building made of aged wood planks and a dark red metal roof a mere fifty feet away, surrounded by thick pine trees. The air around me is tense, making every breath feel heavy and ominous. Sweat pours down my back, stinging when it comes into contact with my wounds, and my head pounds. I swallow the taste of bile that rises to my lips, forcing myself to keep my steps cautious as I move towards the small building. My ears perk at every sound around me as my eyes dart from side to side. *Where the fuck are they?*

One minute, I'm walking across the ground filled with vegetation and old pine needles; the next, I'm flying backward twenty or more feet through the air, and landing on my back with a harsh oomph. My ears are ringing with the loud bang that accosts me. *Fuck, I triggered a hidden grenade or something! These psychopaths have the forest rigged with booby traps.*

I try to get my elbows underneath me and force my body into a sitting position. The whole world is spinning and turning upside down before me. The bile returns, and I have no choice but to turn my head to the side and let it unleash from my system. When I'm done, I wipe my sour mouth with the back of my hand, and try to get my legs to hold me.

"You should just stay down, you fucking cunt," a thick voice calls to me, filled with amusement.

I scramble to my feet and dive behind the thick trunk of an old, gnarled oak tree right as he opens fire, and bullets rain across the space, taking chunks of bark in their wake. *Jesus fucking Christ, this guy is a lunatic.*

"I won't let you take her from here and hand her over to the Brotherhood," he shouts as he opens fire once again.

"I came to protect her from the Brotherhood, not hand her fucking over to them!" I yell back, darting across the small space and diving behind another tree for cover, as he sprays more bullets in my direction.

"She doesn't need your protection. She can protect herself, and she has me."

“She fucking belongs to me! I would have never let her become a murderer!” I shout back as I withdraw my blade from its sheath, and ready myself to rush this motherfucker.

“Let. That’s a pretty word. That alone tells me you know nothing about Dinah Camrose. No one lets Dinah do anything.” He lets out a malicious chuckle like he’s actually having a good laugh at my expense.

“As for being yours, you’re a fucking boy, a coward, playing at being a man. She needed a real man by her side, and here I am. Where I will remain long after you and that other cunt are gone.”

His words cause hot, fiery rage to flow through my body. Jealousy invades every molecule of my being. He’s all but admitting to having her. Claiming her while also calling me out for my failings. My Dinah. My Snow. *His*.

I don’t think logically as I react to his words and run out from behind the cover of the trees, protecting me from his bullets. I race across the expanse toward the dark shadow I see. “Face me, you fucking coward, if you are a man!”

He fires again, and a bullet grazes my shoulder as it flies past me. I keep charging him like an angry linebacker on a mission to take out the offensive running back. This guy thinks he’s going to live happily ever after with my Snow. He’s got another thing coming to him. I will never allow him to continue breathing. Both of us can go to hell and meet the devil.

I land hard with my throbbing shoulder into his side, taking him down with me. My fist lands under his jaw, forcing his head to slam backward on the ground as I rain blow after blow on his face and body. He loses his hold of the gun, which slides across the forest floor before he grabs onto either side of my face in his tight grip, and tries to gouge my eyes out with his thumbs. Both of us are now bleeding and grunting with the strain of skin meeting skin.

He headbutts me hard in the forehead, the instant pain making a wave of dizziness and disorientation hit me hard. I'm seeing double now, with darkness threatening to knock me completely out. Waves of pain and nausea attack me, and my body begs for a mercy I can't grant it, not if we want to keep breathing. I need to restrain this asshole before he kills me. I reach for my blade only to realize that I dropped my knife when I tackled him, and now it's somewhere out of reach. *Damnit.*

He tries to push me off of him, and I almost stumble backward from his large body, but at the last second, I wrap my legs around his frame and hold on tight, as he tries to roll me to get the upper hand.

"Naw, bitch, you're not getting away," I groan through clenched teeth before bashing my fist into his nose, and causing a gush of blood to spray me from the offending appendage.

The deranged fucker laughs, his face and teeth coated in blood. He tries his best to headbutt me again, but I move out of

the way. “I will fucking end you, cunt. You will never get my Nightstar. Never.”

In an entirely insane move, the fucker braces his feet hard on the ground and manages to lift both of us, with me still clutching him fiercely. He gets to his knees and then his feet, with me still wrapped around him like a spider monkey, punching him repeatedly. He then rams me into the nearest tree until all the air has left my body, and I have no choice but to release him and flop to the ground at the tree’s base.

He moves back from me and scrambles in the direction his gun went, and I brace myself on my hands and knees and crawl toward where I can see the flicker of metal in the dirt. If he gets to his gun before I get to the blade, I’m a dead man, and I have no intention of making today my last day on this earth.

He’s still searching for his weapon when I get my fingers around the blade and rush him. He turns suddenly, and my aim veers and lands on his upper shoulder instead of his neck. Red, hot blood coats my hands, making my grip precarious on the blade handle. He shoves me hard, forcing me to step backward and away from him.

“You’re going to pay for that with your life, you spoiled, fucking cunt.” He reaches up, pulls the blade from his shoulder, and wields it in his hand as blood pours from the wound, soaking his black t-shirt and running down his arm.

He thrusts forward, trying to stab me in the chest, but I manage to dodge his attempt. We are both breathing heavily, both of us bleeding from various wounds, and yet neither of us is willing to yield. This is a match to the death, with one winner left standing. The prize, my Snow.

“I want to protect her from the Brotherhood, from her fucking self. I’m not trying to hurt her,” I grunt through the pain, as I am forced once again backward as he swings the blade.

“You want to control her. Use her just like they do all the Sacred Women. I won’t fucking let you have her.” He arcs the blade and slashes, catching my bicep in its path.

“NO! I made a promise to her brother. To protect her.” He lashes again and gets me across my chest, the sharp pain dulling more of my senses. My body is running out of steam with all the blood loss and my previous injuries. My vision keeps blurring, and I take another step back, narrowly avoiding a slash to the face.

“I know what you do to women! Do you fucking think I would let you near Dinah, so you could kill her in your own fucked sense of satisfaction?”

My head is spinning, and now there are two of him in front of me. I try to shake my head to clear my vision. It works for a brief second before I’m seeing double again. “Not Snow, never Snow,” I mumble.

A shot rings out above our heads, the bullet smashing into a tree and forcing the branch to fall before us. We both look

away from each other with shocked gazes, only to find a blood-soaked beauty with dark hair holding the gun steady in front of her.

“Well, that’s good to know. Otherwise, I would have to put a bullet through your fucking head, Zeke.” She smirks, her blue-gray eyes shining in the muted sunlight.

“What the fuck, Dinah?” The ass trying his best to kill me yells and starts to move towards her, but I’m not having it. With the last of the energy I have, I slam my fist into the side of his face, and he goes down to his knees.

“You really shouldn’t have done that, Ezekiel,” Dinah warns with a tsk.

I’m slammed from the side hard into the ground, all the air leaving my lungs as the fucker grabs onto the back of my head and forces me to eat dirt. “You...stay...away...from...my...girl.” Each word is punctuated by a slam of my face into the ground.

Another gunshot blares in the air around us. “Would you two fuckers knock it off. I don’t have time for this shit!” She shouts at both of us with fury. Her words have us both freezing in our actions, me still trying to push up from the ground and him with his fist in my hair.

“Get up, both of you. We have to go right now. He’s fucking dying!” She screams with impatience as she lowers the gun to her side.

“Who’s dying?” I shout while pushing the asshole off of me and getting to my knees.

“Abraham!” With that word thrown into the air, she turns her back on us and starts moving through the thick shrubbery around us.

“Fuck!” The bastard spits blood to the side, gets up like I wasn’t pummeling him mere minutes ago, and starts moving after her. *What is this guy, a fucking machine?*

Shock and fear races through my system and her words tumble on a loop in my mind. *“He’s fucking dying. Abraham.”* No! Not my Abraham. What the hell has she done? A rush of adrenaline fills my system as I chase after the two of them through the woods.

Hold on, Abe, I’m coming!



Chapter 24



Dinah

After yelling at those two giant fools wrestling with each other on the ground like children, I turn my back on them and run right back through the thick shrubbery the way I came. *Fuck, it might already be too late.* He might have bled out by the time I get back to him, despite me trying my best to stop the bleeding. Fear ripples through my veins like a poison trying rapidly to consume me, but I push through the anxiety that is trying to cripple me.

Why did I fucking shoot him? Why did I lose my fucking mind and shoot him? Pain and regret soar through my body as the image of Abe's face, right before I pulled the trigger, makes me stumble in my next step. *What if I killed him? Did I actually want to kill him?*

I can hear the loud noises of the other two following me through the trees, and the relief that flows through me gives me a much-needed moment to inhale a deep breath. Sammy will know what to do. He will be able to stop the bleeding. Fuck, I hope Abe is still breathing when we get there. It might be too late; he might already be gone from this world. *You did that; you killed him.*

A blur of shadows appears out of the corner of my eye, and it's my cue to take off running again, back to the man I left bleeding and unconscious on the forest floor, because I'm an

unhinged psychopath with a penchant for violence and vengeance. *You're insane. You're a murderer.*

“Dinah! Slow the fuck down and tell us what you did!” Zeke’s voice sounds through the silence of the forest around us. I can hear the obvious fear and desperation in his tone. Is his heart beating as furiously as mine? Is he terrified that I’ve ended his world? Usually, that type of terror would give me an orgasm. I live off the fear of men.

Right now, however, I’m feeling it right along with him, and I can honestly say I have never been so scared in my life. Not even when the Brotherhood ripped me from the only home and family I had ever known, and thrust me hundreds of miles away into seclusion with a man I didn’t know. With a future I wasn’t confident I would have, never mind whether I would see another birthday.

“Sammy, fucking hurry,” I scream back in their direction over my shoulder, refusing to stop and waste precious time. *Please let him still be alive.*

I break through the clearing of thick leaves as sunshine streams above me and touches the world around me, bringing with it an ethereal glow. Its golden rays hit various leaves, making them seem otherworldly. It’s so beautiful here. Peaceful. The place where I have shed blood. Where I have changed not only my fate but theirs, with a single pull of my finger on a trigger. *Murderer.*

My eyes meet the form of the large creature on the ground, his black pants seeming to meld into the deep dirt and giving

the appearance he is part of the landscape around us. A dark forest nymph waiting to lure humans into his fae trap. His golden and tattooed skin shines in the warm rays, making him appear to be illuminated from within. The solid muscles that cover his form are each on display and mouth-watering. He doesn't seem human, just an apparition outside of this world that humans could never dare create. *Dark perfection.*

The only thing that tarnishes the image is the red blood that coats his body, seeping into the waistband of his pants, and disappearing into the dark ground around him. My eyes are immediately drawn to the shirt I cut off him, and tried to strap around his wound to stem the bleeding, a dark slash across all that divine skin. I can't move another step, my body frozen to the spot and my legs rooted to the ground. *Murderer.*

My eyes desperately watch for the rise and fall of his chest. *Please. Please be breathing.* The words chant inside of me over and over again, a prayer to anyone listening, even though a murderer like me doesn't deserve any miracles. *Is he breathing?* I feel the desperation starting to rise within me, about to give way to the hysteria that wants to roll me over and consume me. A hungry beast that desperately wants to devour what is left of my sanity.

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The words roll through my mind, forcing me to acknowledge their truth. My wrath and anger have caused this. My need to avenge myself and my family on the world around me. The bloodlust that consumes me and encourages me to destroy everything in my path.

“What the fuck have you done?” Zeke breaks through the trees behind me in a blur of speed I wouldn’t think capable of someone carrying all the various injuries I can see across his body. Fuck, he’s bleeding too. *What the hell have we done?* His body falls down immediately next to Abe’s as he checks for his pulse and breath.

Two large arms circle me from behind, pulling me into the warmth of a strong body. The rich scent of mint and sage brings me a small portion of comfort, and allows me to take the first deep breath since I pulled that trigger. My heart throbs painfully inside my chest, wanting to claw its way out and crawl inside of Sammy. Knowing that he will always protect it, even from the very pain I have self-inflicted.

“Save him, Sammy. Please.” The words leave my lips in nothing more than a desperate breath. I can’t meet his eyes as he releases me, and turns me towards him. His finger touches the bottom of my chin, forcing my face and eyes to meet his midnight blue ones. Whatever he sees in my eyes, in the expression on my face, has him moving away from me.

“Fuck, he’s barely breathing! There is so much blood! Dinah, what the fuck have you done?” Zeke shouts, his voice breaking on the words, the panic evident in their sound.

My knees give out beneath me, and I fall heavily to the forest floor. My heart feels like it is shattering again, but this time, instead of small jagged pieces that I can never put back together, it feels like it is turning into fine-grained sand. Sand that invades every part of my chest and lungs, and makes me

choke on my own breath. I can't fucking breathe. My hands rise to my throat as I claw at it, desperate to draw breath.

"Put pressure on that wound, fucker. We need to stop the bleeding," Sammy shouts, his words loud but also muffled in the world around me that is trying to drown me in so much sand. My body feels so heavy as I fall forward, unable to even keep myself upright.

"Nightstar, fuck! Baby, please, you need to help me right now. You need to breathe. Stay with me. Please, Nightstar." Sammy pulls me up by my shoulders, his fingers digging into my skin with force as he propels me back to my knees, and I stare up at him. My chest feels so tight; my mouth opens and closes, but air refuses to work its way inside my lungs.

"Breathe, baby. I need you to help me keep him alive. You want him alive, don't you?"

His words begin to penetrate the fog that was trying its best to coat me, to suffocate me in my misdeeds. My head nods, even though I don't tell it to. My hands cling to his forearms, my nails sinking into his skin as I try to take a deep breath.

"Good, baby, that's it, breathe." Sammy pulls me closer and mimics the breaths that he wants me to take, and my body obeys his command and follows his into a deep breath.

"We don't have fucking time for this shit! Abe's bleeding to death here!" Zeke's frantic words fill the space around us, and the tightness rushes back into my chest, but I force the air inside my lungs this time. Refusing to let it cart me away into a world where I am at its mercy.

“I don’t give a fuck if he dies. You both can rot in fucking hell.” Sammy pulls away from me and stares at me. “Do you really want me to save him, Nightstar? It would be easier if we let him bleed out, and I put a bullet in the other fucker’s head.”

I pause for a millisecond. What do I want? I shot him. I wanted to kill him, but then the guilt took me over. I picture Gabriel. What would he want? “Please. Please save Abe.” The moment the words leave my lips, he’s pulling away from me; the feeling of loss is immediate and brings a chill to my body. I want to beg him to keep his arms wrapped around me, yet I need him to save the man on the forest floor dying because of my irrational actions.

“Come here, Dinah. You’re going to have to apply pressure on the wound as we move him back to the house. I need my kit; I can’t save him here.”

I stumble forward, my body wracking with shivers as I crawl across the forest floor towards Abe. Once I reach him, Zeke moves back and allows me to take his place as I brace my hands hard against Abe’s cooling skin. The feeling of wet blood soaks between my fingers, and I watch as they are immediately painted red. **Red.** So much blood that it squishes between my fingers and instantly coats my hands past my wrists. My stomach lurches at the blood covering me, a new response to something I love.

“You have to lift him at the same time as I do. The house is to the left, just over a hundred feet. We have to move him quickly. He’s losing a lot of blood. Let his legs trail if you

have to; just keep his body up. Fuck, I'll be surprised if he's not dead by the time we get him through the doorway," Sammy growls. "One, two, fuck, now. Lift, asshole, lift."

They lift Abe's heavy body from the ground, holding him by his shoulders and waist. The movement jars his body and makes more blood pour from the badly bandaged wound.

"Pressure, Dinah! Don't worry about hurting him. Put all your strength into it!" Sammy grunts as he and Zeke continue to move Abe's body in rapid footsteps while I press down as hard as I can.

A hundred feet become fifty, and the house approaches closer and closer. Its white exterior is a beacon of hope. Sweat pours down my body as my eyes remain locked on the wound in Abe's abdomen, and my hands continue to be soaked by the blood that drips down his frame and leaves a trail across the forest floor. Sammy and Zeke are breathing heavily, struggling with Abe's heavy mass. I feel Zeke faltering in his steps before he once again finds strength from deep within himself, and keeps pushing forward.

The house appears closer still, and before I know it, we are stumbling up the back porch steps, and Sammy is whamming his shoulder into the back door, forcing it to slam open without the use of his occupied hands. "In here. Let's get him on the table."

We maneuver a still unconscious Abe onto the rectangular wooden kitchen table, my hands pressing firmly on his abdomen. Zeke moves around, clearing everything around us

as Sammy rushes out of the room with forceful steps. “Zeke, take over applying pressure. Dinah, check his fucking pulse!” He yells back at us as I hear his footsteps running through the house.

Zeke uses his shoulder to shove me back and away from Abe, before taking my place and applying pressure. I scramble forward, reaching out and placing my trembling fingers on Abe’s neck. His skin is chilled to the touch, and his face is becoming ashen. “Why, Dinah? Why try to kill us?”

I try to ignore his words and focus only on getting a read on Abe’s pulse. I can’t find it in his neck, and panic fills me. “I can’t find it. His pulse. I don’t think he’s breathing!” I scream as I tip his head back and try to feel for breath coming from his lips or nose. “He’s not breathing!”

I jump up beside him on the table and start CPR, knowing full well that I am probably not doing it the correct way Sammy taught me. Panic is rising within me and filling my body with adrenaline, as I pump Abe’s chest to the counts in my head, before dipping my mouth to his and breathing into his lips. *Please fucking breathe, please.*

I keep going, chest compression, then breathing into his mouth over and over again, all the noise around me fading into silence, and only the counts in my head loud. Someone tries to pull me off of Abe, but I lash out with my arm, elbowing them in the face before I return to my compressions.

“Dinah, stop! He’s breathing but barely. We have to stop the fucking bleeding!” Sammy’s voice rages in my ears.

He's breathing. He's fucking breathing!

Sammy forcefully moves me out of the way, causing me to stumble back and almost fall on my ass when my legs refuse to hold me up. I watch as Sammy raises both of Abe's arms higher on the table, immediately hooking him up to one of our emergency blood bags. "Come here, Nightstar, hold this!"

Zeke and Sammy work together to cut the hasty tourniquet I had created from Abe's shirt. Blood continues to trickle out of the wound, but not as rapidly as Sammy examines it. "Fuck, I think the bullet is still inside. I don't think his lungs have been hit, but I'm not sure about another organ. We have to get it out, but doing so might kill him." He rolls Abe onto his side and checks his back, and under his arm, for an exit wound. Finding none, he lays him back down.

He grabs a bottle of antiseptic and pours it over the wound, then grabs a locking forceps in one hand, placing it into the damage. "Come here, asshole. Hold this steady like I'm doing," he demands, and Zeke immediately obeys. He grabs a small headlamp and slips it over his forehead, turning it on and flooding Abe's body with bright light.

"Do you know what you're doing?" Zeke questions with fear evident on his pale face.

"Let's fucking hope so for his sake. Otherwise, he's going to meet his ancestors before lunch," Sammy grunts as he grabs a pair of long-nosed scissors and starts digging into the wound. Abe's body momentarily spasms on the table, and a harsh wheezing moan leaves his lips.

“Come on, come on, you big bastard. I’ve almost got it.” He pushes against Abe’s chest as more blood slips out and coats the table. “Got it, fuck!” He yanks the forceps back, with a bullet stuck at the end of it. He throws it down on the table, pours more antiseptic, starts packing the wound, and uses the vent chest seal we have in our kit to seal it.

“We need to get him on an antibiotic and something to manage the pain. I think now that the bullet is out, his body will start clotting, and we can close up the wound.” Sammy places Abe in the recovery position on his side, one arm stretched out, the other cushioning his head, and one leg bent.

“How the fuck did you know how to do all that?” Zeke questions while running his hand down Abe’s back in a gentle caress. The fear he’s feeling is still evident on his face, as is the distrust for Sammy, despite him more than likely having just saved Abe’s life.

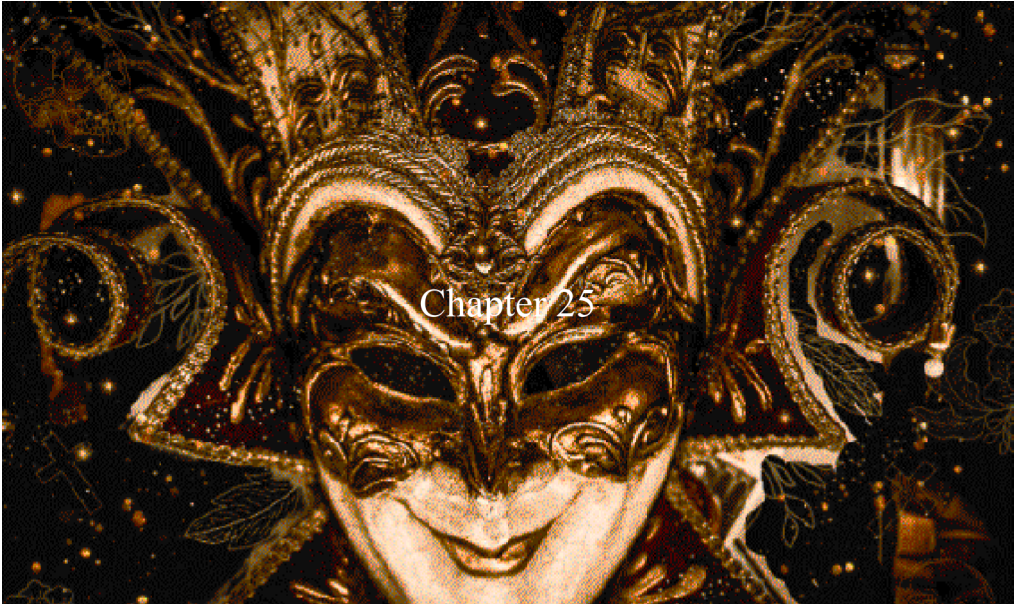
“I was on the front lines of your little war for years, fucker. A soldier of your Brotherhood. We are dispensable to you, just another body to throw in the way of the rebel’s bullets. Most of us learn how to treat our own wounds if we want to survive.”

Sammy pushes away from the table and approaches me, his bloodied hand rising to cradle the side of my face with a tenderness that I currently yearn for. I don’t even flinch from the moist sensation of Abe’s blood clinging to his hands as they make contact with my skin. “It’s alright, Nightstar. Breathe with me, baby.”

For a moment, I want to believe him. I want to believe that this has all been nothing but a nightmare. One that any moment I will wake from and find myself lying in my bed right next to Sammy's warm body, instead.

That I didn't just almost murder one of the boys I used to love, who was once my family. The boy who used to call me his pretty blue flower, and would stroke my hair until I fell asleep next to him.

“What the fuck happened to you, Dinah?”





Zeke

The words leave my lips before I can stop them, not that I am even sure I want to. Rage is still stirring in the pit of my stomach, at the knowledge this crazy bitch shot Abe. My eyes roam over his prone form, and I release the stunted breath trapped in my body on a heavy exhale. His chest rises and falls as he lies pale on the table, vulnerable, and the image haunting. He's alive. At least for now, and if that were to change, I know two people who will be joining him in the bowels of hell immediately.

All the adrenaline rushing through my system is now depleting, and all the aches and pains are making themselves known. *Fuck, he got in a few good hits.* Not that I would ever admit that to him. *Fuck him.* Adding to the painful ones Snow had already graced me with, my body feels like a walking punching bag.

I watch, my heart pounding, as her entire body tenses, and from the corner of my eye, I see Sammy looming closer to her. His frame expands, towering over her, and he glares at me with a menacing intensity. My lip curls as a primal urge surges within me, compelling me to unleash a feral growl, baring my teeth at him in a dramatic display of dominance. *Come fucking try me, bitch; we can go another round.*

Despite the dire situation happening all around us and the unhinged psycho aiding in the attempt to save Abe's life, one indisputable truth remains: she is mine, unequivocally and undeniably. She belongs to me, not to him. Even though it appears he has a significant influence over her. I couldn't help but notice how he managed to soothe her out in the woods, when the gravity of her deranged actions finally descended upon her, and she was having some kind of attack of conscience.

My eyes trace the contours of her body, meticulously registering every inch from her mud-splattered, black booted feet up her black tights with a strapped blade sheath, and over the sleeveless top that still holds the gun harness. Her arms are adorned with intricate black ink tattoos, a gallery of images that include flowers, birds, and even a haunting depiction of an angel with its wings cruelly destroyed by a malevolent demon. *What the fuck? Who had the privilege of marking her like that, and using my Snow as their canvas?*

The words barely escape my mind when I notice that Sammy has several tattoos peeking out from beneath the sleeves of his torn shirt. Jealousy and hostility surge through me at the sight. *Him.* He's the one who inked those on her. He dared to paint my Snow's skin without my damn permission. *Skin that belongs to me.* The struggle to control the urge to murder him, while I force her to watch, fills me. *Pretty sure that's not all he's touched;* my mind snickers.

I have to clench my fists until my nails dig deep into my palms, to restrain myself from lashing out at him and beating

him within an inch of his life. She takes a step away from Abe, and I observe as she squares her shoulders, the previous signs of weakness vanishing as if they were a trick of the light and never truly there.

A malicious chuckle escapes her lips, “What happened to me? What a fucked up question to ask, Ezekiel. You know full well what happened to me. This fucking life happened to me! The Brotherhood happened to me!”

She turns her full glare in my direction, her blue-gray eyes shining with unleashed anger and violent intent. Does she want to strike me right now? Would shedding my blood make her feel better?

“Are you his whore now, Snow? Is that what you have become?” My eyes never leave her face, even though I can hear and feel him moving closer, probably ready to knock my damn teeth out. Even I know that was a shitty thing to say. I want to hurt her, just like watching her with him is hurting me. I will have to examine why that is the case more closely later.

“Watch your fucking mouth, or I’ll put you in the damn ground, asshole.” He tries to step in front of Dinah, but she’s not having it and pushes him back.

“It’s alright, Sammy. It’s much better to be your whore than his Sacred Wife.” The smug look on her face makes me want to slap it off of her. How fucking dare she equate the two? How fucking dare she pick being his whore, a lowly guard with nothing to offer her, rather than being my wife. *Does he*

have nothing to offer her? Do you have more to give? The thoughts race through my mind unbidden.

“And yet, you cannot escape your fate, Snow. One way or another, you will be my wife and my fucking whore, too. The only thing that remains to be determined is whether your knight survives either.”

Before she can answer me with no doubt venomous words, the shriek of alarms start going off in the house, the sound jarring to my ears as I move forward towards Abe to protect him. “What the hell is that?” I question, a feeling of dread hitting the pit of my stomach.

“Intruders. Someone has crossed the one-mile marker leading to this house,” she answers me with concern, reaching for her remaining weapons and pulling the gun from its shoulder harness.

“You said you came alone. You said you came to protect her from the Brotherhood. I should have known that you would lie. That you would try to harm her.” Sammy moves towards me and grabs the gun out of Dinah’s grasp.

“I will fucking end you, and that bitch lying there, before I let you take her. Before they can harm one fucking hair on her head.” He presses the muzzle right against my forehead as he stares me down. Sapphire meeting Emerald in a fierce showdown, neither one of us willing to back down.

“We did come here to protect her. We didn’t tell anyone we were coming here. Whoever that is, they’re not with us.” I

keep my words calm and steady, even though I'm dying to sucker punch this fool for thinking we would harm Dinah.

“If neither you nor Abe told them you were coming here, that you were hunting me, who is here, Ezekiel? I have lived here for years, and the Brotherhood was always content to leave me here in peace. Now, today, all of a sudden, I'm getting numerous visitors?” She questions with a grimace and a look of apprehension.

“It wasn't us, Snow. I swear to you, after what happened last night and me figuring out you were involved, we told no one. We came straight here after I recovered from the nap that fucker gave me.” I let her see my sincerity in my features. I have no idea who's here, but if they've come to harm her, they'll have to go through me first.

“Fuck! You stupid fucking assholes! You led them right to her!” Sammy roars as he moves out of the room and touches something on a wall that causes a hidden panel to spring free. A few wooden steps are immediately revealed, and he doesn't hesitate to fly down them. Dinah is right behind him.

“What are you talking about? Led who here! Fucking tell me!” I shout as my blood pressure rises, and I hear my blood racing through my ears. My hands tighten and become clammy at the thought of inadvertently doing something that may have led the Brotherhood to come and capture Dinah.

Fuck, they'll kill her. No, first, they'll torture her within an inch of her life, making her wish for death, and then they'll abuse her, allowing men of all stations to use her. Making sure

she understands that she is worth nothing, and that they are powerful. Then, when there is nothing left of her body and sanity, only then will they end her.

I can't let that happen. I can't let them hurt her the way they hurt her mother, the way they hurt women they find no use for. The way Abe and I hurt women, like they are dirt under our feet. *Not my Snow*. Not when I promised Gabriel I'd protect her and have done nothing but fail so far.

I follow them into a room filled with screens. Every inch of the property on display, and even images from further down the road appearing before me. Fuck, that's how they knew we were here. That's how they were able to prepare for our unfortunate visit. On the screens, I see various Brotherhood vehicles, all military except one. The only one not a military vehicle is my father's; our family emblem is clearly displayed on the hood.

The lower screens rapidly change with images that must be taken from high above, and give us a glimpse of the inside of the vehicles. There must be at least fifteen or more men heading in our direction, all with the intent of hunting down my Snow.

“You had a tracker on you, whether that be on the vehicle you drove into the property, or on one of your phones. They are here because you fucking led them here! You led them right to her!” Sammy roars and grabs what's left of my shirt, yanking me forward and shouting into my face, his spittle

landing across my lips as his furious storm blue eyes bore into mine.

“I didn’t know. I swear to you we don’t want to hurt Dinah, only to protect her and stop her from killing any more of the Brotherhood.” Fuck, why have they followed us? Could they know already that I was attacked? Could Sammy be correct, and they have been tracking us this whole time?

I won’t allow them to take her. I can’t bear the thought of losing her now, just when I have a chance to fulfill my promise. If she flees with him, I’m certain I’ll never see her again, and the mere idea fills me with anguish. My heart demands that I stop her, that I keep her with me, where she belongs.

“We can still make it out, Sammy. We can still get away from here. They won’t catch us.” Dinah grabs Sammy’s wrist, pulling it and forcing him to dislodge his violent hold on me.

“You will be running for the rest of your life, Snow. They’ll never stop hunting you.” I drag my trembling fingers down my face. Fuck! I really messed this up. I led them here, straight to her. My cunt father and his army of Brotherhood guards. How didn’t I suspect that the fucker had a tracker on us?

“What do you suggest, Zeke? Hmmm, should I just let them take me? Should I go up there and confess my sins? Confess to killing over twenty of the Brotherhood’s Founding Fathers and their offspring? If I beg nicely and ask for penance, do you think they will forgive me and give me redemption?” Dinah

loses her shit and starts screaming at me while she pulls at her long hair.

The rage inside of her is palpable as she self-destructs right in front of me. Even with all that's going on, I still find her beautiful. Beautiful in the way a violent storm is, right before it hurls white crested dark waves against a powerless shore. Destructive. Seductive. All consuming.

I will never allow anyone else to hurt her. Everything inside of me lights up like fireworks exploding one after the other from within with the fierce need to protect her. "Do you trust me, Dinah?" I question her, already knowing that I haven't given her a reason to since we were children.

"I promised Gabriel that I'd keep you safe. That you would be mine. Trust that I would not go back on my word. He meant the world to me."

"And yet you betrayed him, or do you forget that my brother lies six feet underground." Her words are uttered so quietly that I strain to hear them. The pain across her features tells me how painful it still is for her to listen to his name. I understand the sentiment intimately.

"Trust me now. I will never let them take you."



Chapter 26



The Sinner

Dinah

“Trust me now. I will never let them take you.” I stare into his bright emerald eyes that shine with the conviction of his words. He honestly thinks that he can protect me. That he can somehow save me from the retribution of the Brotherhood. *Why does he even want to after everything that I have done?*

“Dinah, I need you to run upstairs and dress like a Sacred Daughter. No fucking weapons, do you hear me? I need you to show them weakness and behave like a distraught, timid female. Cry, Dinah, cry a fucking lot. Show them what you have been all along, all these years that you have been trapped here. Show them that you are unstable. Can you do that for us?” His hands reach for either side of my face and hold me tightly. From my side, I can hear the growl that Sammy releases before a bunch of expletives leave his lips.

“Yes,” I answer him, even though I don’t trust him. Will he actually protect me against his own father? I guess I’m about to find out. With one last look back at Sammy, I race from the room and up the stairs. My head is a muddled space with so many confusing thoughts on a rollercoaster with no end in sight.

I briefly stop in our kitchen and look in on Abe, who hasn’t moved an inch despite the alarms sounding all around us.

They're so loud they hurt my ears, yet he doesn't even twitch. He looks so damaged lying there. All because of me, because of my need for bloodshed. My need to avenge all the hurt this miserable world has caused me.

My hand reaches out before I can stop it and trails along his face's thick, dark stubble. My fingers tremble as they meet his cooled skin, a shiver racing up my arm at the sensation. There's blood caked to the side of his jaw, and just for a moment, I long to wipe it away. To try to wipe away the sins that I have committed. *Get it together, Dinah; we need to survive.*

"I'm sorry." The words leave my lips in a whisper before I pull my hand back, and use it to clean the traitorous tears that are running down my face. My face that is battered and bloodied from a war with two men I should have left alone. Maybe then we wouldn't be in this mess right now. Suddenly, the alarms cut off, serving as a reminder to go and do what Zeke asked of me.

How the bloody hell are we going to pull this off? They will take one look at all four of us and realize what happened here. How am I going to convince them that I am a weak Sacred Daughter, when I long to whip out a gun and murder each and every one of them. Removing them from this earth and cleansing the soil with their blood. *You need to fucking try; our life depends on it. Sammy's life, too.*

I dart into my room and rip off all my remaining weapons, stashing them in hidden panels in the walls. This house is

filled with them, and Sammy and I use them to our benefit. I grab the first hideous prim and proper black dress I can find from my closet and throw it on. It covers me from my neck, down to my wrists, sliding loosely and shapelessly over my body, and meeting my ankles. *Fuck, this thing is ugly.*

It doesn't matter, though; if it saves me and Sammy, I'll wear the fucking thing for the rest of my life. *You might have to*, my mind reminds me. I race back down the hallway just as Sammy re-engages the hidden wall panel. I meet them in the kitchen as they surround Abe's unconscious form.

Zeke stares at me from the short distance between us and then bends down, grabbing the hem of my offending gown and tears it a bit until it looks ragged. He stands up, grabs the collar, and yanks, widening it and making the material rip with his force but still keeping my tattoos hidden. Then his hand reaches up to my face and smears some of the drying blood on my forehead, along my cheek and jawline, before meeting my throat.

“What the fuck are you doing?” I question with alarmed curiosity.

“Do you trust me, Snow?” A mischievous grin crawls across his face, reminding me of when we were younger, and he used to let me tag along when they caused trouble for all our fathers. He would sneak me into places no proper daughter had any business being in.

His hand is still at the base of my throat, and he moves his fingers so they stroke the delicate flesh there. My breath wants

to hitch in my throat, and my eyes fill with the desire to close. To enjoy the sensation of his touch, but I refuse to bow to their whims. *He's dangerous, a liar. A traitor.*

“Not even with your own life, Ezekiel Rothesay,” I reply, swallowing the lump that memories long past produce in my throat. His fingers tighten briefly, and my breath halts, causing my eyes to widen at the look on his face. Is that desire I see in the depths of his depraved green eyes?

“The voltage on the gate has been disengaged. I hope this bastard knows what he's doing, Nightstar. If this doesn't work, we will have to fight our way out. The odds are over fifteen to two, so not good.” Sammy's voice brings me out of the moment with Ezekiel. I see the concern on his face. He's not only worried about the horde of Brotherhood men about to descend on us, but about the one before me who I am trusting with both of our lives.

Fuck, I need to get my shit together. This is not who I am. I am the Unholy Ghost, a brutal, remorseless killer.

Shouts can be heard outside the doors of our Victorian home. Car doors open and slam. Ezekiel pushes me towards the corner of the wall, below a small wooden console table. “Remember what I said, Snow. Behave like a weak Sacred Daughter. Let's see those fucking tears sliding down that pretty face of yours.”

He pinches my arm harshly while his face slams forward, his teeth biting down on my bottom lip and making tears blur in my eyes. What the fuck! He pulls back and lets his tongue

slide across his bloody teeth, a look of depraved satisfaction gracing his handsome face. I can already feel my lip swelling, and the taste of rich copper is in my mouth. “You taste delicious, Snow. I can’t wait to get another bite.”

Just as he stands back and moves into position in front of Abe brandishing a large blade, the door is blown in, and a swarm of men wearing the blue uniforms of the Brotherhood guards enter my home, and make their way into the kitchen area.

Sammy holds his arm straight in front of him with a gun pointed at the first man through the door. “Stop, or you’re a dead man!”

His voice is loud and menacing as it rings out across the space. The guard in the doorway comes to a halt, raising his arms as he takes in the room’s occupants. I let out a whimper and circle my arms around my knees, bringing them closer to my chest and making myself look utterly pitiful. *Fuck, I don’t see how this shit is going to work, not unless Zeke has a damn miracle up his tight ass.*

“They are in here, Sir!” The guard shouts behind him, but he doesn’t move a muscle before us. More men fill the entryway in their uniforms. Some of them point weapons at Sammy, and others race through our house, searching for other occupants. You can hear them clearing rooms one after the other. They won’t find anyone else here; all the monsters are in this one room together.

“Where is my son?” Noah Rothesay’s voice, filled with authority, can be heard loudly questioning from the entranceway before we hear his heavy steps echoing off the stone floors and approaching us. Their sound makes me think of death walking towards me, ready to take me back to hell.

I feel eyes on me from the various guards in the room; the sensation is like bugs crawling across my skin and making my hackles rise. I want to get up from here and murder them all. Instead, I listen to fucking Ezekiel and try to make myself even smaller, tucking my face into my knees and hiding my expression, while I silently seethe inside at all these cockroaches polluting my safe space. I bite hard on my tongue, forcing tears to fill my eyes and trail down my pathetic face. *One day, Dinah. One day, you will murder them all*, my mind reassures me, but the promise feels empty.

“By the good grace of the Lord, Ezekiel. Thank the angels who protect you that you are safe.” I watch from lowered lashes as Noah moves further into the room, ignoring Sammy’s raised gun, and grabs Zeke, pulling him into a harsh embrace that has my own body commiserating with how hard he’s slapping an injured Zeke’s back.

“Father...how did you find us? How did you know?” Ezekiel questions while stepping back from his father’s overzealous and crushing embrace.

“Shit, is that Abraham? John, get a medic in here, now!” Noah turns his gaze back to Zeke, running his eyes over his son’s frame, and no doubt taking in his battered condition.

“Son, you can lower your weapon. The good grace of our Lord and Savior be with you and honor you, for doing your duty to the Brotherhood.” Noah turns his body towards Sammy, who is still holding the guards at gunpoint. He lowers the gun, briefly glancing at Zeke for confirmation, and Zeke gives him a nod.

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” The words leave Sammy’s lips robotically, and I watch as some of the tension leaves Zeke’s frame.

Did he really think that Sammy would risk me to kill some useless Brotherhood guards? Sammy will always put me first. Just like I will always put him first. We are two sides of the same heart, beating as one. *What about Abe and Zeke?*

“Dinah, my beautiful little goddaughter! Look at you, my dear; you are injured and terrified. It’s alright now; you can come out from under there. No one here will hurt you,” Noah murmurs softly, crouching before me and helping me crawl from under the table as if I were a small child that he had to handle with kid gloves. His words make me want to snort loudly. *No one here will hurt me? That remains to be fucking seen.*

“You are bleeding, my dear; your face is bruised and cut. You have been through a great ordeal, but by the grace of our Lord, you will survive. You will be rewarded for your faith and your duty, Dinah.” He uses his fingers to wipe away the blood on my lips, a grimace on his face as I stare pointedly at

Ezekiel over his shoulder, and allow tears to slide continuously down my cheeks. Fuck, if I bite any harder on my tongue, I am likely to bite it right off.

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” I bow my head slightly and reverently but still manage to keep Zeke in my sightline. Blood trickles from my lips and down the side of my face, where it drips off my chin and causes a gasp to leave Noah’s mouth. He holds me steady, gently bracing his arms on my shoulders as if I could break like a priceless crystal at any moment. *Yes, look at me, a pitiful, weak Sacred Daughter. Too weak to even hold herself up.*

The only reward I seek is to kill all of them, and make them bleed all over my previously clean kitchen floor. Unfortunately, right now, that doesn’t seem like it will be a possibility. It’s as if Zeke can read my thoughts, and that bastard winks at me. He shoves his father aside and grips my arm, pulling me closer to his body. His father doesn’t miss this move, judging by the surprised expression that briefly flashes across his features before vanishing. *Possessive fucker, I’m going to break all of his fingers the first chance I get.*

Just then, a man in a medical uniform rushes into the room, swiftly assessing Abraham’s condition. Tension hangs heavy in the air, and for a few heart-pounding moments, it feels as if everyone is holding their breath. Finally, the medic raises his head and locks eyes with Noah.

“He’s alive, Sir,” the medic reports. “Someone did an exceptional job triaging him and stabilizing his condition. We can transport him back to the city for further treatment. I believe he will fully recover once we address the wound and perform the necessary procedures.”

At Noah’s nod, the man signals for two additional individuals to join us, one of them carrying a portable stretcher. With painstaking care, they lift Abraham onto the stretcher. A soft whimper escapes my lips as his head lolls slightly, mirrored by an angry gasp from Zeke. “Handle him with the utmost care,” he bellows, eyes ablaze with a fiery threat. “If you injure him further, I’ll personally make sure your hearts are torn from your chests!”

“Did you triage him, young man?” Noah turns his curious green eyes back on Sammy, and a sliver of unease skates up my back at the way he seems to be assessing him.

“He did, Father,” Zeke asserts. “Once we’re back, I’m going to demand you bestow him with a medal or some damn recognition. He not only kept Abraham alive, but he also aided me in fending off the *Unholy Ghost*, ensuring Dinah’s safety from his clutches.”

He did what now? I can barely contain my astonishment at Zeke’s words. What the hell did this reckless idiot just say? I quickly conceal my alarm behind the veil of my thick, dark hair, hoping no one in the room notices my reaction.

“The *Unholy Ghost*? Is that who attacked you, Ezekiel?” Noah steps closer to his son, his eyes probing, undoubtedly

assessing the truth behind Zeke's words. I can only hope this reckless fool can somehow make this work, or we are all going to die.

“Yes. He attacked me back at the house near the cliffs. Taunting me with what he was going to do to Dinah. He managed to stab me and then knock me out. When I came to, Abe had found me and dragged me back to the house. The minute I was awake, we had to rush here to try to get to Dinah,” Zeke explains, running his hands through his thick, dark hair. His jaw clenches, and his eyes are brimming with emotion. I have to admit, the fucker is convincing.

“The Ghost said he would take her from me, torture her, and assure that she was no longer pure. He stated he would do unspeakable things to her, and then leave pieces of her for me to find. All because she is destined to be my Sacred Wife, a Rothesay,” Zeke reveals, his voice quivering with a mixture of fear and determination.

“You didn't think it wise to raise the alarm, Ezekiel? To gather men before you came after this lunatic?” His father questions with disbelief.

“There was no time. I was knocked out for too long, and I knew he was coming here to hurt her. I had to get to her, father. Abe and I got here as fast as we could to save Dinah. We were immediately attacked; the bastard blew up the vehicle we traveled in, and we barely made it out,” Zeke explains urgently.

“Abraham has been shot, Ezekiel,” Noah points out with a raised brow. “How did that happen, son?”

“The *Ghost* tried to shoot me, and Abe put himself in the way of the bullet,” Zeke explains with conviction. “He took a bullet meant to end my life, father. If he hadn’t, you would be burying your son today.” Damn, this guy spins stories like nobody’s business. I almost want to clap for the performance he’s putting on.

“Blessed be the saints, son,” Noah exclaims, his eyes scanning over Sammy and me. I can see Zeke’s body tensing in response. “This maniac could have killed you. He almost killed Abraham.”

“He managed to infiltrate the house despite Abe and me putting up a fight,” Zeke explains urgently. “Father, it’s not just one man; we were wrong in our intel. There are two of them, maybe more. We saw at least two. It’s like we’re dealing with two ghosts.”

Noah takes a step back, his gaze shifting from Zeke’s intense eyes to mine and then Sammy’s, searching for confirmation. Does he believe this incredible story that Zeke is weaving? If he doesn’t, we’re all as good as dead.

To intensify the already blazing tension, I begin to whimper and tug at my hair, making my body convulse as I stand before this group of useless men. “*Be weak,*” Zeke had instructed. Well, how about I show them I’m on the brink of a damn nervous breakdown? Because right now, that’s not too far from the truth. Zeke’s strong arms envelop my shoulders, drawing

me into his warm, rugged frame, and I feign weakness, pretending that my legs are about to give out beneath me.

“Dinah, everything’s going to be alright now. You’re safe. I’ll protect you, Snow,” Zeke murmurs into my hair, his voice carrying into the room. Someone clears their throat uncomfortably, clearly unnerved by the emotional display in the room. Nothing but a bunch of weaklings, I think to myself.

“Sir, there was an intruder in the house, a massive man armed to the teeth. I did my utmost to shield my charge. I had her hide while I engaged the assailant. He momentarily overpowered me and got hold of the Sacred Daughter, injuring her before I managed to fend him off. The man is injured now. He escaped just before your arrival,” Sammy’s words roll smoothly off his tongue, his face devoid of any deception. *Bravo, Sammy, bravo.*

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever,” Noah utters, lowering his head in praise. The rest of the men do the same, except Ezekiel and I. We stand pressed against each other, and I can feel his heart racing inside his chest. So, he’s nowhere near as confident as he’s portraying. *Good to know.*

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” All the voices combine, including Zeke’s and Sammy’s, causing my stomach to sour further.

“Matias, Francis, have every inch of the grounds searched for these heathens. Order roadblocks to be set immediately all

around the perimeter. Bring in more men if needed. Flush them out. I want them captured and brought before the Brotherhood for their crimes, where we will crucify them,” Noah orders with a growl.

His attention pivots back to Zeke and me, having dismissed his obedient toy soldiers, who are now going to blindly pursue fictional adversaries through the forest. The absurdity of it all threatens to overwhelm me, the urge to break down in hysterical laughter or tears, perhaps both, surging within.

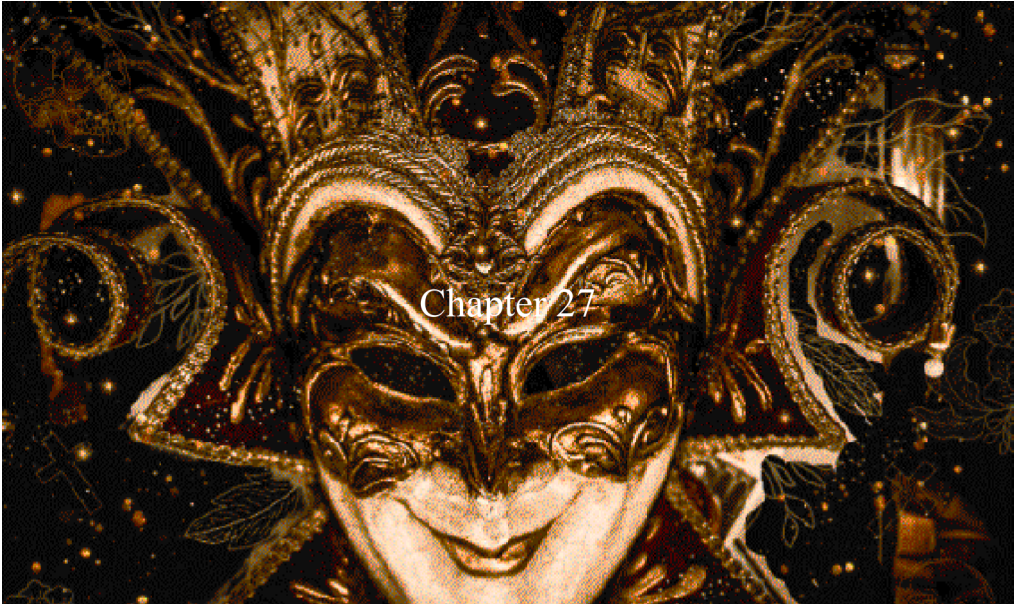
“You are all safe now. The Brotherhood will ensure your safety,” Noah asserts. He glances at Zeke and me before continuing, “Zeke, we must take Dinah back to the capital for her care. I’ll arrange for her to stay with a family with a Sacred Wife and daughter, providing her with the support of other women during this difficult period.” As he begins to walk away, his words leave me with a mix of anger and anxiety.

He’s determined to send me back to the capital, to some stranger’s home where I’ll be under constant surveillance, and Sammy won’t be there to protect me. The urge to refuse, to unleash my fury and act as unruly as possible, is on the tip of my tongue. And believe me, I’m both violent and unruly. But before I can voice my defiance, Zeke opens his traitorous mouth.

“NO! You will do no such thing. She is mine. My Sacred fucking Wife, or she will be within the next twenty-four hours. No one will be taking her from me. You want to keep her safe?

She has to become a Rothesay immediately.” Zeke’s voice is seething with fury, his words laced with defiance and determination.

Just like that, I know he has manipulated the situation to best suit his needs. He has betrayed me and his oath. Really, what did I expect? That he would protect me out of some long-uttered promise to my brother, or perhaps due to a connection we had as children? He’s a traitor, and he has just revealed his true colors.





The Forsaker

Zeke

“NO! You will do no such thing. She is mine. My Sacred fucking Wife, or she will be within the next twenty-four hours. No one will be taking her from me. You want to keep her safe? She has to become a Rothesay immediately.”

Fuck, the minute the words leave my lips, I feel Dinah try to pull away from me. I glare down at her, refusing to release her and tightening my crushing hold. I let her see the perilous truth in my eyes. *I will never let her go, not now, not ever.*

This is the only way to ensure her safety, and shield her from the Brotherhood’s clutches, and her own vengeful desires. No one, not my father, not this psychotic Order, and especially not the fucker currently drilling holes into my head with his venomous glare, will ever take her from me or Abraham again. *You lose, motherfucker.*

“Don’t be ridiculous, Ezekiel. She is still in mourning. It would be highly improper for you to marry her in this state. You’re simply in shock after everything that has happened. A good night’s sleep will bring clarity to your thoughts,” my father scoffs, as if my words were those of a child asking for the impossible.

“Proper or not,” I retort with fierce determination, “you will secure immediate dispensation for our marriage. A clergyman will be in our home by morning, and I will marry Dinah Camrose. She is mine, and I don’t require anyone’s permission, not even yours.” I let my father see the unyielding resolve in my eyes, a warning of the consequences he’ll face if he tries to stop me.

“Ezekiel!” Both my father’s and Dinah’s voices cry out, but I pay them no heed. This will be done; I will have my Snow.

“If you do not comply, Father, I shall fuck her without delay, tarnishing her reputation in the eyes of the Order. She will descend into the status of a fallen woman, cast aside and deemed utterly worthless, indistinguishable from the lowest of dirty whores. The Camrose fortune and its power shall forever elude your desperate, greedy grasp.”

The words ooze from my lips, dripping with venom, and I observe the discomfort that coils within my father, as he struggles to swallow the lump lodged in his throat. Oh yes, I’ve always been privy to the knowledge of her wealth – that immense fortune she now inherits as the sole heir of her family line, now that she has no living male relatives, none other than the Holy Father himself.

It’s astonishing, isn’t it? Her brother was in perfect health a mere few months ago and at the ripe age to marry and reproduce, further securing the Camrose lineage. Now, he lies six feet below the earth, and she’s alone and ripe for the taking.

Dinah Camrose is one of the wealthiest people on the planet, ranking only second to the Holy Father. My own wretched father, consumed by an insatiable greed for her riches and influence, faces an agonizing truth. According to the unforgiving dictates of the Brotherhood laws, only a male blood relation can lay claim to her wealth. With none remaining among the living, other than the Holy Father, the key to that treasure chest now hinges upon a union of matrimony.

What a cruel twist of fate that my scheming father is already bound in unhappy matrimony with my mother. The only other viable option would be me, but only if he possessed the power to manipulate and control me. Which he can't, but he doesn't realize that yet. Hope still glimmers in his eyes that I might someday fulfill my duty to the Rothesay lineage, and the Brotherhood, to become the son he has ceaselessly striven to mold: unwaveringly loyal, obedient, and insatiably hungry for power. A mirror image of himself is what he fucking craves.

What a shame that my only duty is to myself and Abraham, perhaps to Dinah. Although, that is still to be determined on whether Abe lives or not.

“Son! Please see reason; let's not be hasty here,” my father tries with his negotiating tone of voice, but there is no negotiating here. I will have her; she is all mine. She will have to marry me. Whether she agrees is irrelevant because now, I'll never let the little psychotic bitch go, and I currently hold all the cards.

“What? NO!” Dinah tries harder to pull away from me. For a moment, I actually think she’s going to slap me as she tries frantically to claw at my arms, as they hold her in my embrace. I tighten my fingers until they are bruising her skin and let her see the restraint I’m using, to stop myself from slapping her and pushing her up against a wall and fucking her here and now, regardless of who would witness it. *I might even enjoy it.*

“You are mine, Dinah Camrose. Given to me by the grace of God. By your father and your brother. By the fucking Brotherhood who keeps God’s order. You will marry me without complaint, without hesitation, or I’ll take what I want from you and throw you into a hole in the ground where no one will ever find you.” I shake her hard until her teeth clack together and her frightened blue-gray eyes meet mine.

Yes, that right there is what I want: the look of terror on her pretty face. She knows that I am not just making idle threats. I will follow through with every one of them, and no one will stop me. I could push her up against the wall right now and slam my hardening cock into her pretty cunt, and not even my father would stop me. She has no power here. I can take from her all that I want, even her very fucking life.

Her guard will die without the slightest hesitation if he tries to make any move to prevent me from carrying out my threats. He’s acutely aware of this truth, which explains his silent fury rather than any reckless attempt to shatter my defiance. A sly smirk graces my lips, a dare in itself, openly provoking him to take action.

“Don’t do this!” She begs. Her voice catches in her throat as a tear slithers down from the corner of her eye, like a diamond over the canvas of her alabaster and bloody skin. Skin I long to mar with my touch, ensuring that all who gaze at her will observe her ownership. Such a pretty little whore she is when she cries. I can’t wait to witness her down on her knees with my cock shoved in her tight throat and her air trapped in her lungs, as I take from her all that I want, all that I’m due.

“Let us get her back to the capital. It is no longer safe here for any of us.” My father pivots to confront Sammy, who is visibly struggling to conceal his anger. His efforts at composure are less effective than they should be, prompting my father to arch an eyebrow in his direction. “Prepare whatever essentials your ward may require. She won’t be returning to this house ever again. You shall accompany her to the capital, where we shall deliberate upon your future.”

His words are a veiled threat. I wonder if Sammy is smart enough to decipher them without comment? The instant I lock eyes with Sammy, the truth becomes painfully clear. He is indeed furious, and I glimpse the harbinger of my demise within the unfathomable depths of his dark blue gaze.

Those eyes, the eyes of a predator, silently vow to deliver torment in retribution for my recent actions. I make no effort to conceal my lack of remorse, letting him bear witness to my unyielding resolve. I welcome any challenge he might pose. In the battle for Dinah, I’m prepared to fight tooth and nail, even if it means facing my own demise. In the end, he shall know the bitter taste of fucking defeat.

“I fucking hate you. I will see you dead, you fucking bastard.” Dinah leans into my frame and whispers the words so only I can hear them. She digs her nails deeply into the skin of my arms until they break the surface, and droplets of blood flow down my skin. “I’m going to ensure there isn’t a drop of blood left in your body when I’m done with you, Zeke.”

Her threats have the opposite effect on me than she planned. Instead of causing me any fear or unease, they make me hard. Harder than I’ve ever been, and I let her feel the proof of it when I force her hand down to my straining cock, trapped behind the fabric of my pants and desperate to be inside of all her holes.

“Stop turning me on with your words, Snow, unless you want me to fuck you right here in front of everyone.” A mischievous grin graces my lips, and I see further anger across her own. My Snow is a volcano waiting to explode with violence. Fuck, I wish everyone would disappear so I could watch her erupt. I know that her fire will burn both of us alive. How sweet the sound of our combined agony will be.

“I will kill you,” she seethes between clenched teeth as she forcefully pulls her hand away from me, and I allow her to withdraw.

“You can try, princess. In fact, I welcome all your attempts.” I grab a fistful of her hair, holding her in place as a sharp cry leaves her lips, and before she can utter one more hateful word, I slam my mouth down on hers in a bruising kiss filled

with ravenous hunger, rage, and the need to dominate what is mine.

She fights with her whole body, yanking on her head and ripping strands from her scalp. Her hands slap and push at me, digging into my bruised and battered flesh, while her legs try to kick and knee me in the balls. All her fight succeeds in doing is turning me on further and exhausting her.

“Enough, Ezekiel! The poor girl has been through a trauma. Let us get her to safety and add no further injury to her body or mind,” my father shouts at me, forcing me to dislodge my lips from hers, and she tries her best to bite my face. *My little ravenous wolf.*

Somewhere in the house, a door slams loudly, and that has Dinah coming back to herself as she looks around the room for Sammy, who has walked out of it while I kissed her. I offer her a sad smile at the hurt that crosses her features. She is alone amongst her enemy, amongst the hyenas who would like nothing more than to devour her and pick her bones clean. “I am your salvation, Snow. You had better start realizing that now.”

I push her towards the doorway and my father’s waiting form. He exits the room with one contemptuous look back at me and then leaves the house, heading towards his vehicle, and I shove Dinah in the same direction.

“Wait! Sammy.” She turns her sorrowful eyes to me, and in their depths, I see fear. Genuine fear, not the shit she was

showing my father. “Please, Zeke. Please, I need him. He’s my Abe.”

Her words are a knife burying deep inside of me with a force that almost takes my breath. *He is her Abe.* Does that mean she will not survive without him? Does she know how much Abe means to me? She must. She’s been watching us for a long time, it seems. Can I really deprive her of the man she breathes for, even if that man is not me?

What if someone tried to take Abe from you? How would you react? What lengths would you go to to get him back? I’d do anything. I’d do everything I could to get him back, and I’d never stop fighting. Never.

“He will be right behind us in another vehicle, Snow. I will not remove him from your life.” I lick my lips and watch as she tracks the movement. “At least not yet.”



Chapter 28



The Sinner

Dinah

I find myself pacing once more within the confines of this bedroom, the space that Ezekiel thrust and abandoned me into. Back and forth, my steps echo between the barred window and the locked door, a relentless dance that mirrors the mounting pressure within me. With each stride, my blood surges as if demanding release, threatening to shatter the fragile vessel of my composure. I am now a captive in this once-familiar house, dragged here against my will, my protests silenced in the oppressive air by Ezekiel's threats.

Upon our arrival at the capital, and the entrance into the heavily guarded Rothesay compound, I found no need for pretense of my insanity any longer. I had truly become unhinged. My sanity had unraveled like a threadbare tapestry. I lashed out, kicking, screaming, and thrashing at anyone foolish enough to draw near, drawing blood and sowing fear in those unfortunate enough to be within my reach.

Hate was a song sung to me by a cruel and unrelenting mistress in my mind, and with her melody, she demanded that I fight against the restraints of a fate I did not wish to succumb to.

I even succeeded in sinking my teeth into the side of Ezekiel's neck, leaving behind a gruesome imprint of my teeth, which showcased themselves as his blood trickled down

his skin. His parents watched in horror as he carried me forcefully into the house, as though I were nothing more than a misbehaving child to be dealt with. *Motherfucker.*

The headbutt I delivered as we crossed the threshold of his front door was nothing short of brutal, sending both of us tumbling to the floor, clutching our throbbing skulls. The pain didn't deter me, though, as I tried to gouge out his pretty eyes, and had to be physically restrained by three menacing guards. All of the malicious profanity that left my lips directed at everyone in the room had his distraught mother collapsing into a fainting spell. *Weakass bitch.*

Whenever Ezekiel dares to approach me, I unleash a snarl and become a wild creature poised to strike. The walls and doors have borne the brunt of my fury, enduring relentless kicks and punches. This once-opulent and luxurious prison of a room now lies in complete ruins; even the imposing four-poster bed has succumbed to my rage, and toppled to the floor.

The windows, once a glimmer of hope, are now barred from the outside—a direct response to my desperate attempt to escape hours ago through them. Now, there is no escape from this wretched captivity. I am once again a prisoner of the Order.

Damn it, I despise him. Every fiber of my being revolts against his very existence. I should've allowed Sammy to finish him on those cliffs. My lapse in fucking judgment birthed this nightmare. Sammy's whereabouts remain a mystery; I caught only a fleeting glimpse of him when they

dragged me into the Rothesay mansion, but hours have since passed without any sign of him.

No matter how weary and battered my body, rest remains an elusive specter. Thoughts whirl relentlessly within the confines of my mind, and fear clutches me, pulling me into its suffocating abyss. I'm a damned fool. I placed trust where it never should have been bestowed. For a fleeting moment, I dared to believe Ezekiel would protect Sammy and me from harm. Yet, here I languish, imprisoned within these walls, while preparations are being made to wed me to that wretched bastard.

As much as I fucking hate him right now, and I would love to take one of my blades to his throat, slicing it open from ear to ear, and then bathing in his hot blood, I can't because I don't have any weapons left. The malicious asshole personally conducted a search once we arrived at the house, discovering what I had concealed beneath that hideous black dress. The memory causes a shudder to race over my skin.

“Remove your dress willingly, Snow, so I don't have to fucking hurt you, even though nothing would bring me more pleasure right now. We both know you have weapons stashed somewhere on you.” His brows knit in a grave expression as I make yet another attempt to slip past him towards the door.

“Fuck you, you piece of shit. I will end you for what you have done!” I scream, grab a whiskey decanter from the side table, and throw it at his head. It crashes, hitting the wall and shattering as he avoids the missile.

“You’re being such a difficult bitch, and here I’m trying to help you, to save you. How fucking ungrateful you have become, Snow.” He lunges at me as I throw yet another bottle at him. His words sting like barbs in my skin.

“Ungrateful? Difficult? Let me show you how ungrateful and difficult I am. Come here so I can rip out your fucking heart, you monster!” I let my left arm fly out and whack him in the side of the head, as I quickly move backward and jump over one of the chairs in the room. A large crash sounds behind me as he shoves furniture out of the way to get at me.

“We can do this the easy way, Snow, or the fucking hard way! Why do you have to be so fucking difficult? Just give me the weapons!” He roars and charges me, sending an ottoman flying across the area rug and slamming into a wall.

“Screw you! You’ll never have power over me!” My anger flares, a searing blaze in the depths of my being.

“Hard way it is!” He growls back and charges at me, his shoulder hitting my stomach and tossing me onto the ground with a large bang, while his body lands on top of me and crushes me with his heavy weight.

His hand wraps forcefully around my chin, squeezing tightly and preventing me from biting him, as his other hand grabs a fistful of my hideous dress and yanks. The sound of material tearing is loud in the room. “What a pretty, psychotic bitch you are.” His rough, tattooed hand grabs my bra-covered breast and squeezes tightly until a pained gasp escapes my lips.

“Hmm, it looks like you’re all grown up, Snow.” He caresses my tender globe before moving on to my other breast and giving it the same treatment, all while I struggle to fight off his touch. “I’m going to enjoy fucking these beauties while Abe fucks that tight ass of yours.”

“I’ll kill you both, I swear it. If it’s the last thing I do, I’ll kill you, Ezekiel!” I try to head butt him, but his hand moves down from my jaw and seizes tightly around my throat, impeding my airway immediately, and causing my face to radiate heat while my vision dips into murky darkness.

“What a way to go, though, Snow. I think both of us would enjoy it, especially if you stopped breathing at the same time, my pretty whore.” He traces the side of my face from my jaw to my eye with his warm, wet tongue, and then, he withdraws, his gaze fixed intently on my response. “Open your vicious mouth, Dinah!”

I’m momentarily confused with the request, so much so that I open my mouth to get air into my lungs and let further hateful profanity fly, when the bastard spits in my mouth. Shock races through my system, causing all my limbs to freeze as I stare up at him in surprise. His other hand slides down my abdomen, heading towards the line of the boy shorts I wear, and without the slightest hesitation, he once again spits in my mouth. What. The. Fuck.

“Swallow, my dirty little slut.” His grip on my neck lessens just enough for me to comply with his request. The desire to spit it back in his face rises within me, and I go to do just that

at the exact moment his thick, hot fingers make contact with my clit over my underwear. A gasp wrenches from my lips, forcing his spit down into my throat and causing me to start choking on it.

“Jesus, the sound of you choking is the most beautiful music I have ever heard, Dinah. I can’t wait until you make that sound with my cock pouring hot cum down your throat.”

His fingers slide over my dampening skin in slow, forceful strokes over my throbbing clit. Round and round, they circle, and before I can circumvent my body, it heats up and my core spasms, letting wetness sweep from within me and dampen the fabric further, between my needy cunt and his fingers. I try to lift my legs to kick at him, but the fucker uses his own to stop my movements.

“Look at how your cunt weeps for me, Dinah. Does it need a little more? Do you crave my fingers inside of you, baby? Does my little psychopath want me to fill her up? Do you want to be used by me, Snow?”

Holy fuck! His dirty words being uttered in his deep voice, while his glimmering green eyes keep mine locked on his, are causing me to become even more aroused. Moisture escapes me, drenching my panties and causing a guttural groan to leave his lips. His fingers suddenly stop and withdraw from my throbbing clit, and a traitorous whimper escapes from my lips.

He slips his large, tattooed hand below the band of my panties until his hot fingers stroke my swollen and soaked pussy lips with no barrier between them. “Baby, you are so

wet for me already, and I have barely touched you. Fuck. I like that you're bare with just this little strip leading me to my treasure. It will make eating this juicy cunt so much more pleasurable. You want me to lick and suck you, don't you, Snow? To swallow you down like the big, bad wolf sitting down to a feast. A feast that is all you."

With his last word spoken, two of his fingers plunge inside of my tight core, and my body lifts off the ground with the thick invasion. He doesn't wait for me to adjust to the intrusion. Instead, his fingers start a punishing rhythm inside of me that has a bite of pain to it, and causes my eyes to want to roll into the back of my head.

"That's it, baby, ride my fingers like the slut I know you are."

I don't even realize that my body has started to move beneath him until his words meet the air around us and penetrate my lust-induced fog. My pussy undulates on his thick digits, chasing the harsh pounding he generously provides. The orgasm my body is helpless to fight rises within me in a blaze of heat and light, tightening my every muscle. More lust-induced whimpers escape from my lips before I can swallow them.

His grip on my neck tightens painfully, starving me of oxygen, and only the barest shadow of light now enters my eyes. I can feel myself rising amongst the threads of rainbowed electricity beginning to consume me. Warning bells try to give rise to the fact that I'm just about to pass out as I finally spiral

to the pinnacle of the mountain that he was throwing me off of, and for a moment, I welcome and crave the insanity of it.

His fingers loosen at the last moment, and his mouth crashes down on mine. His tongue invades my screaming mouth and consumes me like a hungry animal. My body doesn't question the effect he's demanding from it. It explodes as I cum with an unhinged scream into his mouth, one he swallows with an animalistic growl that makes all the hair on my body stand on end.

His fingers continue to work me through the orgasm, slowing as I return to myself and can barely move an inch. I can feel his hard erection pressed into my side and straining against the confines of the pants he wears, the heat radiating off his body mixed with his scent, causing my body to spasm again without restraint.

"Fuck, you are so beautiful, Snow." He gently pecks me on my lips before his hand rips at the hidden blade in my lower back and the other inside my bra's band. "Deadly too, my sweet, unhinged psycho."

He pushes himself up and away from my body, relieving me of my last remaining weapons, then creates a significant distance between us. I observe him from my position on the ground, my head still spinning. My legs still open wide, my bra in complete disarray, and my chest trying desperately to drag much-needed oxygen into my lungs.

I watch, captivated, as he brings the fingers that have just been inside of my core to his lips and licks, like some large

feline, before sucking them into his mouth and groaning. The sight before me is so depraved and sinful that it causes my needy core to tighten again.

“God, you taste like fucking heaven, Snow.”

He steps away from me, tucking my remaining arsenal into his pants and dragging his hands through his thick, obsidian hair. His eyes glitter with unsuppressed heat as he trails them across my body. The stare is so intense that I can almost feel his blazing touch, even from the distance that separates us.

I manage, awkwardly and stiffly, to sit up and clutch the torn fabric of my dress in my hands. Immediate guilt and self-disgust rush through me for succumbing, and enjoying the feel of his fingers inside me, while even now, sitting here captive, I crave his mouth back on mine. Embarrassment hits me like a tidal wave for coming like the slut he named me and wanting more. He’s my fucking enemy. What the hell am I doing?

He turns his back towards me, as if he really doesn’t fear me in the least, as he moves towards the door. “Cover yourself with one of the blankets and make sure the tattoos aren’t visible. I’ll have someone bring you fresh clothes.” A deep, frustrated sigh exhales from his lips. “And Snow, there’s no point in fighting this. This marriage will happen; it’s the only way to ensure your safety.”

He glances over his shoulder at me, his expression severe and deadly. “Don’t make me hurt or kill Sammy to garner your compliance. I will if I have to, but I’d prefer not to hurt the man who has kept you safe all these years.” Without another

word, he leaves the room, slamming the heavy, ornate wooden door behind him and the sound of the lock engaging from the outside resonates loudly, along with my ragged breaths.

I shake my head to bring me back from that moment, the one I keep reliving hours later. I can still taste him on my lips. Can still feel the possession of his fingers inside of my pussy. His demand to own and control me in the air all around me. Fuck, how am I going to get out of this mess? How are Sammy and I going to get free from here?

Sammy. Fuck, once again, the feeling of betrayal fills me, causing self-loathing to once again rise and saturate every part of me. He's not going to react well when he finds out what Zeke did to me, and how my body succumbed to the pleasure he created. I have betrayed him. My body yielded to the pleasure another man gave me, even if it was under duress. I still came like a whore.

Even now, hours later, I can still feel the slickness inside of me, and my panties are once again wet from just the memory of how he punished me. How he took what he wanted from me without the slightest hesitation or regard for my feelings.

I was relieved when the door finally opened, and a guard wearing the blue uniform of the Brotherhood threw another hideous black dress at me, a few hours ago. I had been sitting here with nothing but a sheet wrapped around me until then.

I feared that at any moment, Noah might walk in and lay eyes on the intricate artwork that adorned my body. Such a discovery alone would give the Order ample evidence for my

impending punishment, and death sentence. It would also seal Sammy's fate, ensuring he'd never witness another sunrise.

Would Zeke really punish Sammy? Would he use him against me as a bargaining chip to get what he wanted? Why the fuck does he want to marry me anyways? I tried to kill the psycho less than twenty-four hours ago. I wanted to kill them both, and I'll never stop trying. *He has to know that. Right?*

All these never-ending questions plague me and give me a headache. All I want is to lie down and sleep like the dead, forgetting about this world that keeps me trapped in a gilded cage. *Would I ever be free? Would I ever see Sammy again?*

I righten one of the chaises and throw my body down on its plush surface. I just need to rest my eyes for a quick moment. I have been up for almost two days straight, and my body is riddled with injuries, that are siphoning away what little energy I have left. I just need a quick nap, and then I'll figure a way out of this mess. A method that I can use to murder all these men who continue to try to make me a prisoner of my fate.

My last thought is of a giant covered in tattoos, lying deadly still on the forest floor, blood pouring from his abdomen, as his amber eyes call out to me and implore me to help him. To save him.

Abraham.





Zeke

Jesus, I can still taste her in my mouth and feel her warm, violent body pressed up against mine, even hours later. A shudder filled with pleasure runs through my body at the thought of how tight her pussy was, and how she will feel once I have my cock balls deep inside of her. And I will be inside of her at the first available opportunity. Her body doesn't lie, unlike that manipulative mouth of hers. She enjoyed what I did to her. She enjoyed how I took from her and how I gave her pleasure. *My own little whore.*

Mine. The word echoes in the deepest recess of my mind, repeatedly demanding I go back in there and claim what belongs to me. Force her to take my cock and enjoy anything, and everything, I want to do to her.

The image of her taking me savagely inside of her delectable pussy while Abe fucks her mouth enters my mind, ensuring I have to adjust my hardening length in my pants, while the guard across the room gives me a curious glance, before a blush stains his cheeks. *Keep looking fucker, and maybe I will shove my dick down your throat.*

Always someone watching me in this fucking house. It's why I couldn't wait to get the hell out of here and have my own space with Abe. Not that we aren't watched there by the scum my father and his have planted under our roof. At least

there, though, I was the master of my domain, rather than here, where my father controls all the moves on the board, or at least he thinks he does. The corner of my mouth lifts with the knowledge of all the secrets I know. The ones my father thinks he keeps safe. Except there is no safety amongst killers and thieves.

Speaking of the devil, he walks through the study door, annoyance and frustration clearly evident in every line of his face and body, after dealing with my mother and her hysterical behavior. My eyes roll at the thought of the spectacle my mother and Dinah both were. It almost makes me want to wash my hands of both of them. Privileged women are such a taxing bore, one I usually didn't have the energy to deal with.

My mother's overly dramatic ass fainted when Dinah started screaming profanities, and behaving like the damn antichrist, as we brought her into the house. She's now demanding that we remove my Snow from our godly home, like she even has a say in the matter.

There is no God within these walls, and if she only knew the sins I have committed, she would shut her judgemental mouth. After all, she is no sainted Madonna. She is as much a sinner as the rest of us. She just likes to pretend she is better than those around her. A whore is still a whore, no matter what clothing you wear or title you have.

“Ezekiel, blessed be, my son, may God continue to grace you with his light. We need to speak. Son, you must see reason.”

God, gracing me? That's a funny way to put what is happening here. Pretty sure that if God could ascertain what is in my head, and all the depraved things I want to do to Dinah Camrose, he wouldn't be blessing me or gracing me with anything. No, he would probably smite me where I stand.

"Did you get the dispensation, or do I have to send out for one?" I don't bother with the response to his blessing. Fuck him and his Brotherhood. The only thing I needed to see right now is the signed paper that assured me I could marry Dinah, and protect her.

"Son, I think you should reconsider the timing of this. A killer is still on the loose, and Dinah has already been through so much. She's still in deep mourning, Ezekiel."

I narrow my eyes on my father, the man I can usually read when he's being a shifty motherfucker. If I didn't know better, I would think my father was trying to dissuade me from marrying Dinah Camrose. Surprising since he was hounding me just weeks ago to do that very thing. I wonder what has changed? What information does the slimy bastard have that I don't?

Fear ripples through my veins like poison, trying to consume me at the thought that there is yet another threat out there to Dinah. One that I don't know about yet. I have to protect her at all costs. I have to protect Abraham, too.

What about Sammy? My mind questions snarkily. Fuck, I guess what's one more asshole to the list? I have a feeling

Dinah will refuse to continue breathing without him, and since I need her alive, that ties my hands a bit.

“It’s because there is a killer out there that I need to marry her. Have you forgotten that the killer came after me and Abraham? That he tracked Dinah down and tried to kill her as a way to hurt me? That the only reason she’s not dead, is because Sammy was able to protect her until we could arrive.” Of course, I don’t bother mentioning that she is, in fact, said killer. The only harm that could come to her is from men just like me, and him—brotherhood men, not some fictional ghost.

“Of course I haven’t!” He slams his palms down on the desk between us, his face blotchy with the anger he’s trying to control. “I haven’t forgotten that this psychopath tried to murder my only son. That he came after you, and then after the woman who is intended for you. A Sacred Daughter! That Abraham Mercier is recovering from a gunshot wound down the hall, and could have died!”

“Then why would you try to stop this from happening?” I shout back, unable to stop myself from losing my grip on my temper.

“I have my reasons, son. You need to trust me. Also, the girl is not well. You...you saw her. She’s...she might be insane, Ezekiel.”

A look of horror crosses his aged face when he mentions Dinah, and her recent unhinged behavior. Even I must admit I have doubts about whether she faked all that, or if she genuinely is insane. I’m guessing it’s a bit of both, and for

some reason, it doesn't scare me. In fact, it has the opposite effect and entices me closer. Like a fly drawn to the light, knowing it should avoid it but can't.

“Regardless if that is the case or not, it doesn't matter; she is to be my wife. Nothing will change that, not her temper tantrums, not this fucking Unholy Ghost trying to kill us, and certainly not you and whatever shifty shit you're up to. I will marry Dinah Camrose tomorrow, with or without your help, and place her under the protection that the Rothesay name will provide.”

He slams his fist onto the tabletop once again, causing items to scatter off the desk and the guard to move forward to retrieve them. They are such obedient assholes, always ready to do my father's bidding. He glares at the guard as if he had forgotten he was even in the room with us. “Get the fuck out of the room, Mitasis!”

Mitasis slides back as if his whole body has been hit with lightning, before scurrying like the rat he is from the room and closing the door firmly behind him. My father turns his malignant green glower back on me, and I'm sure I see hate in its depths. *Don't worry, fucker. The feeling is more than mutual.*

“I will not allow it, Ezekiel! I am still the head of this household. I am the Founding Father, and you will respect me! The Lord our God requires it, as does the Brotherhood, which keeps its order. I will decide when, and if, you are to marry that creature.”

A depraved chuckle leaves my lips, and I can't stop it from rolling over me into a full-fledged belly laugh that brings tears to my eyes. This asshole still doesn't understand that he can't control me. That I am no longer afraid of him. "You...will...not...allow it. Fuck! That...is some...funny shit."

I wipe the smirk off my face and stare at my father, looking deep into his eyes and letting him see right into the darkness that invades me. The one that lurks just below the surface and waits for every opportunity to be unleashed on the world. The darkness that makes me just as much a killer as Dinah Camrose.

"Nothing about this situation is humorous. You have a killer after you. You have brought an unhinged girl into this house, one who I am almost positive has been defiled by her guard, and you are demanding to marry her. Have you thought about how that will look to the Brotherhood, Ezekiel? What will you do about the guard once you marry her?"

"I'm not worried about the guard or her supposed defilement. He has protected what belongs to me all these years, and kept her safe. As for her being unhinged, aren't we all? She is pure. I had my fingers up her tight cunt mere hours ago. When my cock slides through her, she will fucking bleed in her purity."

A sarcastic laugh leaves my lips at my father's look of horror. "The Brotherhood will thank me for doing my sacred duty, and marrying one of our own with a high-ranking

founding family's name, and breeding her until we can replenish God's army."

"Ezekiel!"

"I'm not done speaking, so perhaps you should shut your mouth, father," I interrupt, my irritation rising with every moment I am forced to spend in his presence.

"The guard will become part of my household. He will remain with Dinah and help us to protect her from this Unholy Ghost, and anyone else who would think to harm her. He is loyal to her, and no amount of money can buy that type of loyalty. Furthermore, Abe will remain by my side with no further attempts to marry him off. You, personally, will speak to Peter and stop him from actively searching for a wife for him. When, and if, Abraham is ready to marry and leave my side, it will be his choice alone. Not either of yours."

"These are big demands, son. Demands that you have no right or power to make. You are but a son waiting to take his place; I am the Founding Father. Now be a good boy and do what I say, Ezekiel. Let's not make this more difficult than it has to be, shall we?"

He speaks to me like I am but a spoiled child. One caught with his hand in the cookie jar instead of a grown man, ready to knock his fucking teeth out. Disgust fills me for the man who has had a hand in raising me. He helped shape the monster that I am, and he doesn't even realize the danger I am to him.

A deranged-sounding laugh leaves my lips, and I watch as Noah Rothesay shivers with unease from just the sound. It brings me immense pleasure to know that right now, I terrify him. He hasn't seen me at my worst yet, but he will. I'm the villain he didn't see coming. While he worries about killers hiding in the shadows, here I am in the light right before him.

“How very basic and powerless you think me, father. You say they're big demands, and I'm here to tell you they're but the tip of the iceberg. The real demands are buried under frigid, deadly waters that you can't see yet, but you will.”

I move around the desk towards him, taking slow, menacing steps. “You think me weak, old man. A child that you can maneuver on a chess board to your advantage, but what you fail to see is that you taught me the game, and I've always been a quick learner. The student now surpasses the master.”

Two more steps, and then I'm standing right in front of the man who used to tuck me in at night with tales of the saints, long gone from this world. “Secrets seem to have a way of not staying so secret, and skeletons buried in shallow graves have a tendency to make reappearances at the most inopportune of times.”

I pick a piece of lint from his navy blazer and watch his jaw tighten. “Like, say, for instance, secrets that you wouldn't want the Holy Father to know about, like your involvement in the murder of his kin. Or how about the sale of Sacred Daughters and Sacred Wives for nefarious reasons? Pretty sure he wouldn't approve of those.”

My father tries to step back from me, but I wrap my hand in his lapel and hold him firm. “How about the siphoning of funds from various Brotherhood accounts over the years? Those funds were used to buy further influence and power for the Rothesay name, weren’t they?”

A smug smile crosses my lips as I watch his eyes widen dramatically. “Then there’s the little games you and Peter have my mother participate in. Ahh, yes, remind me. Is she not one of the Holy Father’s cousins? And was Maria Camrose not one of his precious and adored nieces? The Holy Father himself walked her down the aisle all those years ago when she married Francis Camrose, didn’t he?”

His body tenses, his shoulders rise closer to his ears, and I watch as his Adam’s apple bobs. *Gotcha, motherfucker.* “I’m sure he would be interested in what goes on behind closed doors, or maybe he already knows. The more important question is, what would happen if that information were to become public knowledge, say with videos and photographs, appearing out of thin air? He would have to disavow you and hunt you down like animals. You would have to stand trial before a populace just itching for another revolution.” I pause for dramatic effect.

“You see, father,” that word leaves my lips with as much disdain as I can produce. “I will have my demands met. All of them, and you will do it quietly so as not to garner any unwanted attention. I have all of that information ready and safe, just waiting to land in the hands of the rebels, and our beloved Holy Father. If something, say, were to happen to me,

it would appear immediately in the hands of those who could do the most damage with it.”

“You would betray your own family name?” His voice is soft as he utters the words.

“I would end our family name with a fucking smile on my face, and meet the devil with a warm embrace.”

He looks at me with pure anger and hatred in his eyes. “You truly are a demon from the bowels of hell, Ezekiel. I should have had you killed years ago; you and Abraham. Neither one of you is right in the head.”

“Yes, you should have, but alas, that opportunity has passed. Do we have an understanding father, or do you need further convincing?” I bristle at the sight of him, standing there wishing he could have had me murdered.

His green eyes shine with wrathful loathing; his lip is curled in a snarl he wishes he could unleash. I almost wish he would, so I could slam my fist into his pathetic face. It must feel horrible to have your power taken away; maybe now he has an inkling of what he makes others feel.

“You would have to marry the girl immediately, Ezekiel. Tonight. You cannot keep her safe in your care without her carrying our name, especially if you have already abused her. She could cry foul to the Holy Father, and then your head would roll just as mine would. She would have to forfeit the remainder of her mourning period, and a special exception would need to be provided by the Holy Father himself.”

“Which you will see that we have in mere hours, won’t you, father? You, with all that power that you have garnered over the years,” I question with a haughty eyebrow.

He nods in affirmation, but I can see the resentment behind the action. He knows I have him by the balls, and it’s not something he’s enjoying. “All of the rituals would have to be observed. Even your threats can’t prevent that. A rushed wedding is still that to the Brotherhood, a wedding. You will have to bind her to you until death separates you. Life. Blood. Faith.”

A rush of sadistic pleasure races through me at the thought of the rituals, and of binding Dinah to me until death. Even then, if I were to die first, I would ensure she joined me in the underworld. Not even death will be able to take her from me now.

“One more thing, father. All of the Camrose fortune will be turned over to me solely. You will not dip your fingers into my pot. I expect those papers with the transfer of funds you have diligently held as executor, since Gabriel’s unfortunate and questionable death, to be signed and ready before my vows.”

I pat his shoulder and straighten out his tie, then turn around and move towards the door. I need to get out of this polluted room. Away from this man, who I once believed loved me. A younger, naive version of me who didn’t see the world for what it indeed was.

Corrupt. Evil. Dangerous.

“I hope you know what you are doing, Ezekiel. Your sins will not be forgiven. You have trespassed against your own father, breaking one of God’s most sacred laws. There will be consequences to pay, boy.”

I don’t bother replying to him. His threats mean nothing to me now. He, who holds the power, is redeemed. I open the door and walk out of the room, feeling lighter and more hopeful than I have in months.

Now I just have to convince a beautiful, psychotic serial killer to marry me so I can keep her, and the fucking man she’s obviously in love with, alive and safe.





Sammy

It's been hours since I was shoved into this hell hole of a locked cellar at gunpoint. Hours since I last saw Dinah as they dragged her away, kicking and screaming, after she bloodied that cunt Ezekiel and his useless mom dropped to the floor.

I tear my hands through my long hair in aggravation of not even having a way to keep it out of my face. Various emotions are cycling through me, but the most prominent of them is fear. Fear for my Nightstar at the hands of men from the Brotherhood.

Fuck, they could be hurting her. They could be torturing her. What if that cunt betrayed her? What if they know that she is actually the Unholy Ghost?

No, if they knew that, I would have been dragged out of here and tortured, or killed, for helping her. I have to believe Ezekiel's words. He said he wanted to protect her, that he wouldn't let anyone harm her.

It's a hard pill to swallow that another man is out there protecting my Nightstar from the evil men who surround us, and pretend to be God's faithful servants. Dinah is all that I have in this world. She is the only thing that matters. The reason that my heart still beats in my chest. If they needed my

life in place of hers, and I truly believed she would be safe, I would gladly sacrifice myself to their blades.

The door behind me clicks, and I hear it unlock. The dark wood door swings open, and on its threshold is Ezekiel Rothesay. The fucker ensured they took all my weapons when they locked me in here. That won't stop me from killing him, though, if something has happened to Dinah. I will take his life with my bare hands, and send him to meet his maker, *the fucking devil*.

“You can relax, fucker. She's fine. Really angry, very destructive, and more than likely insane, but she's fine.”

He steps into the room without any semblance of fear, like I didn't almost throw him off a cliff just over a day ago. He's changed clothing and tidied himself up since I was brought in here, and now he looks like what he is. A tatted, spoiled prince of the Brotherhood. Meanwhile, I smell like death and am still covered in his lover's blood.

“I need to see her. I don't fucking trust you.”

“Too bad, Samuel Wendover, that's all you get, my word. You will have to learn to trust it and trust me with Dinah. We both want the same thing.” He takes another step inside of the cellar, the door wide open behind him, taunting me to escape and go find Dinah.

He must catch the train of my thoughts because a huge Cheshire cat grin crosses his features. “You can try to get past me. You might even make it, but you will never get to her before you're riddled with bullets. By all means, go ahead.”

He waves his hand at the open doorway. “You, dead, is one less headache I have to deal with. Dinah will need to confront this loss, as she has done with everyone else who abandoned her in this unforgiving and fucked up world.”

“What do you want?”

“Let’s not play games, shall we? You and I both know I want Dinah.” I almost believe he’s sincere, but his cold eyes give him away. He might desire Dinah, but that’s not the only reason he wants her. Something else is at play here. The true reason he is willing to hide the fact that she is the *‘Unholy Ghost’*.

“There is something else behind your desire for her. She’s not the prize, is she? She’s just a means to get you closer to it.”

He doesn’t dispute my accusation and instead moves further into the room, running his hands over the various food items stored on the shelves. He picks up a jar of peaches before replacing it on the shelf and returning to face me.

“I will be marrying Dinah in just a few short hours,” he interjects, raising his hands to preemptively halt the rage-filled words of my impending refusal.

“Stop. Let me save you some breath. Regardless of your objections or hers, this needs to happen to ensure her safety. Right now, the Brotherhood is out there hunting for two men they think are the Unholy Ghost. Men who have killed over twenty of my Order’s brethren.”

He runs his hands through his Onyx-hued locks, and I finally notice the lines of exhaustion across his features and how he moves stiffly, as if in physical pain. He survived not one, but two beatings, and a stab wound at mine and Dinah's hands, and the guy is still standing. Still fucking plotting. A small wisp of respect fills me at the thought that he is strong. That he could, in fact, protect Dinah.

“They will continue to hunt for them, but I will ensure Dinah is never suspected. She will remain safe under my protection and with my name guarding her life.” He pauses and looks at me. I see frustration written across his features. Like he is forcing himself to do something he doesn't want to do.

“You will remain by her side and ensure, not only that her sanity remains intact, but that she doesn't try to escape the protection that I am giving you both.” He meets my gaze, his never wavering, never showing an ounce of fear or contempt.

“How do you propose to keep them thinking the Ghost is still out there if she's locked up?” The minute the words leave my lips, the knowledge of how he plans to do it blares right in front of me. “You plan to keep killing Brotherhood members, so they think he's still out there.”

This fucking guy is just full of surprises. First, he takes her and promises to keep her safe. Now, he tells me that I can remain at her side. I have no doubt that he either suspects or knows for a fact that I love her, and have been intimate with her. Then, for the biggest surprise of all, he's going to continue

to kill his own, in order to keep the suspicion off of her. The question is, why?

“I might even let her kill a few if she’s a good girl and cooperates. I have a feeling that Dinah doesn’t only do it as a need for vengeance. There was too much joy in the killings. She likes and enjoys her work, doesn’t she?” He questions.

I don’t answer him. My throat constricts at the thought of Dinah still being able to release the pent-up rage inside of her that almost consumed her. She needs that outlet if she’s going to survive. He’s willing to give her that, no doubt, for a price. *Her obedience.* Will she be able to submit to him? The thought of her submitting to anyone other than me fills me with a burning fire, and the need to wrap my hands around his throat.

“I suggest you conserve that anger, Sammy. I’m not your biggest fan, but I’m also not the one who wants to hurt Dinah. I will, if that is the only way to keep her safe. Make no mistake, she is mine. She has always been mine. I could kill you here and now for taking what belongs to me. For depriving me of being her first, as was my right. I won’t, however. Dinah has already lost too much. I won’t take what remains of her family unless you force me to.”

“What do you want from me?” I run over his words in my mind. He knows I am her first and only. He knows she has belonged to me all these years that we have been together. Rather than kill me, he offers me a way to stay at her side, to keep protecting her.

“To help me convince her that this is the only way that she remains safe. Help her see reason. Make her understand that I will not clip her wings, nor take you away from her. That she will not be treated like her mother was. No one will abuse her; I will kill any man who tries. She will belong to me... and Abraham, and you. The three of us will be her protectors, ensuring the Brotherhood never gets their filthy hands on her.”

I let his words ring in my mind, mulling them on a vicious cycle, trying to detect the lie within them. “You’re not a believer, are you? You play the game. Allow them to see you as one of theirs, but you don’t believe in the cause.”

“No, the only cause I give a shit about is my own. I care about keeping Abraham safe, and now Dinah. If you were to die, I wouldn’t shed a fucking tear. This whole world can implode, and I wouldn’t care as long as they were safe.”

“Safe? Safe like you kept Gabriel? I know he didn’t kill himself. I know both you and Abe were more than best friends with him. How did you keep him safe, Ezekiel? The same way you plan to keep Dinah safe?” I move towards him and grab onto the front of his black button-down shirt. I pull him towards me until we are mere inches apart, and his warm breath skates across my lips.

“I won’t let you hurt her. I won’t allow her to be collateral damage in one of your sick games. She isn’t a game piece to be used like Gabriel was.” I watch as his eyes widen and his nostrils flare. He’s trying to control himself when all he really

wants is to hurt me. The mention of Gabriel's name hurts him, just like I hoped it would.

He wrenches himself away from me, a few buttons on his shirt popping off and scattering across the cold stone floor. "You have no fucking clue what you are talking about. I played no games with Gabriel. I tried to keep him safe, but he wouldn't listen. Wouldn't use common fucking sense to protect himself. I will never let anyone hurt her like they did to him. I made him a promise."

I watch him, looking deeply into his eyes, and I see the sincerity there. The pain and loss that fills him with Gabriel's untimely death. He loved him, and losing him has broken him. He genuinely believes that he can protect Dinah and Abraham. I'm not sure he can, but I'm also not willing to end up on the wrong side of this. If I can remain by Dinah's side, then I can continue to protect her from the Brotherhood, from Ezekiel Rothesay and Abraham Mercier, and from herself.

"Take me to her. I will make her listen."

"One more thing, she has to be a virgin when I marry her, old man. The Order will make her go through the marriage ritual. No exceptions can be made. Don't worry, I have come up with a solution, but you'll have to convince her to go through with it." He walks away from me and out the cellar door, not even waiting to see if I will follow him like an obedient dog. He knows I will. That for Dinah, I would do anything.

How the fuck am I not only going to convince her to marry this jackass without a fight, but also allow him to perform the marriage ritual before a bunch of men from the Brotherhood?

Fuck, let's hope she doesn't murder me for even suggesting it. With a last look back at my prison, I walk out the door and follow the man who is about to change both of our lives. Whether for the better or the worse, that remains to be seen.



Chapter 31



The Sinner

Dinah

The sound of approaching heavy footsteps has me preparing myself for an attack. If that fucker thinks he will come back into this room and once again get his rocks off, he has another thing coming to him. *Actually, I'm pretty sure you were the only one coming before*; my mind reminds me with sarcasm.

The lock disengages, and the heavy door swings open just as I launch myself at whoever comes through the door, and knock them forcefully into the frame. “Holy shit, Dinah! What the fuck are you doing?” Sammy’s voice bellows in my ears as I rain punches down on him, and he uses his arms to shield his head and face.

A harsh laugh echoes from the hallway behind him. “That’s why I said you had to go first. I had a feeling she would attack whoever came through the door.” Ezekiel’s voice, filled with humor, reaches me, and I immediately stop slamming my fist forward.

“Sammy?”

“Yeah, Nightstar! Do you think you could let go of my fucking hair before you rip it all out?”

I let go of him with a huff and take a few steps backward, my chest heaving and adrenaline still flowing through my

system and making me tremble. Sammy studies me from a slight distance with tempestuous blue eyes as dark as the night sky. I can't stop myself from launching at him again, a cry of relief leaving my lips.

This time, however, I wrap my arms and legs around him as he catches me and holds me tight to his strong, muscled body. I can finally take a deep breath in his arms. Being separated from him, and not knowing what was happening to him, has been the worst form of torture. *Home. He feels like home.*

He nuzzles into the side of my neck, his arms painfully tight and causing my breath to falter. Unbidden tears try to make their way to my eyes, and I have to bury my face in his messy hair to stop them from descending down my cheeks, and showing my weakened state. He takes a few steps forward, allowing Ezekiel to enter the room behind him, who closes the door firmly.

“Are you ok, Dinah? Has anyone tried to hurt you?” Sammy questions, and I can hear the worry in his tone.

“I told you she's not hurt. No one would hurt her here; I won't allow it. Besides, you've seen for yourself she's a violent psycho. She can handle herself,” Ezekiel scoffs with irritation.

“SHUT UP, EZEKIEL!” Sammy yells as he puts me down, still keeping me close to him as he turns his wrath on the asshole with his hands in his pockets.

“Big words from a man only still alive by my good grace. Keep it up, and I'll change my mind about letting you continue

breathing.” Green eyes filled with malice meet mine, and I see not only anger in their depths, but something else. *Is that jealousy?*

Why would Ezekiel Rothesay be jealous right now? I know the dick said I was his, and he always was a spoiled shit growing up, but this feels like something more. My fists tighten in Sammy’s blood-splattered shirt, and the desire to run from this room fills me. The energy in the room feels wrong, and not just because I am a captive. A sick feeling starts in the pit of my stomach, bringing with it nausea and trepidation.

“What is he talking about, Sammy?” I rip my gaze away from the emerald one that is trying to consume me, and meet Sammy’s angry eyes. “You can’t trust a word that comes out of his traitorous mouth. He’s a snake. Tell me you didn’t make a deal with him! Tell me, Sammy!”

I catch Zeke’s body going ramrod straight from the corner of my eye, and his jaw tightens at my words. I bet you if he didn’t need something from me, and Sammy wasn’t in the room, he would try to take out that displeasure on me right now. A moment of insanity overcomes me because I know that I would not only welcome the violence, but chances are I would enjoy it.

I observe as he gives both of us a half-shrug, as if he isn’t concerned one way or the other with the outcome, but I know it’s all a facade. I can see it in the way he holds himself, the jut of his chin, the way his shoulders are tense, waiting for something to happen. *What the hell is going on here?*

“The *‘prince’* has found a way to keep you safe, Dinah. To keep both of us safe from the Brotherhood, and allow me to remain at your side.” I start to protest, but he shushes me. “Please listen, Nightstar. We don’t have much time, and I need you to promise me you will do this for me, for us. I need you safe. Promise me?” His cold and clammy hand reaches up and circles my throat, his frigid fingers applying a small amount of pressure to guarantee my attention.

“No. Whatever he has promised you, he will never keep his word. Sammy, please, we have to figure a way out of here. We can’t depend on him to help us,” I beg, my anxiety rising with each of his words and terror stabbing at my heart. What has this prick promised him to make him believe he will protect us?

Sammy’s fingers tighten on my neck until I only get a small amount of air through. My eyes widen at the anguish on his chiseled face. His other hand grabs a fistful of my hair, yanking my head back sharply. The pain in my scalp, the tightness in my throat, and his intense gaze, have my nipples hardening and my core clenching. He’s so close to snapping I can feel it. Violence is begging to be unleashed from all of his pores. It’s a beacon calling to me in its depravity.

“If there was another way, Dinah, any other fucking way, you know I wouldn’t be asking this of you. There...isn’t, Nightstar. Please believe me. This is our best chance of staying alive. You will agree to his terms because I won’t lose you. I can’t.”

“Sa...mm...y.” My breath rasps with how hard he’s squeezing my neck. Real fear has taken hold of him and has him locked in its icy jaws. I need to get him to calm down. The desperation in his tone and his eyes are frightening me down to the soles of my feet.

He releases me suddenly, and I lose my balance, falling to my knees as I drag much-needed air into my lungs. I watch from my position on the floor as Sammy starts to pace restlessly. Ezekiel never takes his eyes off of me. “What have you done?” My voice sounds shrill to my ears as I embrace the panic surging through me.

“Whatever I need to do to keep you safe.” Ezekiel looks away, refusing to hold my gaze. No! *Fuck, no. What have these two done?* I feel a choked sob welling up within me, but I suppress it just as I push back the anxiety coursing through my body, setting my heart racing like a galloping racehorse.

“Nightstar, later tonight, you will marry Ezekiel,” Sammy declares, forcefully raising his hands to quell any potential objections, his fingers clenching into fists, knuckles white with tension, as if ready for a fight against dissenting forces.

“You will marry him, Dinah. It is the only way you and I both get to stay alive. It’s the only way we get to continue to be together.” His hands grip his long, dirty blond tresses and yank in exasperation.

“He has agreed to allow me to remain at your side, and you will continue to be mine, Nightstar, just with stipulations.” He turns his unforgiving glare on Ezekiel, and I watch from the

corner of my eye as Zeke shrugs. “He has a way to keep the Brotherhood on the trail of the Unholy Ghost, and keep their suspicions firmly off of you, Dinah. I’m convinced this could work. If it doesn’t, I will tear his fucking heart out of his chest and feed it to his lover.”

“How...? How can this even work? I can’t marry him, Sammy. I won’t. How could you even suggest such a thing?” The words escape my lips in a feeble whisper, disbelief at Sammy’s request overwhelming me. I witness Sammy’s deep wince in response to my questions, his face reddening as he clenches his teeth, avoiding the words that would seal my fate.

The overwhelming surge of abandonment washes over me, leaving me questioning if he no longer desires me. How could he propose something as dreadful as marrying Ezekiel? There must be an alternative, a different path to survival. This can’t be the only option available to us.

A loud sigh leaves the other inhabitant of the room. “The Unholy Ghost will continue his reign of terror and kill more Brotherhood members, Dinah. You will be my wife, bound to me and my home. No suspicion will fall on you as a Sacred Wife. As a Rothesay.” Zeke’s eyes gleam at me from below his thick, dark lashes as he drags a hand roughly through his short coal-colored hair, the tattoos on his hands and fingers a stark relief against his golden skin.

“If I am bound to you and locked in your home, who will be out there killing Order members?” I demand, not understanding what the hell is going on here.

“You will, Nightstar. No one will know it’s you except us. Zeke and Abraham will be able to cover your tracks, and as a Sacred Wife, you’ll never be suspected. If the killings continue, you and I will be ruled out as possibilities if anyone suspects we were involved.”

A thrill races through me as my eyes move back and forth between them. I can keep killing members of the Brotherhood, and they’ll protect me. No Sacred Wife would be thought capable of such violence and atrocities. I would be above suspicion. I would be almost untouchable as a Rothesay. Sammy would be safe. All I have to do is marry Ezekiel and submit to him. I would have to surrender who I am and become a Sacred Wife, a pawn in the hands of men.

Those words race through my mind in a fearful, relentless loop, causing my stomach to coil tightly, and my ears to reverberate with dread. I’ll become everything I’ve fought so hard to resist. My destiny will slip from my grasp once more. I’ll be a captive in Ezekiel’s clutches, and Sammy will be his bargaining chip in this twisted game.

The first tear escapes from my eyes, tracing a solitary path down my face as I struggle against the impending flood of emotions. I would have to betray Sammy, betray all the years we have spent together. I’d be marrying a man I suspect had a hand in my brother’s death, in Gabriel’s demise upon this earth. How could I inflict such a betrayal upon my own flesh and blood? I clutch my arms around myself, fighting to ward off the overwhelming wave of misery and vulnerability engulfing my body.

A frigid tide of hopelessness engulfs me as I confront the bleakness of my circumstances. All of this could have been avoided if I had just allowed Sammy to cast Zeke over that cliff. *Why did I stop him? Look at what has befallen us now.* Fresh tears trace their path down my skin, and an anguished sob escapes my quivering lips.

Sammy falls to his knees before me, his hand reaching out to pull me into his body and his large arms wrapping me in their strength. “I love you, Nightstar. If there was any other way, I wouldn’t ask this of you.”

My forehead leans against his, and I watch as sad tears trail down his face to match mine. I can’t help but feel that this is the beginning of the end, for the life that I had with Sammy all these years. Nothing will ever be the same going forward. What we had will be tarnished beyond repair with what they are asking me to do.

He says he loves me; how could he ask this of me? Was it all a lie? After all these years together, he asks me to let another man come between us. Would it not have been preferable to die together? Would I have chosen the same outcome for him if the tables had been reversed?

I pull back from Sammy’s embrace, my eyes trailing over his, and then I meet Zeke’s. Do I detect remorse in those deep, smoldering green eyes? Does he understand that he will destroy what I have built for myself, who I am, with these actions?

All of the wrath that continuously lives within me ignites like a match. What does he get out of this? Does he think I'll be like his mother or, worse, like mine? That I'll allow myself to be used up and then discarded like a piece of tissue paper, all while he holds a blade over the head of the man I love.

My eyes narrow to daggers, ready and willing to demonstrate the violence that lives within the cage inside of me. How it longs to be set free and cause pain to Ezekiel Rothesay in this moment of weakness.

“You will belong to me, Snow. I will be your husband, but not only in name. I will have you in every way I desire. You are mine. You have always been mine.” Ezekiel takes a step forward and then another, silent, stealthy, a predator about to go in for the kill.

“You will one day carry my child inside of you, and because of this, I won't take Sammy away from you. I don't want to cause you more unnecessary pain. We will share you with him,” Zeke murmurs soothingly, his brow furrowing as he bites down on his lower lip.

The man before me is a walking masterpiece of seduction, even when he's not trying. An irrational impulse to yank that lip free surges within me, but I forcefully shake myself to get some clarity. *He is the enemy, Dinah. Get your shit together already!*

“We?” I question, unease crawling down my neck like a bunch of insects on their way south.

“Ezekiel, Abraham, and me, Nightstar. You will be ours. All three of us will keep you safe. We will... share you,” he says through tight teeth, anger, jealousy, and sorrow written across his face. I squeeze my eyes shut at his words, trying to get my breathing under control. I feel like an elastic band being pulled and stretched harshly. I can feel myself ready to snap. When I do, will I be able to control myself, or will I kill everyone around me in a fit of uncontrollable rage?

I push away from Sammy and get to my feet, putting much-needed distance between myself and both these idiots, with their male toxicity. “So the three of you have decided my fate. I’ll be shared between you like an obedient dog at her master’s beck and call, is that it? A whore to be used when you feel like it. Regardless if that is not the fate I want for myself.”

“Nightstar...” Any further words Sammy is about to utter get swallowed by the look of menace I give him.

“You are a Sacred Daughter, Dinah. Your fate was always to become my wife.” Zeke’s nostrils flare with a look of disappointment at my reaction. He takes a further step towards me, but halts when he sees the rage I’m not trying to hide across my features.

“I am a human being! Not cattle to be bartered, nor a dog to be trained to come when her master calls. I am a woman. I was not born for you to own me. I was not put on this planet to fill your fucking needs, Ezekiel, or that of your sick order.” I can’t breathe, my lungs constrict, and I feel lightheaded.

How could they do this to me? How could Sammy have agreed to make me the one thing I have always fought against. A prisoner. A slave to the men of the Brotherhood. A possession.

“Nightstar!”

“Noooo...” An inferno rises within me, setting fire to all my thoughts and emotions. “You...have... betrayed me...Sam... my.” The words leave my clenched teeth, as the desire to kill everyone in this room tries to overtake me.

Betrayers, liars, and thieves. Men. All these words circle round and round until only one thought remains. *Death.* I will murder them all for thinking that they can get away with doing this to me.

“You should know there’s more, Snow.” Ezekiel watches me from across the room. A mix of disdain, anger, and maybe even pity, now written across his features as he looks between Sammy and me.

“The Order requires the Ritual of Marriage to be performed, with no exceptions, the night of a marriage, which for us is tonight. You may not believe me, but I am sorry for this. This one is out of my control. I cannot spare you this. It has to be done, or the marriage won’t be blessed and recognized, and you will be considered a fallen woman.” Zeke’s mouth snaps shut, and I feel my anger ready to explode. I don’t even know what the hell he’s talking about, but whatever it is, I want no part in it.

“Why...the fuck...would...they consider... me a fallen... woman, Ezekiel?” I demand, my breath laboring in my chest and sweat starting to trail down the side of my neck, with the effort it’s taking not to lash out in violence at both of them. My mind is busy already plotting how I will punish both of the men in this room. How they’ll scream for sweet, agonizing mercy before I’m done.

I am not a pawn to be played with. They’ve forgotten that I am the queen on the board, and they are a mere knight and a bishop, both easily overtaken and discarded.

“My father suspects that you have been defiled by Sammy. That you’re no longer pure. To stop him from putting you through a humiliating inspection, one that would have led to both of your deaths, I told him what I did to you in this room so that I could confirm you were a virgin.”

“WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO TO HER!” Sammy roars, rising from the floor suddenly and grabbing a fistful of Zeke’s black dress shirt.

“He fingerfucked me...on the floor...like an animal. I came like a dirty whore for him. I guess you should get used to it since this is what you want.”

I throw my words like blades at Sammy, wanting to hurt him like he’s hurting me with the agreement to share me. To give me away to the Brotherhood after knowing how much I loathed that fate. How I would have rather died than become a Sacred Wife.

The crack of Sammy's fist is so loud in the tense and silent room that it makes me take a further step away from both of them, and chance a glance towards the door. Could I make it out of this room if they started fighting? Would I manage to get out of this house before one of the guards or Noah stopped me?

"You fucking piece of shit! I'll fucking kill you!" Sammy yells as he slams his fist again in Zeke's already battered face.

"FUCK YOU! I'm protecting her, you fucking idiot! They would have killed her if they could prove she was impure." He shoves Sammy back hard. "They would have killed you for defiling her!"

"So you made me cum, to what, protect me? Is that what you're claiming?" I inquire with disbelief.

"No...fuck. No, I did that for me...and you. I wanted you to fucking enjoy it. I fingered you because I needed to be certain you weren't pure. The orgasm was my way of apologizing and making the experience bearable." He sighs, wiping the blood from his mouth with his thumb as he moves his jaw around.

"Here's a thought, asshole! You could have just asked me if I was a virgin!" I throw up my hands in exasperation and disdain at their combined stupid asses. *It seems these two alpha assholes don't have a brain cell to rub between them.*

"I couldn't be sure you would tell me the truth, and I couldn't risk it; your life's on the line... And also, you are fucking mine, so I can do as I fucking please. I am the only

one helping you here; without me, you would both be dead.” Zeke digs the palms of both his hands into his eyes.

He looks exhausted standing there. His face is battered and bruised. Dark shadows make their homes below his eyes, giving him a haggard appearance. *How long has it been since he slept? Why do I even fucking care? I’m not fucking his, I’m not anyone’s.*

I force myself to take a deep breath and push down all the anger surging through me, and the demands my body and heart are making on my mind to bludgeon them.

Zeke’s words cause me to question what I know about him. He has never been so self-sacrificing. *He isn’t now, either.* He has just found a way to spin this where he comes off as the hero, saving poor wretched Dinah and her lover from death. He’s full of shit; he knows it, I know it, and Sammy should have realized it before agreeing to this mess.

Ezekiel Rothesay will only help us for as long as it benefits him and Abraham. I will be discarded the minute it doesn’t, and Sammy will die. Is he doing this as a means to get back at his father, or is this about control?

As for Sammy, how dare he show his anger now, after giving me up as an unwilling sacrifice. As property the three of them will share. My hands rub down my face with aggravation as I come to the only realization that matters in this whole mess. We would both be dead right now at the hands of the Brotherhood if it wasn’t for Zeke’s quick thinking and words.

I'm filled with so many regrets, ones that I can't do anything about now.

“What is the marriage ritual?” I question.

At least they both have the gall to look embarrassed. They give each other a quick glance. So it fucking begins, the cooperation between men to control a woman.

This fucking woman. I will murder both of them and feed them their own cocks. No, better, I will feed them each other's cocks. *What about Abraham? My mind inquires.* So far, his cock is safe, but it's only a matter of time. He's just like the rest of them.

“Dinah...ah...shit.” Sammy rakes his hands once again through his long locks. “Ezekiel will have to fuck you tonight in front of a select group of high-ranking members of the Brotherhood, while they watch to prove that you are pure. His father will no doubt be amongst them.”

All the blood drains from my face, and my ears ring. There is no way I just heard him say what I thought I did. There is no way this asshole just told me Zeke would be fucking me before an audience of Brotherhood members tonight. I shake my head with disbelief. This is how they are going to keep me safe?

I take two quick steps forward, my fist crashing into the side of Sammy's face, and I pivot, launching my leg outwards to strike Zeke in the stomach. Both of them emit groans of pain and shock at my sudden outburst of violence, swiftly retreating from me with a wary tension. “You stupid bastards!”

“Nightstar!”

“Snow, FUCK! Stop fucking hitting people!”

“You are lucky all I’m doing is hitting you, and not just cutting off your dicks like you two deserve.”

“It’s the only way, Nightstar.”

“Various problems with that scenario, not even the biggest fucking one being that I am not, in fact, pure. You know that your fucking self, Sammy, since you took my virginity years ago.” *Someone save me from these fools.*

“I have a way around that, Snow. You’ll have to trust me,” Zeke implores, his green eyes shining with the need to make me agree to this fiasco they have come up with to keep me safe.

Trust him? I want to bludgeon him with the nearest object and rip his heart out of his chest, yet he’s asking me to trust that he won’t betray me to the Brotherhood. That he won’t offer me up for some fucking reward of power. Betray me as he did my brother, who he left hanging from a beam in his home.

“You have no other choice, Dinah. If you want to live, you have to trust me.”



Chapter 32



The Sinner

Dinah

The incessant chatter of the women around me is grating on my last nerve, setting my patience on the brink of rupture, and threatening to shatter what is left of my composure. If I had one of my blades, I would slice all their throats and roll around in their blood like the bloodthirsty psycho they don't know I am. *Unfortunately, I don't.*

Ezekiel, *the cunt*, made sure of that after locking me in this room with them and telling me to behave. *The fucking audacity on him.* Now, here I am in this large bedroom suite, surrounded by giggling women, being pampered and prepared to meet my fate. A fate that I consider worse than death.

Does anyone care that I don't want to do this? *Nope.* Would they if I started snapping necks or biting people's faces like a wild caged animal? *Maybe.* Zeke must have realized what I was capable of, because he warned me if I fucked this up, he would put a bullet in the back of Sammy's skull while I was forced to watch. I'm seething with anger at both of them, to the extent that for a brief moment, I entertained the thought of telling him to go right ahead.

"Your hair is so beautiful and thick, Miss Dinah. It will look stunning with the golden veil," Marta, one of the household attending maids, says as she plays with my long, dark hair. She shapes it into intricate designs with diamond-covered pins and

fastens them to my scalp. I bite the inside of my cheek to stop myself from uttering anything rude. It's not her fault I am stuck in this mess; it's mine. It's the Brotherhood's. It's fucking Ezekiel Rothesay's.

“Her eyes are stunning! I have never seen eyes this color. Every time the light hits them, they seem to change from blue to gray. You are truly blessed, Miss Dinah,” Sonia, another maid, compliments me, as she uses a brush to apply blush to my cheeks. It's on the tip of my tongue to tell her not to bother; lambs to the slaughter don't need to be beautiful. They just need to be present and forced.

“Ladies, please compose yourselves and your excitement. You have a future Sacred Wife before you. My future daughter. Our Lord and Savior has truly blessed her by being chosen as my son's spouse. She will bring the next generation of Rothesay into this blessed world.”

My future mother-in-law, Esther, stands before me, appraising my appearance like a vendor scrutinizing ripe fruit at the market. Her relentless gaze has been fixed upon me for the past hour, causing annoyance to crawl beneath my skin, and the desire to lash out, and smack her, an ever-present need riding me hard.

It's evident that she places no faith in the words she speaks. To her, I am an ominous cursed specter haunting her family's lineage. She made this abundantly clear when she shared her disdain with me, before the elaborate preparations for my role as a coveted sacrifice to the Order began.

“A wise woman builds her house, while a foolish woman tears hers down with her own hands.” Esther Rothesay stood there, a vision of pride cloaked in righteous fury. Her dark tresses framed her head, making her look like a queen announcing her decree while her intense, dark chocolate eyes bore into mine, as if attempting to unveil the secrets hidden within the depths of my soul. As if she, too, was not filled with sins. “I warn you, Dinah Camrose. I will not allow you to tear down my home, or my family’s holy and loyal name.”

Holy name? Was she freaking kidding? Her family are a bunch of toxic misogynist assholes that enjoy forcing women like my mother and her into gangbangs, sexual slavery, and becoming breeding mares for the Order. Furthermore, her asshole son is extorting me down the aisle, and keeping me a prisoner in her home. How’s that for holy?

“A gracious woman gains honor; violent men gain only wealth.” I smiled viciously at her with my teeth bared. “I have no desire to be part of your family or your home. If I could, I would sacrifice you all to Satan, and dance naked in his flames.”

The gasp that slipped from her lips and the profound horror etched across her face, as she quickly retreated, sent a surge of perverse pleasure coursing through me, even making me feel a twinge of exhilaration. Fuck, I have to take pleasure where I can now. Toppling Esther Rothesay from her lofty pedestal was undeniably satisfying.

I tune back into what the women are saying, as yet another woman walks through the door. How many are coming in here? It's starting to feel like a zoo, where I am the main attraction.

Her delicate features are immediately familiar to me. *Sarah Mercier, Abraham's mother*. She's carrying a large white box in her arms, straining with the weight and size of it. I watch as she carefully and reverently lays it on the bed beside me. Whatever is in that box, I want no part of it. Just looking at it brings me unease.

"Ladies, may the Lord bless and praise you. The Brotherhood, honor you and keep you sacred."

"It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order."

The murmurs fill the room as the maids bow their heads in her presence. I, however, keep my head right where it belongs, up high and surveying for threats. I trust no one in this room or in this house. They are all sheep, easily led to the slaughter, and I refuse to be amongst their ranks.

"Dinah, happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her. I am so joyful that this day has finally come, and filled with equal parts sorrow that your mother did not get a chance to see it come to fruition."

She leans forward and places her soft hand on my face, cradling it in a gentle embrace. I want to be furious that she has brought up my mother. I want to be upset that she's touching me, but I can't. Longing and memories fill me, of a

time long past, when this woman used to brush my hair as she sat with my mother and talked for hours. They were friends once, both of them forced into this world because they loved men who would betray them.

I don't bother to respond. We both know that my mother never wanted this for me. She was never genuinely vocal with anyone other than my father and brother. The rules of the Brotherhood prevent women from sharing their opinions. She confided in Sarah, though.

A vicious snort leaves Esther's lips, and I have to tighten my hands into fists to prevent myself from rising and lashing out at her with violence, even though she would look more enticing on her ass. "Yes, we are all sorry for Maria's untimely loss. So much loss in the Camrose family."

"Yes...well, she is surrounded by us now; we will act as her mother. You are gaining a beautiful daughter, Esther. The Lord, in his wisdom, has blessed you. How I wish she had been chosen for Abraham; she would have made such beautiful babies with my son." Sarah glares at Esther with a raised eyebrow.

I guess they are not so chummy, despite their husbands being thick as thieves with each other. Could it be because one of them doesn't mind being fucked raw by the other's husband? Sammy and I observed them for months; we know what happens in their homes behind closed doors.

Noah likes to share Esther every chance he gets, especially with Peter Mercier. Esther enjoys being on the receiving end

of Peter's visits, and Sarah doesn't quite have the same sentiments about Noah's visits. *Yet, Esther is worried about my sins; go figure.*

"Ladies, enough fussing! We must get her into the veil, dress, and off to the cathedral. The Holy Father's entourage will be arriving shortly, and we cannot afford to be delayed and keep them waiting." Esther claps her hands together and moves to the box Sarah brought into the room.

So, the Holy Father will be proceeding over my nuptials. I knew the Camroses were directly related to him by blood through my mother's side. She was one of his favorite nieces. That didn't stop the Brotherhood from shunning her, and punishing her for sins my father committed.

That's twice now that the Holy Father has proceeded over an event recently for my family. Three, if you count the blessing he prayed over my mother's dead body at my brother's funeral. The only words of grace she would be receiving due to her actions. His insistence that she be buried in their family plot brought me the only measure of peace I received that day.

"The Holy Father! What an honor, Miss Dinah," Marta whispers, her eyes wide with excitement like a child.

I observe as Esther lifts the box lid, delicately pushing aside the white tissue paper to reveal a breathtaking, light gold and cream embroidered gown. The sight of the dress tightens my throat. The intricate beading on the skirt and bodice shimmers in the light, casting prismatic rainbows onto the surrounding walls.

“It’s stunning!” Sonia gasps.

I swallow the lump in my throat, tears threatening to cascade down my face. “It was my mother’s wedding dress.”

My eyes meet Sarah’s as a tear trails down her golden-age-lined face. “She had it sent to me when you turned eighteen. She knew she could not attend your wedding...in...her circumstances. She wanted to ensure you had it. It’s a beautiful dress, Dinah.”

That’s right, my mother was a fallen woman. Even as a favorite blood relation of the Holy Father, she would not be allowed to attend something like her own Sacred Daughter’s wedding ceremony, for fear of tainting her with the same disgrace.

I rise and approach Esther, who holds my mother’s dress. I don’t want her to lay a finger on it, to soil it with her contempt for me, or her disdain for my mother. I know it’s irrational; after all, it’s just a beautiful piece of fabric. But deep down, I’m aware she never held any affection for my mother. Sarah must be attuned to my thoughts; she moves forward and takes the dress from Esther’s fingers.

“Ladies, we thank you for your assistance, but now only Sacred Wives will help Dinah dress.” Sarah moves away and drapes the dress along the end of the bed, the long train spilling onto the ground with a flourish. I can see the immediate irritation on Esther’s face that Sarah has dismissed her staff. She appears to have an aversion to anyone else

taking charge in her domain. I'll store that knowledge away for later use when I want to get under her skin.

The two maids bow low to us and exit the room. The momentary silence is a balm to my weary and overstimulated mind. I look around the room, once again surveying whether I can escape somehow.

Then, a frightening thought hits me. I can't undress in front of these women. I'm covered in tattoos. Tattoos, which are not allowed under the rules of the Brotherhood. I start to panic and move as far away from the dress as possible while staring between them. "No...I will dress myself. I...can do it."

"Nonsense, child, we are here to help you." Esther starts to move towards me in an attempt to corner me. This bitch is about to end up on the ground if she doesn't stop moving. She would look so much prettier attending her son's wedding with a split lip, and a black eye, to compliment her black heart.

"I'd really rather dress myself. I...I'm shy...and uncomfortable with others looking...at me." I try to devise a legitimate reason why these two sacred women cannot strip me naked right now. "I...I made a vow to God not to let anyone but my husband see me naked before my wedding night."

"How honorable, my dear." Sarah contemplates me from where she is standing with suspicion. "Esther will leave while you dress, and I will turn my back and only look when it is time to fasten the buttons at the back, therefore not causing you to break your vow." Esther huffs but manages to keep

silent. I think maybe some part of her is relieved she doesn't have to touch me. *Same, lady, same.*

FUCK! How the hell am I going to pull this off? I swear to all that is holy, I will make Ezekiel Rothesay pay for all this shit, including the apparent concern on Sarah Mercier's face right now because I am acting all kinds of shifty. Does she think I'm nuts? *Probably.*

"It's normal to be nervous on your wedding day, Dinah. This day is filled with anticipation but also stress and pain. I know that your mother not being here feels like a giant hole in your heart, but Esther and I will do our best to assist you." Sarah sighs and straightens her shoulders. "Has Esther gone over what will happen once the vow part of the ceremony has been completed?"

She fixes her gaze on me, and when I subtly shake my head to signal a negative response, she shoots Esther a withering glare, her golden eyes ablaze with fury. "You are her new Sacred Mother, Esther. You must do your duty. It really is quite distressing to see that you have not. Regardless, she needs to be prepared for what is to come."

Esther rolls her eyes and moves away from us, her shoulders raised up to her ears and her back stiff. "My duty is to my son, who I have raised in the honor and glory of the Brotherhood. If she is unprepared, that is through no fault of my own."

"Leave, Esther. I will handle the remainder of the tasks, including preparing her mind and soul for what is to happen to

her. Anyone who claims to be in the light, but hates a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.”

Sarah walks to the bedroom door and opens it wide, waiting for Esther to walk through it with her golden eyes narrowed and a deep scowl on her face. “Esther, you should reflect on your words, and the coldness in your heart. The Lord would require penance before you attend this holy day.”

Sarah closes the door firmly behind her, her body leaning heavily against the thick ornate wood. She presses her hands to her cheeks and releases a deep sigh. “She wasn’t always like this. She...life has been hard on all of us. Being a...a Sacred Wife can have its...difficulties.”

Sarah moves away from the doorway, her shoulder lifting with a half-shrug, and motions towards the seating area, “Sit, Dinah. We don’t have much time, but I refuse to allow you to go through today blind. Had I been blessed with a daughter, I would want the same for her.”

I move to the chair opposite of hers, truly curious about what she’s going to tell me. It’s not like I don’t know what sex is. Shit, I may not know about orgies and gangbangs personally, but I sincerely doubt that’s what she will discuss with me. She believes I am this sheltered young woman, imprisoned all these years by the Brotherhood. I have no intention of changing her perception if I don’t have to.

“Dinah, during the vows, you will be blessed by the Holy Father, and then you will participate in the blood ritual.” A grimace crosses her face. “Ezekiel will slice his palm open,

and then yours and you will join hands. That is the worst part of the ceremony. Everything else requires very little of your participation; just sit there demure and silent, under the veil and mask.”

She shifts restlessly in the chair, her body tensing and her hands fisting in her lap before she rubs them together, as uncomfortable silence fills the room. “She should have told you, wicked woman,” she utters so low that I almost don’t catch the words.

A large sigh leaves her lips. “Regardless, it will be done; may the good Lord grant me strength. Dinah, you will be taken to a back chamber in the cathedral after the ceremony. It will have a bed, a sheer curtained-off area, and...twelve chairs.”

I observe as she bites down on her lower lip, grappling with the effort it takes to form her words. “Dinah, the chairs...are for...twelve high-ranking members of the Brotherhood. They will all wear their masks; you will not be able to tell who is who.” Her fingers fidget in her lap, and she grinds her teeth. “You...you will disrobe...from your wedding gown, and dress in a sheer white slip with no undergarments, then lay on the bed facing those twelve chairs.”

A flush creeps up the side of her face, and her eyes refuse to meet mine, looking somewhere over my shoulder. “Ezekiel will take your purity in front of them. He will insert himself inside of your...sacred area. There...will be discomfort...and some pain. You will bleed afterward. That is what the men are

there to see, Dinah. You are an offering of purity and light to the Brotherhood.”

I already knew a ritual existed, having questioned Ezekiel and Samuel about it hours before. Those two fuckers didn't divulge these details, though. Hearing the minute details from Sarah, and seeing how uncomfortable the mere memory of participating in one is for her, makes my anxiety rise. My chest constricts painfully at the thought of being a vulgar display for those fuckers to get their rocks off on. Sick, demented assholes, wanting to watch a young woman be defiled for the first time.

“Ezekiel has the option of being gentle with you, Dinah, if he chooses to. I hope for your sake that he is. That is not always the case.” Her lips tremble, and a tear slips down her cheek. “That was not my case, nor your mother's.”

She scrunches up her face and wipes away the tear, determined to continue. “Once he has blessed you with his release, the ritual is done, and the men will leave the room, including Ezekiel. Esther and I will return to dress you once again, and then you can return here for the celebration of the nuptials.”

“No! Ah...no, not Esther. I...she doesn't like me. I would... I'd rather...it just be you. Please.” I lower my head and stare at my hands. I'll be at my most vulnerable lying there, used by Ezekiel and on display to the men of the Order. I can't even begin to fathom what my mental state will be like, but I know

it won't be great. I can see me lashing out at Esther and strangling her. Then everything will have been for nothing.

Fuck, I am going to need some help. Zeke didn't think this through completely; how very male of him to assume it would all work itself out. *Asshole*. How will I not only hide all the tattoos while wearing a sheer nightgown, before twelve male leering members of the Brotherhood, but also pretend that I am a virgin? I know he said he had that covered, but can I trust him?

My eyes meet Sarah's, and I see nothing but compassion in hers. She truly is sorry that I have to experience this. She was always so kind to me when I was little. She used to call me her shared daughter. Can I trust her now to help me get through this? To help me survive this fate without ratting me out to the Order?

Only one way to find out. Either she rats me out now, and I die before having to marry Ezekiel, or I don't tell her, and I don't manage to pull off hiding what I need from the Order, and I die anyway as a condemned woman.

I stand up from my chair, loosening the belt of my thick blue robe, and let it fall around me to my feet. A gasp sounds in the air around us as she stumbles from her chair, her hand over her mouth, and her eyes wide with horror in their depths.

"Dinah, what have you done?" She steps closer to me, her eyes roaming over my flesh and making goosebumps appear. I turn around on the spot so she can see clearly the gravity of the situation I find myself in.

“I lived, Sarah. I loved. Even as a prisoner, I loved.” The words leave my lips with a wince.

Sadness and awe cross her face at my words. She lifts her eyes from my tattooed skin and meets my gaze. I can see recognition dawn on her features. “The guard.”

I don’t bother to deny it; there could be no one else but him. All these years, locked up in captivity, it was only him and me, with the occasional visitor from the capital checking up on my welfare and mental state.

“Did he abuse you, Dinah? Did he take advantage of your mental state?” She questions, her hands tightening at her sides and her eyes practically glowing with amber fire. I wonder if she would attempt to harm Sammy if I said yes?

“No. He and I love each other. We have loved each other all these years. He was only ever there for me after... he has never hurt me, never forced me to do anything. He let me decide when and if I was ready. He is my home, my safe harbor, and I am his.”

Her eyes close tightly as she considers my words. “I am truly sorry, child. I wish they had left you alone in captivity for the remainder of your life. Left you in peace. Does Ezekiel know?”

She moves forward and lets her fingers trail gently over the leaves tattooed on my shoulder. At my nod in confirmation, she removes her touch and steps back, her forefinger coming up below my chin and raising my face to stare up into hers. “These are stunning; he has some talent, Dinah. It’s a shame

we will have to cover them with thick makeup. We need to keep you alive, child.”

She drags her hands over her face, the strain of what I have just shown her clearly evident on her features. “Blessed be the Father, may he grant us strength to pull this off, and forgiveness for the deceit. Get naked; I’ll get the makeup started.”





Abe

There is so much noise outside the room I'm lying in that it wakes me from my drug-induced sleep. A wince leaves my lips as I try to adjust my battered body more comfortably on the bed. Pain radiates up my side, causing nausea to rise and my chest to tighten. *FUCK!*

Quick flashes of images fly across my mind, of when I was brought here to the Rothesay compound. Memories of pain, confusion, and a glimpse of Zeke's worried face. I don't know how much time has passed, but it feels like mere moments to my weary body.

I can't believe that little psychopath shot me. She stared me dead in the eyes and shot me, after giving me a beating. A beating I may have deserved. A grin crosses my lips at the memory of how glorious she was, standing there with her dark hair surrounding her. Her blue-gray eyes shone with malice, and her body leashed with violence. Shit, my cock wants to harden at just the image. Unfortunately, the rest of my body has objections. *A lot of fucking objections.*

"My little Atasi, how I long to wrap my fingers around that pretty neck of yours," I whisper to myself. Knowing full well the first chance I get that's exactly what I plan on doing.

The door to the room suddenly opens, and I'm greeted by the sight of a short and slender, bespeckled man with thinning gray hair. "Ah, you're awake, Abraham. Bless the saints, boy. You gave us quite a scare!"

"Brother Jeremiah?" I question, feeling entirely out of sorts as I run my hand through my wavy hair, and my fingers get tangled in the blood-coated strands.

"Doctor Jeremiah to you, son. You were fortunate that the guard had experience field dressing wounds. That '*Unholy Ghost*' almost succeeded in killing you. He and his companion will be found and brought before the Order for punishment and execution. Don't you worry, son. You just need to heal; truly a miracle you didn't die."

He moves further into the room, lifting what looks like a medical chart from the nightstand beside me, and checking on whatever is hanging on the intravenous pole, and being pumped inside of me. I can tell it's some of the good shit 'cause the pain is present but mellow unless I move around.

"Good, your blood pressure has stabilized."

His words finally make it through the thick, drugged fog that's wrapped itself around all of my working brain cells. He said the '*Unholy Ghost*' was still on the loose with a companion, but he also mentioned that the guard did an excellent job field-dressing my wound. *What the fuck is going on here? What shit has Ezekiel pulled off?* The fucker better still be alive to give me answers, or this whole world will burn.

“Ezekiel? Where is he?”

“Hmmm...oh, probably preparing for his nuptials, I would think. The boy has gotten himself a beauty. I saw her when she arrived with you. She was a little ragged, but I’m sure the wives will clean her up,” Jeremiah answers distractedly as he continues to read my chart.

“His nuptials?” The words feel like ash in my mouth.

What the fuck does this guy mean that Ezekiel is preparing for his nuptials? The *‘beauty’* he’s referring to has to be Atasi. A jealous fire starts within my veins at knowing he thinks she is beautiful. That he looked at her. The urge to jump out of this bed, choke him out, and then pluck out the eyes that stared at my girl is riding me hard. She’s fucking mine. *Well, mine and apparently Ezekiel’s, since the fucker is marrying her.*

“Yes. They are in a couple of hours. Everything has already been prepared. I heard the Holy Father himself will be proceeding over it. What a true honor that is. He’s a lucky man to find such favor at a young age,” he murmurs, oblivious to the impact his words are having on me.

“I just came in here to check on you before I head to collect my wife, and make my way to the cathedral.”

The cathedral. That’s where they are all heading, of course. The Holy Father would have insisted on it, and so would have Noah Rothesay. He’s all about rubbing his high standing within the Brotherhood in everyone’s noses. The fucker wouldn’t have missed an opportunity to make a spectacle of this event.

The question is, why is Ezekiel allowing that to happen? What could have happened that would have made Ezekiel push forward with a wedding, without even waiting for me to be able to attend?

Maybe he's done with you now that he has her? My mind rasps the words through the fog. Fear wraps itself around my chest like a slithering snake filled with poison, ready to end my very existence. Ezekiel wouldn't do that to me. He loves me. He has always loved me, just like I have always loved him.

He loved Gabriel, and look what happened to him. No! I refuse to believe these thoughts. These doubts that are trying to wrap around me, and convince me that he could so easily discard me, after all that we have been through. After all the years together.

Something must have happened after I was shot and passed out on that forest floor. I hate not being in the loop, especially where Ezekiel is concerned. That fucker belongs to me. *ME!*

He seems to have somehow forgotten that, as evidenced by leaving me here, and running off to marry Dinah. *There will be consequences.* I will have him down at my feet with my cock shoved down his tight throat, so he remembers whose altar he truly worships at.

I slide the bed linens off my body and throw my legs to the side of the bed. The minute my feet hit the hardwood floor, a sharp pain shoots through my abdomen and makes sweat bead at my temples. I grit my teeth hard to swallow the scream that

wants to escape my lips. My eyes close tightly, with the wave of dizziness and brain fog that attacks me. No, I have to get out of this bed. I have to get to Ezekiel.

“What the heavens do you think you’re doing, boy? You’ve been shot. You need to stay in that bed!”

I ignore the concern in his voice and tense my body, using my fists on the mattress to propel me to a standing position. “Find me some pants and get this shit disconnected.”

“I will do no such thing, Abraham Mercier. You have been injured, and only by the true grace of our Lord and Savior are you alive. You need to stay in that bed.”

I stare him down, letting him see the madness that is about to overtake me. I won’t lie in this bed, without knowing what is happening, while Ezekiel is out there with Dinah. Something fucking occurred, I’m sure of it. I need to get to that cathedral. I have to speak to him and see with my own eyes that he has not abandoned me for her. *He wouldn’t, would he?*

“Either get me a pair of pants, and help me dress so I can get to that wedding, or know that I will make sure I fuck your pretty little daughter and put a bastard into her that I won’t acknowledge, tarnishing your fucking house and making you and her pariahs amongst the Brotherhood. Especially when I confess that she begged me to sin with her.”

The man’s face goes deathly pale before me, his dark brown eyes widening in horror at my promise of ending his daughter’s purity. “You know I am perfectly capable of it. You know you can’t stop me, either. A Mercier trumps a Chambly.

You have very little power, whereas I have almost unlimited power.”

I watch as his Adam’s apple bobs, and he shakes himself, moving forward to disconnect the intravenous tubes from my hand. “You are a wicked man, Abraham. God save us all if you ever take your father’s place in the Brotherhood.”

I disregard his words; they don’t hurt me. I don’t give a shit about his opinion. Besides, he’s probably right. They will need saving from God, or whoever, if Ezekiel and I ever do manage to get control of the Brotherhood. I haven’t forgotten what they took from me, from us. I will burn them all down to the ground, and dance in the flames of their ashes.

Right now, though, I need to get my ass to a wedding. An explanation is due, and I mean to collect it. I just hope I don’t end up killing both of them when they confess their sins to me.





The Forsaker

Zeke

I stand before the dark wooden pews with their deep red velvet cushions, all of them filled with members of the Brotherhood, and their loyal and obedient Sacred Wives. The cathedral is at capacity, the short notice of my nuptials to Dinah Camrose not stopping anyone from making an appearance. If they think it odd, the rushed wedding with no formal announcement, no one is willing to vocalize it.

No, no one here wants to start a war with the Rothesays. We are at the top of the proverbial food chain of the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament. My eyes glance towards my father, holding court in the front pew, wearing an expensive black suit as if he were a true king. A smug smirk graces his lips, his emerald eyes shining. His white mask sits on his lap, and his black robes are embroidered in red silk thread, denoting his station surrounding him. The fucker is enjoying the attention being paid to him. There is nothing like a narcissist at a wedding ceremony, especially when it isn't him getting married.

My mother sits next to him in a dark blue demure gown, also embroidered with red thread along her hemline and collar, denoting that she is a high-ranking Sacred Wife. Not that you couldn't tell that from all the diamonds draping her, and the half mask that graces her face. All of the Sacred Wives in

attendance wear them, as our laws require. Pretty white masks, bordered by gold and adorned with precious jewels.

Soon, my little Snow will be forced to wear one, too. How beautiful she will look with those fierce eyes staring back at me through the eyeholes, daring me to break her. No mask can ever hope to conceal her defiance, or her indomitable spirit. And I have no intention of breaking either. No, I want Dinah Camrose to always fight me, preferably while she's underneath me, screaming and clawing like her life depends on it. *It just might.*

My focus returns to my mother and the scowl that she can't seem to hide from her dark rose-painted lips. What is she even doing here, already sitting in the cathedral? Was she not supposed to be helping Dinah prepare to walk down the aisle to me? To become my prized possession? I hope for her fucking sake she hasn't done anything to my Snow. I would hate to have to commit matricide, but I will if Dinah is in any way hurt.

My mother is the perfect contradiction. An obedient and demure Sacred Wife, the ideal example for other women of the Order at first appearance, but underneath that, there is nothing sacred or holy about her. She's an opportunist, a viper, and two-faced. She enjoys the station she has achieved in life, and is determined that no one and nothing will stop her from rising even higher.

I think it's one of the reasons that Sarah Mercier and Maria Camrose never enjoyed her company. No, Dinah and Abe's

moms are built a little differently. Their veins don't run with venom.

The sound of bells chiming warns of the approach of the Holy Father, and the ceremony's commencement echoes loudly through the room. Brotherhood members rush back to their seats like cockroaches running from the light, each wrapped in black robes and slipping on their masks. What a sight it is to stand at the front of the cathedral, and look down on all of them. *Thieves, liars, and hypocrites.*

Abraham would love this view. He would probably stand up here and give them all the finger, with a brilliant smile on his handsome face, regardless of the consequences. A trickle of unease rises up my spine, knowing he will be irrationally angry that he's not present here today, to watch me complete this task. *Irrationally angry? Who the fuck are you kidding? He has every right to be upset. He's going to feel betrayed!*

A flash of irritation soars through me at the direction of my thoughts. Yeah, he's going to be angry, but would he be even more devastated and filled with rage if, when he came to, he found out that Dinah had been killed for her actions? I couldn't take the chance. I had to take charge of the situation and ensure that she remained with us.

Safe. Owned. *Mine.*

After today, Dinah Camrose will become Dinah Rothesay. She will be mine under the laws of the Brotherhood and the church. Mine to do with as I please. No one will stop me from taking her or from claiming what is mine. What has always

been mine. Not even Abraham Mercier, no matter my feelings for him.

The bells toll louder and in rapid succession, as the members of the Brotherhood rise to their feet. The large wooden doors of the narthex are opened wide by two guards, and the first few members of the Holy Father's entourage are visible, their golden cloaks with deep black embroidery depicting holy scenes gracing their bodies.

Their faces are covered with the most exquisite black, gold, and white masks that cover half their faces and leave their chins and mouths visible. They move slowly forward, carrying the emblems of his office: the Holy Father's banner, the symbol of the Order, his sword, and the sacred oils. Voices from above in the choir area ring out in chants that have all the hairs on my arms standing on end.

Then he appears, flanked by two little boys wearing the golden and white livery of the Holy Office. They walk before the Holy Father with their heads bowed in reflection, little white masks, with painted red cheeks over their faces, giving both a childlike appearance and somehow also looking sinister. *That's some fucked up shit right there.* Thank fuck, Abe and I never had to serve as pages to the Holy Father. I could see us having nightmares for years if we had.

The Holy Father's pristine white and gold robes seem to float into the room behind the boys, as if his feet aren't touching the ground. The white is so bright and pure that it's almost blinding. Golden thread brings beautiful depictions of

the saints to life in the fabric, and priceless jewels accent the garment, which must weigh a substantial amount.

His head is covered in the hood of his cloak, his face obscured by his usual white and gold Venetian-style mask with the gold-dipped feathers making a halo around him. The only visible items that denote that he's an actual human male are his eyes and hands.

As he moves past the pews, each row of Brotherhood members bows their heads. Their Sacred Wives fall to their knees in subjugation, like the good girls they are. *I can't wait to see my Snow on her knees for me. Will she show me such reverence?* I might end up with a blade in my stomach instead of homage paid to me. My little Dinah is unpredictable with her violence.

It's really quite a production that he's putting on. He commands the type of respect by just being present that God himself would. Yet, I know for a fact, he isn't as pious and pure as he appears. Those hands have caused blood to be shed throughout this world. Those blue eyes have seen countless miseries, and those lips have sent millions to their deaths. He is a hypocrite, just like every man in this room. *No, worse, he is their leader.*

The first of his entourage reaches the transept, where I stand and wait. I meet the dark brown bottomless eyes of the holy brother holding the sword, and his lips twitch in a smirk in my direction. I can sense a feeling of malice coming from him.

Who is he? Does he mean harm to me while I'm standing here defenseless before the Brotherhood? I wouldn't put it past my father to have me killed right here, and blame it on the rebels. He's an opportunist, after all.

As the two young boys approach, I lower my head in a bow of respect to the Holy Father. Respect, I don't have, as I am no longer a believer, and this man is no more holy than I am. There is a hush amongst the members of the Brotherhood, the only sounds that of the choir above us chanting with young voices, and the swash of the Holy Father's heavy robes making their way down the nave.

"Blessed be the son that makes his father glad on this day. May the Lord bless and praise you. The Brotherhood, honor you and keep you sacred." The Holy Father's voice rings out as his robes touch the front of my shoes. I keep my head lowered in respect and utter the words required of me, and every member of the Brotherhood. My chest feels tight with his mere presence, and my hands have become clammy. *What the fuck is happening to me? I don't believe in this shit.*

"It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order." My response rings out strong and sure, even though I loathe everything it stands for. I refuse to be a sheep led astray like the rest of these maggots. I will not let one man who believes he is filled with absolute power control me. *No one gets to fucking control me.*

He moves away from me and towards the center of the apse, his entourage encircling him, like knights ready to lay down

their lives to protect him. I'm finally able to take a deep breath when he is no longer before me, and I raise my eyes subtly to survey all those sitting in the pews. All of them are entranced by his appearance, and the power he is projecting, like mindless zombies, supplying him with rapt attention to his every word. *Sheep.*

“Brothers and sacred sisters, we welcome you to this blessed occasion in celebration of life, love, and tribute to our benevolent Lord. He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” The voices of men and women echo together in the large stone cathedral.

Just then, a violin begins to play with a soft melody, and all attention is diverted back to the narthex. Between the two open doors stands an exquisite vision wrapped in expensive swaths of golden embroidered fabric, and a lace and silk gold veil covering her from head to toe.

Her head is dipped towards the ground. The crown on her head is filled with diamonds and precious jewels, sparkling in the candlelight surrounding us. She holds tight to a bouquet of blood-red roses and white calla lilies, surrounded by gold-tipped feathers in her joined hands.

She's an ethereal vision, far beyond any mortal woman in the room. Gasps ripple through those present as they behold my Snow. She stands tall, exuding confidence, a woman prepared to confront the devil himself. As she raises her head, my

breath escapes my lips, and I nearly choke on my tongue. *Holy fuck.*

Peeking through the intricacies of her veil, I glimpse her mask—a mesmerizing piece adorned with intricate white and gold patterns, its golden flowers adorned with glittering diamonds that shimmer with hints of red, turquoise, and burnt orange. Her striking, resolute blue-gray eyes peer determinedly from behind the eye holes while her delicate, rosy lips curl slightly at the corners.

If I didn't know any better, I would think Dinah was enjoying this. Mind you, she could just be picturing murdering everyone in this room. I wouldn't even put it past her to try. My little wife-to-be is a vicious killer. The thought should worry me, but it doesn't. In fact, it has the opposite effect, and causes my cock to twitch in the confined prison of my pants. I shift my black robe over my frame to avoid anyone in the front row seeing my reaction to my Snow. *Wouldn't want to terrify some Sacred Wife.*

I observe as Abraham's mother, Sarah, adjusts the back of Dinah's gown and gracefully moves past her, after offering a deep curtsy to the Holy Father. She glides down the sides of the pews to join her husband's side. My gaze momentarily drifts away from Dinah to settle on my mother, my anger burning within. It should have been her assisting my future wife, not Abraham's mother. *I will make her pay for her slight to my Snow; I fucking vow it.*

Dinah takes a demure step forward, followed by another. The music provides a distant backdrop as everything else fades into insignificance. Only Dinah occupies the center of my attention, her gaze locking onto mine, holding me captive. *She is the most beautiful creature I have ever seen.* Draped in gold as if a benevolent being dropped her on this very earth just for me. *Goddess.* A temptress of sins, waiting to be collected as my prize.

What sin wouldn't I be willing to commit at this very moment to have her? I would kill everyone in this room, including my damn parents, if that was the only way I could make her mine. Fuck, I would gladly set fire to the whole world and watch it burn, as long as Dinah Camrose became my possession.

She proceeds with a few more steps, her eyes now subtly scanning the surroundings. I instantly catch the moment her gaze lands on Sammy, standing with the other guards against the cathedral's stone walls, forming a protective perimeter around the pews. His eyes narrow as they fixate on her, his mouth a rigid line. Tension radiates from every inch of his body, his hands clenched tightly in front of him.

Poor, deluded Sammy, entertaining the notion that he could lay claim to my Dinah. In our wretched world, there was never a chance that he could possess a prize as exquisite as Dinah Camrose. He amounts to nothing, a lowly guard, while I am a goddamn prince of the Order.

I compelled him to come with us today; in fact, I insisted upon it and dangled the threat of expulsion from her side,

should he refuse to cooperate. I desired nothing more than for him to have to witness her approaching me and her obedience to my commands. To observe her as she walked toward me, her husband, her master, her destiny. I craved for him to be forced to acknowledge that she now belonged to me by the laws that bind us, and later on, when I take her cunt, she truly will belong to me in every way.

Am I a sick fuck for torturing him? *Of course.* Do I fucking care? *Not even a little bit.*

Her moment of shock is short-lived as her gaze refocuses on me, and her steps bring her closer to my side. *That's right, baby girl, come to me. You now are mine, and I'll never let you go.* She finally reaches my side, the hem of her opulent gown brushing up against my robe.

Her scent wafts over to me, the smell of amber, bergamot, and vanilla, making my every inhale a desire to take her and run. Run so that I don't have to share her at all in this moment with anyone else. *She is mine. My wife, my captive, my good girl.* I never realized how much I truly desired her until this very moment.

Dinah Camrose is quickly becoming an obsession. A need that burns through my veins and sears every single breath I take. I have never felt this way about another female in my life. Females were always disposable, a hole to bury yourself into and release some tension. You use them, fuck them, and then dispose of them. Some got to live after I was done with

them; others had the pleasure of taking their last breaths with my cock deep inside one of their holes.

Dinah will never be like those other women. I haven't even had more than my fingers inside of her, and I am already hooked like an addict needing his next fix. She will be my everything, and I will ensure that I am hers. If she wants Sammy to have even a small portion of her, she must please me first. *What about Abraham?*

Abraham will be the other side of the coin, the yin to her yang. Both of them will belong to me in every way that truly counts. I shall never allow either of them to escape my grasp, and I'll employ any means necessary to ensure they remain firmly entangled in my web. If Abe wants her, I won't stop him from taking her, as long as he acknowledges that both of them are mine.

I lean forward, taking a deep inhale of her scent. A smell that penetrates down to my bones and lays claim to me, just like I mean to lay claim to her. I lean my head forward, brushing my chin against the side of her veil and closer to her ear. "Later, I'm going to fuck your pretty cunt with just that mask on. I might even cum all over it if you're a good girl."

She pulls back from me, and I see her glaring daggers at me. Her hold on the flowers tightens so much that her fists almost crush them. She would love to attack me right here in this church, surrounded by her enemies. Maybe she even thinks that she won't have to marry me if she does. That the Brotherhood and the Holy Father will deem her unhinged.

“If you make a move towards me in violence. I’ll have him shot right here. You can watch him die as his blood soaks the stones below your feet, and then I’ll fuck you on the ground like an animal in his cooling blood.” A charming smile crosses my face as I hear people clearing their throats, while Dinah and I have this private moment.

“House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. The good and benevolent God has brought forth this Sacred Daughter, and this Brotherhood son, in order to create a new blessed union. From their unity, the Brotherhood shall grow and prosper.” The Holy Father’s voice rings out and breaks the connection between Dinah and me, as she rips her glance from mine.

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.”

I reach out and take hold of her elbow, which is covered in rich embroidered fabric. I can see skin peeking through the panels with no sign of her ink. My eyebrow rises, and my eyes narrow on hers. She catches where my eyes are staring, and the little minx winks at me.

A chuckle almost leaves my lips, and I have to swallow it at the last second to avoid offending the Holy Father. I lead her forward, and before the Holy Father, who is standing at the chancel observing us through his mask. *I wonder what his thoughts are on this marriage? Fuck it, it doesn’t matter what the cunt thinks, she’s mine.*

Dinah drops into a low curtsy, her head bowed until it almost reaches lower than her knees. She holds the position stiffly, while I reverently bow my head and keep hold of her elbow.

“Rise, my niece and Sacred Daughter, and step forward into the role the Lord has chosen for you in his wisdom. Strength and honor are her clothing; she is confident about the future. Blessed be an obedient daughter.”

Dinah rises gracefully, taking a step forward, and I’m reluctant to release my grip on her even for an instant. I yearn for every man in this room, whose eyes are fixed upon her, to be consumed by envy. Envy that she is now a Rothesay and, above all, mine.

We shift our focus once again to the Holy Father, who approaches Dinah and tenderly cups her masked face through the veil in his large, bejeweled hand. Her breath hitches audibly in her throat, and her lips part in wonder. Her eyes widen and dilate, almost as though she were entranced by his presence.

“It is my honor and my privilege, as your remaining male kin, to give you with my blessing to Ezekiel Rothesay, a loyal and honorable member of the Brotherhood. Together, you will continue the Lord’s good work, Sacred Daughter.”

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.”

Her words sound robotic to my ears, and a chill races down my spine. Just as I’m about to reach for her again, the doors to

the narthex, which had been closed after her appearance, slam open loudly. Everyone seems to freeze in their motions, and as one, we all turn to view who is standing at the end of the aisle.

A furious and disheveled Abraham Mercier greets all our eyes. By the look gracing his features, he's about to get himself killed. *FUCK!*



Chapter 35



The Sinner

Dinah

The Holy Father's words sound like a deep, comforting melody in my mind. All the rage I was just feeling about having to go through with the wedding, and becoming a prized pig for Ezekiel Rothesay, seemed to have faded away, leaving behind nothing but a hollow echo of my rage on my blood-stained soul.

Even my need to murder everyone in this room has disappeared. All I feel is a warm, soothing sensation as if I'm somehow floating. I feel as if the world is now filled with ever-lasting peace, thanks to the Brotherhood. The Holy Father wants this for me; he wouldn't give his blessing if he didn't.

I want to please him, don't I?

A deafening crash shatters the hazy veil encasing my mind, jolting me back to my brutal reality. I shake my head and squeeze my eyes shut, to try to re-anchor myself in the present moment. *Get it together, Dinah. You are surrounded by enemies.* My head swivels lethargically toward the source of the commotion. At the end of the aisle, where I recently walked to confront my grim destiny, stands a wrathful, maskless Abraham Mercier, his lips curved into a sinister smile.

His clothing is a disheveled mess, some pieces not even properly put on, like his unevenly buttoned shirt. His ochre hair falls in unruly waves, with a few clumps matted together. There are still traces of blood on his neck, and dirt smudges on one side of his face. His complexion appears flushed and uneven, marked by a pronounced, angry, throbbing vein on his forehead. He's a disheveled wreck, yet undeniably captivating, to the point where I can't tear my eyes away from him.

Even from a distance, you can see clearly there is pain etched on his features as he clutches his side, and forces himself to remain standing. Guilt racks me instantly at knowing I'm the cause for his injury. His amber eyes narrow in on Ezekiel at my side, and an irate grimace crosses his lips. *Someone woke up displeased.* I feel the corner of my lips tipping upwards underneath the veil.

He resembles an enraged bull, preparing to charge at us. I can't quite fathom why his anger pleases me, but it does. Deep within my dark soul, I hunger for it. Could it be because I, too, am loathing the situation I find myself trapped in? Perhaps it's knowing that Ezekiel miscalculated somewhere, and is about to get his comeuppance.

From the corner of my eye, I watch Sarah and Peter, his parents, scramble from their pew and quickly try to approach their son. What they think they will be able to accomplish, I have no idea; the menace and determination on his face are frightening. His stare is both as alarming as it is thrilling, as he tries to see into my very core and dissect what he thinks is there.

Nothing but darkness is left, all of my goodness having been robbed of me long ago. I'm as much a monster as you are. Do you recognize me in yourself, Abraham?

Abraham stops halfway up the aisle as some of the guards warily make their way in his direction. He bows as low as he can while clutching onto his abdomen. “My deepest and sincerest apologies, Holy Father, and fellow Brothers. It seems I have arrived late to the ceremony of my oldest and dearest friend.”

His words are sneered as he stares at the Holy Father. “I could not in all good conscience, even while recovering from my wound, not be here to support and bless this holy union. I ask for your forgiveness and indulgence for the interruption and my lack of timeliness.”

A deep, annoyed sigh sounds behind us from the Holy Father. He must make some sort of motion to the guards because they all pull back, and I watch Abe's parents scramble for their seats.

“Abraham Mercier, I will forgive you this disrespectful interruption, in light of your recent battle with pure evil in the name of the Brotherhood. Take your seat, and let us not hear another word out of you before the ceremony is complete.”

Abraham bows once again and moves stiffly towards the front pew. His tawny eyes meet mine, and I can see the deep rage in their depths. I guess the fucker is still mad that I shot him. *Boohoo, buttercup.*

A faint smile tugs at my lips, and I observe his nostrils flaring, before his piercing gaze fixes on Ezekiel, who stands immobilized by my side. My eyes shift between them, and a sense of satisfaction washes over me. It appears we have a *lovers' spat* on our hands. It seems Sammy and I aren't the only ones displeased with Ezekiel's intentions for this sham of a marriage.

“My sacred brothers and sisters, a woman isn't independent from a man, and a man isn't independent from a woman in the Lord's sight. As a sacred woman comes from a man, a sacred man also comes from a woman, but everything comes from God above. Who requires devotion and obedience from all his children.” The Holy Father's eyes glare at Abraham with his last words from behind his mask.

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.” The voices rise in unison, causing dread to start again in the pit of my stomach.

“Husbands and men of the Lord's blessed order. You are called to protect and serve faithfully. The Lord requires that you live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as she is the weaker vessel. As our blessed father in heaven dictates, you are the stronger of the species. You must protect the wombs of your Sacred Wives, so that you may be blessed in the bounty of heaven. You must protect their weak minds and fragile spirits, so that they are one day called to heaven's gates. Protect the wombs and spirits of the Sacred Daughters in your care, or that comes from your union, so that they may one day provide soldiers loyal to

God's army. Your heirs will fill you with the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

"It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order."

My ears burn with the Holy Father's misogynistic words, and my lips refuse to utter the response. The fog that had draped over me has completely dissipated now, and I can think clearly. Ezekiel must notice my silence; his hand once again cradles my elbow, this time more firmly in his grasp. I feel his fingers tightening on my flesh in warning, and their heat burning through the silk and lace. *Fuck you, asshole. You can break my arm; you're not getting those words past my lips.*

"Sacred Wives, you must submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the righteous Lord. Their words must be obeyed. This is how you will honor the Kingdom of Heaven and gain entry. For the husband is the head of the wife and their home, as our God is the head of the church, and I am his image here on earth. As our faithful Order of the Brotherhood submits to our Lord, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

"It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order."

"Brothers, those of you who are husbands, love your wives and daughters, just as the Lord loves the Brotherhood and his people. In his ultimate sacrifice, he gave himself up for her to make her holy and worthy, cleansing her and making her sacred by the washing with water through his word and his

laws, so that one day she would be able to present herself to him as a radiant sacred vessel, without tarnish or wrinkle or any other human blemish, but holy and blameless.” The Holy Father’s voice rises and becomes more forceful in tone, and no other sound can be heard around us, almost as if everyone has just forgotten to breathe.

“It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order.”

He steps forward and places one of his large hands on the forehead of my mask over the veil and the other on Ezekiel’s against his mask. “The Lord requires that you come to him masked in your holy orders, one amongst his loyal members of the Brotherhood. On the day of your death, you will enter the Kingdom, and he shall call you by name in rewardment of your loyal service to his cause. It is then that you, too, shall be blessed and anointed. All of your sins will fade with the mask you no longer wear. For this is the word of the Sacrament and the Brotherhood which keeps its order.”

My eyes meet the Holy Father’s through the eye holes in his mask. Their immense, deep darkness calls to me, and tries to pull me into their depths. I feel a tremble start throughout my limbs, one I can’t seem to stop, and a small gasp leaves my mouth. Ezekiel’s fingers tighten on my arm, but even that feels insignificant.

“Child, I, as your representative of God and your male kin, give you in honor to Ezekiel David Rothesay, a Brother of the

sacred Order of the Sacrament, so that he may glorify you before our Lord. Ezekiel, commence your vows.”

With the Holy Father’s hand pressed against the mask, I swear that I actually feel the heat from his palm, as if a warm light were trying to push its way into me. That fog sensation starts to crawl through my mind, and I want desperately to fight it, to leave this room with all these men who mean harm to me. My chest heaves with strained breaths, and my mouth dries up like a desert.

Ezekiel turns toward me, the Holy Father withdrawing his hand from Ezekiel’s forehead while still gripping mine, ensuring I remain steady and immobile. “Dinah Maria Camrose, you come before the Order as a Sacred Daughter, ready to become a Sacred Wife. As a female, you are steeped in sin. To be absolved and brought into the light, you must agree to be my sinner so that I may cleanse and purify you with my seed, and make you holy. Do you agree to be my sinner before all our brethren, so that one day you may enter the Kingdom of Heaven?”

Emerald eyes lock onto mine, causing my heart rate to quicken, until the only sound I can discern is the echoing thud of my own heartbeat in my ears. My hands tingle and grow clammy, almost losing their grasp on the bouquet. The heat sensation from the mask continues, but now it seems to radiate throughout my entire body.

What is happening to me? Something is not right here. Did they drug me? My mind is becoming sluggish, and all I want

to do is agree with what they are asking me for. Agree, and I can be saved. *I want to be saved, don't I?*

DINAH! Dinah, snap out of it! My mind screams, but it's too late. "I, Dinah Maria Camrose, a Sacred Daughter, agree to be your sinner and become your Sacred Wife, so that I may be saved and glorified by the holy Order of the Brotherhood."

"The Lord in his wisdom has brought this sinner to be glorified. As two become one, both shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven. This Sacred Daughter now becomes a Sacred Wife. In your commitment to strengthen the Order of the Brotherhood, you shall bear its sons and daughters, and be rewarded with the cleansing of your human sins." The Holy Father's voice wraps itself around us, shrouding us in its powerful embrace.

Zeke takes my left hand away from the bouquet, and slips a ring on my finger. I'm too stunned by what I have just done to even look down at it. His fingers squeeze mine before releasing them. "With this ring, I bind you, Dinah Maria Rothesay, to me until the moment you take your last breath on this earth, and we meet again in the Kingdom of Heaven."

The choir starts chanting again, and I hear the members of the Brotherhood clapping all around us. The Holy Father finally releases me of his grip, and an instant cold sensation flies through my body, and brings me back to the here and now. Ezekiel offers me a sad smile, one that reaches those stunning eyes of his.

My fate is now tied to his. *What the fuck have I just done?*



Chapter 36



The Sinner

Dinah

The rest of the ceremony was a blur, of actions and words that I have very little recollection of. The only thing I do remember is the slicing of my palm, and then Ezekiel mixing his blood with mine in our joined hands, in some bullshit Brotherhood blood ritual, further tying us together. Then it was done, and I was indeed his in the eyes of the maggots before us.

I must have zoned out because when I blinked, Noah and Esther Rothesay stood before me, their fake smiles on their masked faces welcoming me into their family. Noah leaned forward while Esther embraced her son and whispered in my ear, “it is done; you are ours,” *which was cryptic as fuck.*

Esther could barely hold back the dissatisfaction and sneer, when it was her turn to embrace me as she called me daughter. Her whispered threat to “*behave or else*” made me chuckle. *Trust me, bitch, I am no happier than you are about this whole mess.*

Then Abraham stood before me, anguish and fury etched into his chiseled features, his mouth set in a harsh slant. His unmasked face offered no concealment for the thoughts or emotions tormenting him. His typically amber eyes now appeared dark and menacing as he leaned in, whispering into

my ear. “I’m going to enjoy fucking you to death, Atasi. All this pain I’m enduring, get ready to feel some of it.”

He drew back and fixed his gaze on Ezekiel, a tumultuous storm of emotions sweeping across his face and body. His hands clenched at his sides, a struggle evident as he fought the urge to reach out and seize the man I was now destined to call my husband. I almost felt pity stir within me as I bore witness to the devastation and anguish he was experiencing due to Zeke’s actions.

Was he feeling betrayed, just like my brother must have felt before his death? When the two people who loved him left him to die? Karma is a cruel and terrifying mistress who will not be denied her comeuppance.

“You and I’ll have words after this is done. Forgiveness will not be readily given, and you had better have a damn good explanation.” He pivoted away from us and stalked up the nave, ignoring calls from Brotherhood members.

I heard the whispered ‘*Fuck*’ from Ezekiel at my side, but I ignored it. If he was having issues with his lover, that was his fucking problem. He dragged us all into this mess, where now I’m a possession of his. *Well, at least until I can stab him to death.* Which I prayed would be sooner rather than later.

My eyes search the cathedral for Sammy, but I never get more than a glimpse of his back as people make their way out of the pews and toward the exit. Pain echoes in my chest, knowing I’ve hurt him with my actions and words here today, regardless of whether they were forced.

Zeke's tight hold on my arm forces me to go in the opposite direction, towards an antechamber to the side of the altar. The minute we cross the threshold into the empty room, he murmurs, "well done, Dinah. Who knew you could be obedient? I wonder if you'll be such a good girl as I'm fucking all your pretty holes, and filling you with my cum?"

He lifts the veil away from my face and grabs my chin in his tight, bruising grasp before his mouth falls on mine, like a ravenous animal ready to devour its meal. I try to push him away, using all my strength. I even attempt to close my lips and teeth to him, but it's useless as his other hand wraps around my throat and tightens without mercy.

His tongue plunders into mine, tasting me, and proving that he now owns me, regardless of my objections. My breath catches in my chest, and tightness commences as I struggle to get even a wisp of a breath through. I can feel my face flaming hot underneath the mask and darkness edging its way into my sight. He is going to kill me mere minutes after making me marry him, the bastard.

He finally pries his mouth away from mine, and loosens his grip around my throat. His thumb rubs circles into the abused flesh while my nails dig into the flesh of his hands. "From now on, the only necklaces that you will wear, Snow, are the ones in the shape and size of my hand. You will beg me for them, like the good girl I know you can be."

He abruptly releases his grip on me, and I falter in my long, cumbersome dress, barely managing to catch myself on an

armchair before nearly landing on the floor. He retraces a few steps toward the room's exit and glances back at me over his shoulder. "You look stunning, wife. You are the most beautiful creature I have ever seen. I'll try to be gentle with you, Snow. Please know that what I'm doing is to protect you. You are mine now. I'll never let anyone hurt you."

With his final words, he walks out the door and closes it with a resounding thud. One that I feel through every bone in my body. I stand there with my chest trying desperately to get enough oxygen, my emotions all in an upheaval, and my pussy dripping because the fucker has just turned me on with his words and violence.

That was over an hour ago. Shortly after he left, Sarah Mercier raced into the room, her mask in her hand and her delicate features filled with concern. "Oh, Dinah. I am so sorry, child. I am sorry for all of it, including my son making that dramatic and unhinged appearance. He...he can be... territorial where Ezekiel...is concerned."

I had no words to give her. What could I say? I was not a bride looking forward to her wedding day. In fact, I greatly doubted that there were many of those in our world. I was a sacrifice to the Order, a vessel to be used and commanded, as they see fit. As Ezekiel Rothesay now sees fit. I wondered at that moment if she knew more about the type of relationship Zeke and Abe truly have, but didn't have the energy or mental capacity needed to confront her about it.

I shake my head to bring me back to the current moment. The one where I'm standing naked before Sarah, as she reapplies thick amounts of foundation to my skin, to hide all the tattoos that grace my flesh. My eyes glance to the side of the room where a bed is draped with luxurious pure white linens, and surrounded by candlelight. A little further away from the bed, a sheer white curtain divides the space, hanging from ceiling to floor, and behind it sit twelve dark wood gothic-styled armchairs with deep, blood-red seat cushions. Their sight makes my skin crawl with the knowledge that shortly, twelve men will be sitting there watching as Ezekiel fucks me for the first time. The only time if I have my way.

Liar, my mind whispers.

“I'm worried, Sarah. What if Zeke can't pull this off? They are expecting a virgin who will bleed.” I drag my hands down my face as I bite into my bottom lip. He had no plan on how to disguise my tattoos. I would have been in real trouble if it hadn't been for Sarah. What guarantee do I have that he actually has one for bedding me and proving I'm pure. *None*. He could be setting me up to die.

Fuck, this is such archaic bullshit. Like really, my worth is determined only by my intact hymen, and my ability to bear children for this monstrous order. There is no way that this is a better world than the one the Brotherhood took over by force.

Women used to be free to make their own choices. They used to be able to decide who they married, if they married at all, and when. Women used to be able to marry other women,

for fuck sakes. They could fuck who they wanted, when they wanted. They could work, study, own property, and travel. They could make decisions for themselves, and had rights under the law. Legitimate rights, not the religious bullshit the Order spews.

In a moment of weakness, the world, which had been devastated by too many wars, famine, and greed, fell to the strength of the Order, and nothing has ever been the same again. A world that was promised peace, equality, and love, under the regime of the Brotherhood instead received nothing but absolute destruction, and the controlling fist of a few powerful men. Freedom was but a faint memory, for those old enough to remember the world before it was left in ashes.

Like all the other women of this current world, I had no further rights other than to allow what men dictated my future to be. As the *'Unholy Ghost'*, I was able to take back some of my power. I could rid the earth of those who would cause further destruction and pain. Yes, I became the Brotherhood's judge, jury, and executioner, but someone had to.

“He will, Dinah, have faith. He knows what will happen in this room tonight. I don't believe he would have gone through with all this, only to lead you to your death.” Sarah's amber eyes meet mine. Eyes identical to her son's, ones filled with pain and remorse.

With a final dab of the sponge and a brush of setting powder, her eyes survey my naked skin, ensuring we have managed to cover all the ink. She reaches forward, grabs the sheer silk

nightgown, and slips it over my head, holding it so I can slide my arms through the sleeves. “I think the camouflage should hold as long as he isn’t too rough, and it doesn’t rub harshly against the fabric.” Her nose twitches at her words, and our lips break out in uncomfortable smiles.

Once I stand there, covered from my neck down to my bare toes in the loose sheer fabric, she leads me to a chair before a large standing mirror and starts playing with my hair. We had to remove all the pins and intricate designs the maid had created, when we removed the veil and crown. Now, my raven hair lies in thick, shining waves at my back, like tendrils of darkness over the paleness of my flesh.

“I think we should leave it loose, Dinah. It will help to cover you just in case, and it’s just so beautiful, so thick and dark like your mother’s.” She twirls a strand through her fingers, and a small tear slides down her face.

“Your mother had it the worst of us. All three of us were married within weeks of each other, back before the world completely lost its mind. She was so happy at first with Francis. I truly envied her because I believed he genuinely loved her, unlike the affection Peter has for me, or even Noah had for Esther.”

She releases my hair, and swipes at her face with her palm. Her golden eyes meet mine in the mirror. “Quickly, we realized that what Francis loved first and foremost was power. Maria was precious to him because of her family ties to the Holy Father, and those in the highest recesses of the

Brotherhood. Even those, in the end, did not save her. We women have no control or power over ourselves in this order.” She bites down on her bottom lip so hard she splits the soft skin, and a drop of blood rises to the surface.

“I think some part of his soul was sick. He allowed others to hurt her badly and degrade her, all while telling her it was her duty. He used her as a bargaining chip with other members, allowing them to force her into sexual acts that would also trap them under his thumb, and allow him to blackmail them. It’s how he gained so much power so quickly. Of course, Peter and, especially Noah, followed in his footsteps with Esther and I. Not all husbands treat their wives like ours do, Dinah. Some truly honor their wives; they are just few and far between.”

“I once thought he loved her.” My words escape my lips in a hushed whisper, and memories of how I believed my father had loved my mother flood my mind. I can almost envision how he used to gaze at her, those tender moments when he thought no one else was watching. Then, that horrible day happened when I discovered the truth. My father was a monster, just like all the men around him.

“I think some part of him did, Dinah, but it was twisted up with all the darkness that fought within him. That darkness often won against the light. Towards the end, I know he regretted his actions to hurt your mother, and the world around him. He tried to bring change. To make amends, it was too late by then, and they had to make an example of him.”

“They branded him a traitor, and her a fallen woman, to prevent others from having similar intentions. They tortured him and destroyed my family, all in the name of this order that is nothing but a bunch of worthless, faithless men, playing with power and the lives of others.” I straighten my shoulders, refusing to get lost in my grief.

There is nothing I could have done when I was a child. I could not have saved my mother, but as an adult, as the ‘*Unholy Ghost*’, I have tried to end the lives of men who would hurt women like my mother and Sarah.

Will I still be able to continue with my life’s mission? Ezekiel said I would, but I don’t trust a word that leaves his lips. Only time will bring forth the truth of his intentions.

Her eyes grow large, and her features are stony, as she stares back at me through the mirrored reflection. “Their time will come, my shared daughter. I promise you that.” She leans forward and gently lays a kiss on the side of my head. Hearing her call me the term of endearment she used to use when I was a small child brings a smile to my face.

However, before I can question her further, a knock on the door startles us, and tension has me coiling my limbs tight. How I wish I had a weapon to defend myself in here. I survey the room once again to see if there is anything at all I can use, and my eyes linger on the pins that were once in my hair. As Sarah turns to answer the door, I quickly grab one and hide it in my hand, using my nails to push off the little safety rubber on the ends of the metal prongs.

It's not much of a defense, but in the worst-case scenario, I will stab it into someone's eye. Hopefully, Ezekiel gives me a reason to use it on him. The fucker deserves to feel some of my violent intentions. He thinks he has me beaten and will control me going forward. I'm here to show him that will never happen. I will never bend or break at his feet.

“Dinah, it's time. The men of the Order will start entering, along with Ezekiel. I will not be allowed to be in this room any longer. Remember what I told you: play possum. Let Ezekiel guide you; he knows what is required.”

She grabs my face between both her soft hands. “Feign pain, they enjoy that, Dinah. Hopefully, Ezekiel will not hurt you, and you will just have to pretend. Do not rise once Ezekiel has spilled within you. Close your eyes and stay still with your legs open. Each man of the Brotherhood will come forward to inspect the blood of your purity, and make a testament to what they saw, and then they will leave. Once Ezekiel leaves the room, I will return to help you clean up, and then you can leave here. It will be done.”

Another knock sounds at the door, this time a little more forceful. “I have to go, Dinah. Please move before the bed, and stand with your eyes lowered to the ground.” She slips her mask back on and walks to the door, never once looking back.

I move towards the bed, the feel of my long hair against my body the only warmth and comfort in the room. My body, mind, and soul feel like blocks of pure ice. I swear it to myself and my mother, who has gone to her early grave with calls for

vengeance, I will murder every man of the Brotherhood who enters this room to make me feel like a victim. I tighten my hand around my only weapon. I will never allow them to make me feel powerless again.





The Forsaker

Zeke

The door swings open, revealing Sarah's masked face, and our eyes meet in a knowing gaze. Concern is evident in her topaz eyes. She must have been the one to assist Dinah in concealing the tattoos. Does she know that Dinah is not a virgin anymore? Would Dinah have confessed something so dangerous to her?

What choice did she have, asshole? You left her to fend for herself, my mind chastises. The grimace etched across her face leaves me with a sinking feeling that she does. Damn it, can she be trusted?

She blocks the doorway with her slight frame, shoulders stiff, and head held high. A battered queen with no power. Defiance radiates from her form and reminds me of her son, who shares some of her attributes, including pure stubbornness. "You will protect her, Ezekiel Rothesay, or I swear by the life of my own son, I will find a way to end yours."

She doesn't even give me a chance to respond, pushing away from the doorframe and silently walking down the hall. *Guess that answers that.* Footsteps arriving behind me have me pivoting, my mind still trying to process the fact that sweet, gentle Sarah Mercier just threatened my life. My gaze lands on

the men behind me, and anger immediately springs to life within me.

My father and Peter stand together, with their masks on the top of their heads, and anticipation clear in their features. Disgust fills me, knowing my father wants to watch Dinah, a girl he has known since birth, get railed. There's no point in arguing that he shouldn't be part of the ceremony. He's a high-ranking member of the Order, and it is his right to participate, even if it's revolting.

Surprise fills me as I notice the man approaching in his golden robe and mask in place. It's the same member of the Holy Father's entourage who carried the sword. His dark eyes meet mine, and again, he gives me that sinister smirk. *Who is he?*

"I will be representing the Holy Father, who did not think it appropriate to be a part of this ceremony, given his kinship to the bride." He stares at my father with apparent revulsion as he utters the words. My father shifts uncomfortably but disregards the barb sent his way.

A few more members of the Brotherhood approach in their black robes and white half-masks. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I glimpse Abraham and Sammy coming up behind them. My molars clench so tightly that I feel like one of them will crack. What the fuck is he doing here? Abraham should be back at the house resting, not trying my fucking patience.

Peter whirls around and spots his son, surprise registering on his features. "Son, you should be resting. What are you doing

here?”

“I will be partaking in the ceremony as Ezekiel’s oldest friend,” Abraham states, his voice devoid of emotion.

“Abraham, that is not possible, son. There is already one member of your household present, your father. It would not be proper to have two,” my father replies with agitation.

“Let the boy participate; after all, he and your son are best friends, brothers even under the Brotherhood. I am sure the Holy Father would approve. It is an honor to witness a Sacred Wife lose her purity and become sanctified.” The sword carrier responds without ever diverting his gaze from me. This motherfucker is getting on my last nerve. My hands clench at my sides as I try to remain composed, resisting the urge to erupt in violence.

“You, guard. Fetch another chair from that other room. You can carry it inside when we enter,” my father instructs Sammy, who grits his jaw, acknowledges his request, and enters the room to retrieve the additional chair. *My father is a pure asshole.*

Abe and I watch Sammy intently, witnessing how utterly miserable he is and how he’s trying hard to disguise it. I can see Abe’s sadistic smirk starting to tip his lips upwards from the corner of my eye. He knows full well why I’ve forced Sammy to be the guard in the room; we are both fucked up and sadistic assholes. Some salt needs to be rubbed deeply into wounds. Sammy’s about to learn the hard way that I don’t play fair.

When all thirteen men, plus Sammy holding the extra chair, are ready with their masks in place, I open the door and enter ahead of them. The muted light of golden candlelight greets me, and the scent of bergamot, amber, and vanilla teases my senses. I see her outline through the sheer curtain as she stands piously before the bed. *My little Snow.*

Amidst this dimly lit chamber, the shadows will help to conceal the twisted desires of its attendants. I'm almost grateful that my Snow will not have to see their reactions to her and the lust that already graces some of their features.

I slip around the curtain as the men follow suit, filing inside and taking their seats. I take note that the Holy Father's man, my father, Peter, and Abe, take front-row seats to watch me defile my bride. Sammy moves over to the furthest wall next to the door after placing the last chair into position, his gaze refusing to glance in Dinah's direction.

Could I have endured what I'm subjecting him to? Could I have stood by and watched another man coerce the woman I love into marriage, and then watch with a group of malignant men as he fucked her before us?

No. I would've already slaughtered everyone in this room. He is stronger than I thought, which is a pity. I was hoping that he would explode so I could have a reason to murder him, and break my promise to Dinah. With him out of the way, she would be dependent on me. He's proving that desire to be more challenging to obtain than I expected.

His self-restraint is commendable. I have no doubt in my mind that he is vividly picturing murdering every single person in this room, and taking Dinah and running. Too bad for him, they would never leave this cathedral alive.

My attention returns to the dark-haired beauty before me, in the sheer white nightgown that trails to the floor and covers every inch of her, while also revealing every beautiful curve and the perfection of her body.

Not a hint of ink is visible, and I send up a quick thank you to Sarah in my mind for assisting her. Her thick, loose, ebony waves cover the round globes of her breasts, keeping them hidden from prying eyes. Her perfect pink pussy is visible through the sheer fabric, the sight making my cock come to full attention in my pants.

Fuck, she's so beautiful. Even in this stupid, shapeless nightgown, she's an erotic sight.

I draw nearer to her, my hand extending to seize a thick tendril of her hair, wrapping it around my finger and tugging gently. I compel her to lift her gaze from the ground and meet my eyes, my large body helping to obstruct the view of her small form from those seated and waiting. Her pale steel blue eyes, with a coldness that makes the Arctic feel warm and fuzzy, meet mine, and I see a maelstrom of anger within their depths. I lean forward, my lips meeting her forehead as I whisper, "trust me, Snow."

Some of the tension leaves her shoulders at my words, but one of her hands remains clenched at her side. I trail my lips

down over her eyes, kissing each of them until her thick lashes flutter underneath my lips. Then I move across to her cheeks, pressing my mouth to each side in a chaste kiss before reaching the ultimate prize of her soft rose-covered lips. I can hear antsy movement behind me, but I ignore their impatience. She is mine now, and I mean to enjoy her.

I allow my lips to press against hers, not demanding to deepen the kiss, both our eyes open and staring into each other. Can she see right into my very soul? Does she witness the darkness within me? Will she ever be afraid of what she sees, or does she recognize a kindred spirit? My evil and madness calling to hers.

Her lips part with a slight whimper, allowing my tongue to enter and taste her richness. I explore her mouth, letting myself plunder and take from her, utterly addicted to her sweet nectar within mere moments. My hands reach up and tangle in her thick hair, pulling her closer to me until our bodies are flush. I can feel my hard cock digging into her stomach and coating the inside of my boxers with the drops of precum escaping my engorged head. *Fuck, I need her. I need every inch of her to be mine.*

I take a step forward, and she takes a step back, and then another until the back of her legs are pressed against the high mattress. I use one of my hands to cradle the back of her neck, my fingers digging into her hair and the other wrapping around her small waist, lifting her slight frame and laying her back gently against the plush mattress and all the soft linens.

I lean my body over hers, keeping most of my weight on my elbows, as I fit within the cradle of her splayed legs. Her hand rises to grip my shoulder as she widens her legs further, and her breath hitches in her throat, as I rub my confined erection against her pussy lips over the fabric of her nightgown.

I withdraw from her, and a faint, almost imperceptible moan of protest escapes her lips, leaving me uncertain whether I genuinely heard it or imagined it. I quickly unbutton my black dress shirt, pulling the ends from my pants and removing it from my body. My hands find my belt buckle, and I undo it before moving onto my pants button and zipper. As I strip off the remainder of my clothing, I watch Dinah's eyes widen with a hint of desire, the gray overtaking the blue, and a charming blush rises to her cheeks.

Is my little serial killer aroused? Fuck, I hope so. I hope she's getting wet for me, and I can keep her focused on me, and not acknowledging the other fuckers in the room. The ones who are tainting my first time possessing her with their presence.

Once I am standing naked before her, I slip one knee onto the mattress and lean my head down to capture one of her light brown nipples, and suck it through the fabric of the nightgown. Her body arches into my touch, as her fingernails meet my neck and shoulders. Her grip holds me to her hardened nipple as I suck deep, and little mewling sounds leave her lips. *Fuck, she tastes delicious; I want and need more of her.*

I shift my head and give her other nipple the same treatment. My hand moves lower over her stomach, brushing against her hip as I gather the soft fabric of her nightgown and raise it, until I can feel her flesh pressed against mine.

A hiss leaves my lips at the feel of her soft, warm skin making contact with my own. I lift myself off her slightly, allowing my grip to pull the hem of the nightgown all the way above her hips. I would love to just strip her of the whole thing and savor all that creamy skin, leaving teeth marks in my wake, but I don't want these fuckers to have that unrestricted view of my pretty little Snow.

I trail my mouth down the middle of her chest and abdomen, leaving wet, open-mouthed kisses in my wake. When my head is at her pelvis, and she's squirming below me, I place a chaste kiss on the very top of her pussy. Her rich, musky scent invades all my senses, and makes me start to lose my mind.

Get it together, fucker, we have a job to do, I admonish myself, when all I want to do is drive my aching cock inside of her tight core.

My tongue slips out of my mouth and licks the soft skin where her thigh meets her pussy, making its unhurried way across her plump, wet cunt to the other side and down. I trail kisses up and down her slit, relishing in her taste and the feel of her wetness as it coats my lips.

My tongue lashes at her throbbing hard, little clit before slipping through her drenched pussy lips and meeting her entrance. She moves restlessly below me, the muscles of her

toned stomach contracting, as goosebumps rise across her flesh. Her body's reaction to my ministrations makes me want to preen like a damn peacock. She wants me, or at least her body does, even if her mind refuses to acknowledge that truth. For the moment, that has to be enough. I'll deal with the rest as we navigate forward together.

Here's where stuff is about to get devious and risky. I'm hoping Dinah doesn't give away what I'm doing to those watching. I move the two hidden blood capsules from below my tongue to the very tip, my mouth latching onto her sweet pussy as I push them inside of her. The rich hit of her flavor has me gripping her thighs in a punishing grip, and fucking her as deep as I can with my tongue.

Moans leave her delectable lips, as her head thrashes from one side to another on the mattress. Her clenched hand comes up to the back of my neck and holds me to her with force, as her back arches in pleasure. I feel a little pinch of pain as my hair is being ripped from my scalp, but it's nothing that will dissuade me from enjoying my Snow's rich flavor. Shit, she could rip out all my hair, and I would still sit here with my tongue buried inside of her.

Fuck, she is a meal that needs to be savored and enjoyed with time. Unfortunately, I don't fucking have the luxury of it at the moment.

Not with these assholes sitting here getting eyes full of what belongs to me. *Mine*. My grip on her soft skin tightens with anger, as I think about the room's onlookers. Their mere

presence is a relentless reminder of the cage we are all ensnared in. Each masked face that leers in wicked anticipation, causing self-loathing and rage to fill my blood. The desire to crush each and every one of their skulls fills me.

Right here in the midst of this ritual, an unspoken oath forms within the depths of my dark soul. I will destroy not just their voyeuristic pleasure at my Dinah's expense, but also the bonds that have us tethered to this unholy union, a covenant sealed in deceit and desire for power.

The Brotherhood of the Sacrament will burn at my feet, and I'll hand its ashes to my Snow as a depraved and willing gift.

I pull back and let my fingers stroke through her glistening and aroused folds, coating them before slowly slipping them inside of her. I'm trying to be extra careful with the capsules so that I don't pop them yet, but I also need to make sure they are deeper inside of her, so they don't accidentally slip out when I enter her. I feel them with my two fingers, pushing them further inside of her with satisfaction. I pump once, then twice, hating that I can't bring her to completion before I take mine.

Soon, Snow. I'll make you cum like my dirty, little whore, over and over again until you can't even remember your name.

The Brotherhood, however, doesn't care if Dinah enjoys herself and cums; they just care that she bleeds. I pull myself away from her, despite my body wanting to feast on her forever. I shift back up her toned body, her skin a soothing softness against mine that causes shivers to break along my

spine. The head of my throbbing, pierced cock slips between her wet pussy lips, coating itself before slipping to her entrance.

Fuck, she's so wet and warm. My mouth meets hers once again, and I let her taste herself on my tongue before pulling back. A fleeting moan slips from her lips, and I swallow it, trying hard to hold onto my restraint.

She's so responsive that it's becoming harder to remember why we are doing this. That her life is on the line here and now. With my mouth just mere inches above hers, I utter, "eyes on me, baby girl. You belong to me, not to them."

I push forward in a hard thrust that has her body shifting up the bed, and a pained cry leaving her lips loudly, as I bottom out in one harsh go. Fuck, she's so tight, and the sound of her soft cry is making me want to lose complete control. My cock throbs painfully with the need to pound into the new heaven he's found, without mercy.

I lower my head to the side of her neck and bite down hard, a scream leaving her lips as I slip the palm of my hand up to her mouth. I pull back and whisper in her ear, "I want to hear you scream, baby, but only for me. Those cries are mine."

She bites down viciously with her teeth on the meaty part of my palm, and that minor hit of pain is all I need to slam into her roughly again and again. Her body keeps shifting up the mattress with the force of my thrusts, the sound of skin slapping skin loud in the room, as are her muffled cries against

my hand. Her legs wrap tightly around my waist, trying to hold or slow the force of my strokes, but I'm not having it.

I'm on a mission to leave a permanent mark of my ownership on her pussy. I want there to be no doubt in her mind that I was here, laying claim to her, ruining her for anyone else who comes after me. I slam into her repeatedly, bracing my body on my elbows and dragging my eyes away from her beautiful face to where we are connected. Satisfaction fills me when I see a tinge of red on my cock as I pull out of her tight, drenched cunt and slam home again.

“So good, Snow. You feel like you were made for my cock, baby.”

Fuck, so good, she feels better than any pussy I have ever had. Even if I spent the rest of my life deep in her tight embrace, it wouldn't be enough. I would still crave her until I was filled with insanity. *She is mine*. She was always meant to be mine, and now that I have claimed her, God help anyone who tries to take her from me.

I slide my hand from her mouth and press my lips to her ear. “You're my good little slut, aren't you, Snow? Feel how your tight cunt drenches my cock, how your juices drip down my balls. You're my little whore. You can't get enough of my cock, can you baby?”

I keep thrusting harshly into her as her breath leaves her in ragged gasps. Her nails are gouging my back, shoulders, and arms as she tries to keep hold of me, the stings meeting the

sweat coating my body, and letting me know she has broken the skin. *Yes, baby! Mark me up, claim me as yours.*

I can feel the heat rising up my spine like a bolt of electricity, and my rhythm becomes more erratic and choppy. My chest feels tight, and my head starts to go fuzzy; sweat drips down my face and into my eyes. My balls draw up tight against my body, and a sense of euphoria fills me as I slam a final time into Dinah's perfect cunt, and spill inside of her with a roar.

Mine! The word chants on repeat inside my head, laying claim to her in a primal way. There is a need to mark her further, trying to push through and claim me. *Fuck! If I died in this moment, it would be enough to say I tasted paradise between her legs, and was redeemed as a sinner who prayed at her altar.*

I lift my large, heavy frame off of her and stare down into her flushed face, her beautiful stormy steel eyes filled with a tempest trapped within their depths, lowered to half-mast with her thick lashes giving her a satisfied and sleepy expression.

She's even more beautiful like this, and I loathe what has to happen next. That these fuckers get to taint something so wonderful between us. "Dinah Maria Camrose Rothesay, you are now a Sacred Wife, sanctified by me, your husband before God and the Brotherhood which keeps its order."

"It is right to give thanks to the Lord, my God, and to the Brotherhood which keeps its order."

The male voices in the room respond in union, and immediately, the sleepy look leaves Dinah, and she shrinks in on herself. Trying to hide her body below mine, away from their sightline. I lean forward, pressing a gentle kiss to the tip of her nose. In this moment, I yearn to shield her from this despicable and evil world, to safeguard the fragility she's exuding. Every fiber of my being aches to coil myself around her, and ensure her safety. Dissatisfaction fills me, knowing that she didn't get to cum, while I got to experience heaven within her warm heat.

“Close your eyes, baby, and keep your legs open wide. Don't open them until you hear Sarah's voice. It's over now; no one will take you from me, ever.”

I slide from inside of her warm pussy and get to my feet. I stare at where my cock was just the happiest it has ever been and watch as my cum starts to slip from inside of her, tinged with red blood. Fuck, I hope those capsules dissolved enough with our combined body heat and fluids; this could all go really fucking wrong if they didn't, and pop out with cum.

I stand back, my cock still hard and coated in her juices and my cum, as it bobs up against my stomach. My eyes meet Abe's first, and I see nothing but desire staring back at me. His breathing is harsh as his chest rises and falls rapidly, and his thick cock is straining in his pants. He licks his bottom lip, and desire fills me to take it between my teeth.

Alarms filled with danger are ringing in my mind, warning me to be careful here, with all these eyes watching us. One

wrong move, and it won't only be Dinah and Sammy at risk of dying at the hands of the Order.

The danger doesn't stop the desire to shove my cock inside his mouth right now, and make him taste the combination of Dinah and me, though. Fuck, I wish I could fuck his ass with Dinah's cum still coating my cock.

One day soon, I will. I vow it.

I rip my eyes away from him, and to the other members of the Brotherhood present, and I see similar aroused states, men adjusting themselves in their pants after watching me fuck my new wife. My eyes meet the Holy Father's man, who nods in my direction, his hand swiping at his mouth as his other hand adjusts his cock that's tenting his pants.

Lastly, I turn my angry gaze to my father, and I see nothing but hate staring back at me. My cock instantly starts to deflate at the expression on his face, and the malcontent rising in my body with the desire to snap his neck.

His cock is hard, tenting his pants, but his hands are fisted in his lap, making no attempt to disguise his state. His mouth is settled in a deep scowl, and his green eyes smolder with discontent. His skin is covered in a sweaty dew that repulses me. He finally tries to hide his expression, taking a deep breath to get himself under control as he nods once to me and rises, unembarrassed about his predicament, pointing straight out in front of him.

He moves past me to where Dinah lays sprawled out on her back, her chest rising and falling rapidly, her nightgown

shoved up at her waist, and her toned legs wide open with her pretty swollen pussy on display coated in my cum and blood.

Thank fuck, she listened for once in her stubborn life, and her eyes are tightly closed. I don't want her to behold the expression of lust on my father's psychotic face. He makes a move with his arm as if he would attempt to touch her, and a deep warning growl leaves my lips. I'll rip that fucking arm right off his body and beat him with it, if he does. Someone behind us clears their throats, and it seems to pull him out of whatever fog he's in.

"Daughter, you are now sanctified and recognized by the Brotherhood as a Sacred Wife," he murmurs before turning and heading towards the door.

One by one, each man in the room comes up and stares at the product of proof spilling from Dinah's swollen pussy and, with their words, confirms that she is sanctified. Besides Sammy and me, the last two in the room are Abe and the Holy Father's man. Dinah's eyes remain thankfully clenched tightly shut throughout this barbaric ritual.

The Holy Father's man approaches first, his dark eyes narrowed, and his head tilted to the side as if he is considering what he is seeing. The combination of my cum and the red tinge is spreading out of Dinah, and making a wet spot at the opening of her pussy, and where it meets the pure white linens. It's not a lot of red, but it's enough to signify that her hymen was broken by me. *God, how I wish that was actually true, and I had been the first to lay claim to her.*

“You have passed the test, blessed daughter. The Holy Father will be pleased. I sanctify you in his name, and welcome you as a Sacred Wife to the Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament. May your union produce fruit.” He turns and walks out of the room without another look back.

Then it’s just us three left with Dinah. Abraham advances forward and, without a word, slips his finger through her swollen pussy lips and into her cunt, pushing in and out as she shifts restlessly on the bed, and whimpers leave her lips. Her face is tight with anger as she endures the touch, not knowing who it belongs to. A growl sounds from behind us as Sammy starts to lose his precarious control.

I want to be angry, fuck, I want to shatter his hand for touching what’s mine, but instead, beads of precum drip from my cock, as I get more aroused watching him touch her. He pulls his finger back out and pops it in his mouth, sucking the combination off it and groaning. “That’s a nice trick, Zeke. I guess Dinah can be not only a whore but a virgin any time we want her to be.”

Dinah’s whole body tenses on the bed at his words. He doesn’t bother to utter the words necessary by the Order to sanctify her, and strolls angrily out of the room, his shoulders tense, and his head held high. Fuck, he and I are going to have it out, I can just feel it. He won’t let this go even when I explain why I did it. *Stubborn, jealous fucker.*

My eyes meet Sammy’s dark blue ones, and he doesn’t mask his pain and rage from my sight. In his eyes, I see my death

one day at his hands. He quickly glances at Dinah's body and then walks out of the room without a word. He's holding himself together better than I thought he would. Much better than I could have accomplished, considering what he just watched happen here.

With one last glance at the woman who just saved herself, and her lover, while becoming irrevocably mine, I pick up my discarded clothing and leave the room, shutting the door behind me.

There is no chance of me ever letting her go now.





Sammy

I slide into the room on silent feet, a wraith wandering these condemned halls. Halls of a house that has become my prison, even though I am the guard responsible for keeping the chains on the doors. The muted light of the hallways helps to camouflage my large frame. Well, that and knowing who is watching everything happening in this house at all times.

Beneath Ezekiel Rothesay's roof, shadows lurk in the form of moles. Some, he acknowledges, like the minions his father employs to maintain a watchful eye on his household. One belongs to the Holy Father, their motives concealed, their presence frightening. The last informant belongs to the rebels, hungering for any advantage to topple the Brotherhood. All of these presences add additional danger to an already fucked up atmosphere.

Regardless of their purposes, I refuse to allow any of them to harm my Nightstar. Two agonizing nights have passed since the day of her wedding. I've spent my days shadowing her from a distance, yearning to reach out, to offer solace, while my nights have been dedicated to standing sentinel outside her locked door. The one she seems to think will keep me out as well as everyone else. The tension of the situation only seems to grow, and the stakes are higher than ever.

Fortunately, no one has dared to make a move against her, not even that fucker Ezekiel, which honestly surprised me. I was sure that asshole would be barging into her room every chance he got, now that he has had a taste of my Nightstar. Now that the deed is completed, though, it seems he's giving her some space to acclimate to her new position – as his wife. His constant reminder that she's his possession is a bitter pill to swallow. Oh, how I yearn to plunge my blade into the hollow cavity where his heart should reside.

Dinah has remained silent, refusing to utter a word to me ever since her wedding. She avoids me, dodging my attempts to engage her in conversation, or corner her. Every breath I draw serves as a painful reminder that I share as much blame for her anger as Ezekiel does. I should never have agreed to his wretched deal, nor should I have pushed her into marrying him.

Watching him marry her, and then fuck her, was the hardest and most painful thing I've ever experienced. My heart nearly shattered into pieces as I was forced to observe silently as he not only claimed and touched her, but succeeded in bringing her pleasure. That memory will haunt me for the rest of my miserable life. One I can only hope is not lengthy.

My Nightstar has withdrawn into herself, refusing to speak unless commanded by Ezekiel, or when completely necessary with the staff. I watch as she moves from room to room in this large house, lost in her thoughts, with undisguised misery etched on her face.

The staff have begun to gossip already about her. They've heard the rumors that I perpetuated while she was under my care, that she is insane. She doesn't help to dissuade them of those notions when she throws shit at Ezekiel, every time he enters a room she's in. My Nightstar is filled to the brim with rage, and it won't take much to provoke her to explode.

A part of me hopes that Ezekiel bears the brunt when she does; the other part fears what will happen to her when she eventually loses control, and she will; it's no longer a matter of if but when. A Sacred Wife must be docile and compliant, not violent and volatile under the Brotherhood's laws.

Will Ezekiel go back on his word to keep her safe and protected, if she continues fighting him at every turn? Will he push her to the breaking point, forcing her to unleash her wrath, which could end up costing her her life? These questions and others plague all of my waking and resting moments.

The other occupant of this confining residence isn't faring much better than me in the wake of Ezekiel's actions. Abraham, still recuperating from the bullet wound to his abdomen, remains aloof, ignoring Ezekiel's futile attempts at conversation, and his pitiful apologies. Much like my Dinah, he doesn't bother to conceal his contempt for the master of this household, or his seething anger at the predicament that has befallen us.

We are all trapped in this web now, all four of us consumed by regrets and the tragedy of our actions. Do I believe that one

day, we can all live in harmony? That I'll be able to share Dinah with Abraham and Ezekiel? That is if she ever allows us near her again, which at the present moment is highly doubtful.

The silver moonlight cascades across the linen-draped bed, casting a haunting glow. The small figure beneath the thick covers seems almost engulfed by the expanse of the massive bed. I step closer, drawn by the need for a glimpse of her serene face, a stark contrast to the piercing glares she has directed at me, and everyone else, in this miserable house.

I crave the peace we once had together in our small home, far from the Brotherhood and these two fuckers, who seek to damage what I had with her. Even though we were out murdering Brotherhood members, and I feared for her unstable sanity, there was still a sense of unity between us.

She knew then that every breath I drew was for her. She was my purpose for existing, even though she held an unquenchable thirst for vengeance against the Order. I was also the beacon guiding her forward, helping her endure and survive the agonizing loss of her family. But now, I couldn't be sure this was still true.

Was she beginning to regret the sacrifice she had made to ensure our survival? Would her hatred for me and my actions endure forever? Have I truly lost her?

Panic seizes me, as I realize I may have lost her in a bargain to keep breathing air I no longer crave. Breaths that are meaningless if I don't have my Nightstar at my side. I need her

to forgive me, to understand that what I did was for her, that the mere thought of never again seeing her alive was too much to bear, even if the consequence was that I had to watch her from afar with someone else, causing me insurmountable pain.

I shift forward until I'm at the side of the bed, watching as her chest rises and falls with her deep slumber. The fact that she doesn't wake up with my presence, signifies how truly exhausted she is. A small beam of light guides my eyesight over her beautiful features, her dark hair a pool of ink surrounding her, and her luminescent, soft skin seeming to glow with an ethereal light from within. Her pouty lips are parted in sleep, and her dark, full lashes linger on her high cheekbones. She is an exquisite work of art, a temptation I don't wish to resist, and a soothing balm to my tortured soul.

Her tattooed arm snakes out from beneath the covers as she shifts, gripped in the dreamland she inhabits, the movement causing the linens to display more of her naked body to my hungry sight. The tattoos that grace her arms and chest become visible to my eyes, reaffirming with their presence on her body that she was and is mine. Each one inked onto her skin by my hand, cementing our bond.

A small, pained cry leaves her lips and has me reaching out, before I can stop myself, to comfort her. Nightmares always seem to plague my Nightstar, refusing to give her a moment of peace even in her slumber. The need to wrap her tightly in my arms is a vicious fire within me, one that I can no longer indulge in for fear that she will reject me.

My fingers make contact with her soft skin, trailing across her forearm and causing her to cease her movement. A wistful sigh leaves her lips as she digs her body further into the mattress, seeking comfort, the sheet now pooled around her waist, displaying the round globes of her creamy breasts to my eager gaze. Her nipples harden in the cool air and have my mouth watering.

Fuck. My cock begins to harden within the confines of my pants. I miss touching and tasting her. The need is so visceral within me that it almost brings me to my knees. Just one more moment, I need to somehow reassure myself that I haven't entirely lost her. That she will forgive me in time. That she still desires me, even though her anger is a living chasm between us.

My finger traces across the skin of her warm, soft breast, lingering as goosebumps erupt over the surface and her nipples harden further. I permit my fingers to cautiously glide along her nipple, strumming it and causing another small moan to leave her lips.

Emboldened by her reaction, and desperately needing a hit of the drug she is to me, I repeat my actions on her other breast and slowly trail my fingers down her chest, tracing over the tattoo I placed there. The one that I poured my heart and soul into, that is more of a brand of possession than it is art.

Her body moves subtly, her lips parting with a mewling sound as my fingers explore the rich canvas that is her soft skin, and continue their exploration down her toned stomach,

dragging the linens with me and worshiping her, with every touch and every breath that leaves my lips. My eyes move back and forth, between where my fingers are touching and her facial features, deep in slumber.

When my digits reach the destination of their heaven, I smooth them over the soft, plump skin of her pussy, and a whimper and the sound of my name escaping her lips, has my breath stuttering in my chest. Behind me, I hear the door quietly crack open, and someone slips stealthily into the room.

Panic and anger should overwhelm me at the thought of someone else seeking my Nightstar out, but I know exactly who it is. I can smell and sense him as he silently approaches, his breath quickening when he catches a glimpse of my girl. My eyes tear away from Dinah before me, meeting bright emerald eyes filled with curiosity and longing.

We don't bother to exchange words; there is no need. Both of us are here for the same reason. *Dinah*. We both now crave her, just as two addicts crave the hit of their favorite substance. Dinah has become a need scorching through our veins that cannot be quenched.

I ignore his presence as I slip one of my fingers between her slit, stroking over her clit and causing further whimpers to leave her lips. Her body seeks the feeling of my touch, wetness seeping from inside of her to assist my fingers in their exploration. Another moaned exhale of my name has my mouth watering as I long to taste her, and pride surging, making my chest puff up like some deranged gorilla.

Zeke watches, mesmerized, as I lean forward and allow the tip of my tongue to slip between her folds and lash her clit. Her body arches on the bed, and for a moment, I hesitate, believing that she is waking from her slumber, but her eyes remain shut even though her body seeks the friction of my mouth, and her fists lightly clench on the linens. “Sam...my,” her moan is the balm to my weary soul.

My first taste of heaven has my heart thumping rapidly, and my taste buds explode with her sweet and musky flavor, while my mind fills with euphoria. I lash at her little, hard nub repeatedly, alternating between licking and sucking with a feverish need. My finger once again slips between her drenched folds and to her tight entrance. I pull back and stare at my Nightstar, filled with desire as she lays like a banquet before me, as I plunge my fingers inside of her tight core.

A pained groan leaves the other male inhabitant, and he shifts forward. His hand reaches out as his fingers trail over the velvet skin of her breast, and he strums her hardened nipple. The desire to murder him rises again within me. How fucking dare he come in here and take what little I have left of her from me. *This moment was mine. She is mine, and the need to reclaim her is all-consuming.*

As gasps and whimpers leave Dinah’s mouth, they help cool some of my rage, knowing we are bringing her pleasure. Even if it’s while she lies deep in an exhausted slumber, oblivious to the reality that it’s us, instead of some dreamland lover she’s reaching for. She doesn’t grasp it’s not the dream version of Sammy she’s seeking. I continue to pump into her tight hole

with small thrusts as her hips undulate below me, chasing their pleasure and release.

I return my mouth to her clit, sucking hard at the exact moment Zeke leans forward and lashes her nipple with his tongue. The combination of us wreaks havoc on her small, pleasure-filled body, causing her to drench my fingers, and low pleading words to leave her lips, as she mumbles her request to come sleepily.

I push another finger inside of her, and stroke over that spot I know brings her so much pleasure. I'm rewarded with more mewling sounds as I thrust deeper, quickening my movements as Ezekiel also sucks deeper on her nipple.

She comes with a small, breathless cry, her body tightening below our combined ministrations and arching off of the bed. She is a goddess before two mortal men, captivated by her beauty, and willing to do anything to see that pleasure-filled expression cross her face.

As she descends from the crest of her orgasm, I withdraw my fingers and mouth from her body with a pained devastation and longing. Ezekiel pulls back, and his gaze slips over a satisfied but slumbering Dinah. I grab onto his bicep and pull him away from her; with one last look filled with regrets and my heart cracking open with need, I open the door and pull him silently from the room.

He complies without argument and stands outside her door, observing me with that unnerving way of his. His hand rises towards my face, and I stand stock still to see what he is going

to do. His thumb slides across my bottom lip, still wet from Dinah's release, and then he slips it into his own mouth, groaning with pleasure.

Deep pupils filled with emerald fire meet mine, and I see the hunger in their depths. His nostrils flare, and his lips crush into a straight line. Without a word, he pivots and moves down the hall away from me, and I'm left confused, aroused, and filled with regrets.

Fuck, this world is filled with even more perils than I thought.



Chapter 39



The Sinner

Dinah

Ten days. That's how long I have been a prisoner in this house, bound in matrimony to that cunt, Ezekiel Rothesay. Ten days of evading the three men who share a twisted sense of ownership over me. Men now actively steering clear of my presence, driven away by my violent and vengeful tendencies. It might be considered a mixed blessing, but the gnawing loneliness is starting to fester within me.

Ten days since the psychotic Order that they all serve forced me not only to endure the ordeal of a wedding I didn't want, and married me off to a power-hungry psychopath, but also forced me to experience the most horrific and humiliating sexual encounter of my life. One that has left scars forever on my soul, and plays on repeat in my waking and sleeping hours.

I seethe with a white-hot fury at what has befallen me during my every waking moment. My anger has become a blazing cyclone within my chest. The realization that all my choices have been brutally stripped away, washes over me. In one moment of dire duress, I became like all the other females of this world, under the menacing thumb of the Brotherhood. *Weak. Captured. Powerless.* A storm of indignation races through me, knowing I have lost my sense of self and power. Power I once knew and enjoyed as the Unholy Ghost.

“Mrs. Rothesay, Mr. Rothesay requests your presence in the study, ma’am.” The voice of Elizabeth, one of our maids, breaks through my obsessive, all-encompassing thoughts and forces me to look away from my view of the pretty cliffs out the window. The cliffs that I still dream of pushing Ezekiel over. A deep sigh of misery leaves my lips as I turn around and survey the blonde before me.

She’s pretty, petite, and obedient. She’s a decent maid, hardworking like all those who require labor in exchange for survival in our world. She’s also fucking Abraham Mercier, every single time he beckons in her direction, with those deep liquid golden eyes that reflect a sun-kissed morning.

He’s not even being discreet about it. The fucker makes sure to do it in rooms that they can be caught in, regardless of the fact she could be sentenced to death for her actions. Like, just yesterday, when I walked into this very room to see her draped over the arm of the sofa. Her face was shoved into the cushions, her uniform skirt lifted above her head, and he was pounding into her from behind without mercy. His eyes met and held mine in defiance, daring me to stop them.

I refused to cower from his challenge, no matter how much it made my blood boil, and hurt to rise inside of me, to witness and hear the pleasure he was bringing her, with the noises she couldn’t restrain. She enjoyed his use of her body, completely unaware that I was a voyeur to her pleasure. When he came inside of her, it was my pet name that he called out. “*Atasi.*” As if that didn’t make matters even worse. He was either picturing me instead of her, or taunting and trying to hurt me.

Mission fucking accomplished, though I would never admit it to him.

I can't blame her for submitting to his every whim; what else is she supposed to do? He's a high-ranking Brotherhood member. She is not a '*sacred*' anything, just someone of the serving class. Not that if she was a '*Sacred Wife*', it would have saved her. That's just what the Brotherhood likes the general public to believe. The truth is far more sinister. Besides, Abraham oozes nothing but sex and danger, both of which are an aphrodisiac to women.

"Did he say what he required?" I question as I move towards the doorway, the sound of the stupid long dress I am wearing swishing around my legs, causing a frustrated sigh to leave my lips.

Fuck this proper Sacred Wife shit. I long for some goddamn pants. Whoever thought women would want to wear this twenty-four-seven is insane. *Oh, right, a man came up with this crap*. It's just one more reason to hate this world and set it ablaze.

Ezekiel has been trying to piss me off for days, with his constant lists of requirements that force me to fill the unwanted role of his wife. *If only he would give me the choice of being his executioner*.

First, the fucker required that I meet with all the household staff, and determine if any of them should be dismissed. Like I would ever fire someone and send them into further poverty. He has no idea what befalls someone rejected from a high-

ranking household. They are as good as dead; no one else will take them. *Privileged idiot.*

Then it was the bullshit about dictating our menus for the week. I think I might have horrified the chef, when I suggested he put rat poison in all of Zeke and Abe's meals. The man's face went as pale as a ghost's, and he looked like he would faint there on the spot. It's safe to say I had no idea how to prepare meal choices. Shit, Sammy was the one who did most of the cooking in our house. I could make some toast, and maybe some eggs without burning the place down, but that was about it. I left the choices right back in Chef's capable hands, and signed off on whatever he decided.

Then, just yesterday, Ezekiel sent a message that I was to choose all new linens for our home. Linens, like you have to be fucking kidding me with this mundane shit. I can't wait to see his face when he realizes everything I ordered will be black, and the most expensive items from the available lists. Black, like his damn soul for making me marry him. It's petty, I know, but a girl needs to get her revenge where she can at the moment.

Elizabeth lowers her head, staring at the ground like all the obedient servants of this house. She's afraid of me but for all the wrong reasons. I don't plan to be a harsh or spoiled mistress, nor am I genuinely insane like the rumor mill likes to spread. *Well, maybe a little insane.* Regardless, I've no intention of harming anyone in this house, with the exception of those three disappointing fuckers; Zeke, Abe, and even my Sammy. *Is he still my Sammy at this point?*

I stroll unhurriedly across the lavish stone hallway with its tall archways and indigo-painted walls, featuring priceless paintings hanging with depictions of religious portraits. Momentary humor fills me at their sight, as if the members of this household can be saved from sin. *Not fucking likely.* It would take a cleansing of significant proportions to do that, and even then, I still think we would be damned.

I enter the room and stop in my tracks. My eyes move quickly and greedily across the forms of the three large males in the room. The three who are never willingly in each other's company. Ezekiel stands there as a commanding force behind the oversized antique wooden desk, wearing all black from head to toe. *A demon just waiting to reap your soul from your body.*

His black swirls of ink are on display below the sleeves of his tight t-shirt, and crawling up the span of his neck to where they disappear into his hairline. The faint tattoo on his scalp is partially obscured by his dark hair. His emerald eyes are fixed on Abraham, not even acknowledging my presence in the room.

His face is twisted into an expression I can't quite read. *Is it anger, frustration, or longing?* Maybe it's a bit of all of those emotions combined. I watch as his tongue dips out and wets his full bottom lip, and my core spasms at the sight.

I'd like to say that I'm completely unaffected by him, but the truth is I was already influenced by my desires for him, before I even knew what he felt like deep inside of me, or how his

mouth tasted. Now, it's so much more, and I loathe it. I hate knowing that some part of me would willingly spread her legs for him again and again. That I crave the feel of his harsh lips on mine, and his hand tightening around my throat until I can't get a breath in.

Abraham sits in one of the sizable burgundy velvet wingback chairs, staring intensely into the lit flames of the fireplace before him. His wavy, chocolate hair shines in the warm light with hints of chestnut, burnt umber, and bronze. His elbows are braced on his knees, and his hands are steeped in front of him as his body leans forward. Like the snake in the Garden of Eden, he's the picture of sin and corruption, and I long to take a bite of that apple.

His glance briefly lands on me before he glowers in my direction, and returns to looking at the fire, dismissing me completely. His long-sleeved white shirt pulls tightly at all the muscles on his massive upper frame, and his long legs are encased in dark gray, comfortable-looking sweatpants. You would never know the man was shot just under two weeks ago by how he's been carrying on.

My gaze moves past him towards the farthest part of the room, to the man staring out the window with his back turned towards us. He's wearing the navy blue uniform of a guard, the dress shirt fitted and stretched across the wide expanse of his back, pulling the material taut to accentuate his muscles. His long legs are clad in dark navy uniform pants. The fabric drapes his muscular legs, tight around his thick thighs, and that

round peach-shaped ass, and it makes my mouth water with a need to bite into it.

His dirty blond hair is tied up in a messy man-bun on the top of his head, the sunlight streaming through the window making it appear like rich strands of gold. He's delicious in all his manly glory, standing there tempting me with need just from his presence. He doesn't bother to turn around to acknowledge me, but I know he can sense my presence just by how his shoulders tense, and his breathing changes.

Of all the men in this room, he's the one I am the most disappointed in. He begged me to break our bond and marry that fucker, Ezekiel, only to treat me like shit for doing what he implored me to do. I understand how hard it must have been for him to watch me walk down the aisle to someone else and pledge myself to them, but he's the one who begged me to do it.

He's the one who asked me to allow Ezekiel into my body, a place that once only belonged to him. He didn't have to endure that. I'm the one who felt that overwhelming sense of betrayal as Zeke's cock entered me, and I enjoyed it. He didn't have to fight his body and remind it that it belonged to someone else. *I had to do that.* I had to endure that, and have relived it every day since. He's acting like a spoiled brat child who got his favorite toy taken away. Meanwhile, my whole world changed, like a tsunami making landfall.

If he's filled with regret at his choices, he shouldn't be taking it out on me. I wanted to run away with him. My vote had

been to fight our way out. I was willing to die together for what we had. I love him, and my heart aches at this chasm that has appeared between us.

He is my home and safety, and just like a cloud of smoke that has disappeared, I'm utterly alone. My throat aches as the seconds become minutes, and he continues to refuse to look at me. *Please, just look at me. Just tell me everything will be fine. Tell me that you still love me. Please.*

Ezekiel clears his throat loudly, and forces my attention to return to him from my observation of Sammy. It's then that I see the look on his face, a mixture of guilt and need; the anger that was just present moments ago is now absent. I have the disconcerting feeling that he was watching me as I watched Sammy.

“Snow, the search for the ‘*Unholy Ghost*’ has grown cold, and suspicion is once again starting to rise through the grumblings in the Order. There's been no trace of the ‘*Ghost*’ nor his companion since Abe was shot,” Zeke scoffs, and I have to stare at him in bewilderment. Is this fucker for real right now? He knows full well why there hasn't been another sighting of the ‘*Ghost*’, I'm a damn prisoner in his home.

Sammy turns at his words, and I get my first glance at his face today. Dark shadows stain the space below his midnight blue eyes, ones that are filled with misery and pain. He's sporting dark facial scruff that is longer and more unruly than usual, as if he can't even be bothered to tidy himself. The shadow of his beard emphasizes the chiseled contours of his

jawline, making him appear older and more menacing. His chiseled high cheekbones look gaunt, like he's not eating enough and has lost weight.

“What’s your point, prick? Who cares what they think?” Abraham questions with a bored expression.

“We do, Abe. We can’t have suspicions pointed in our direction. You were shot, and I was attacked. So far, to my knowledge, we’re the only people who have ever survived an attack by the Unholy Ghost.” Annoyance flickers across Zeke’s face.

“What are you suggesting, Ezekiel? Let’s get to the point, shall we? I have guard shit to do,” Sammy demands with a bitter voice.

The two males stare at each other like two prized lions about to go at it, while Abraham and I watch as bored spectators. Sammy takes a few steps towards Ezekiel, his hands fisted, nose flaring, and Ezekiel moves around the desk with the same aggression. I rub my hands down my face with exhaustion. I’m so sick of this shit. I’m sick of all three of them, and this whole situation. I just want to stab all of them at this point.

As it is, I sleep with a damn blade under my pillow every night. Not that between the nightmares, the self-doubt, and the worry that at any moment the Brotherhood will come for me, I’m actually getting any sleep. My body is exhausted, and my temper is short. I’ve run out of fucks to give, and now these jerks have fucked around, and are about to find out what happens when I snap.

My movements are so quick that they don't see me coming until it's too late, and I'm a serious danger to them both. I take a few short steps forward, grab Zeke's shoulder, slam my elbow into his solar plexus, and then raise my knee into his stomach, taking him down. All the air leaves his body with a pained grunt. Before he's even fallen to his knees, I'm on Sammy. I hook my right leg around his ankle and yank him forward, until he's trying to catch his balance. Then I slam the flat part of my left foot into his shin until his leg buckles, and I throw a hammer fist straight at his head. He tries his best to dodge but isn't quick enough, and I catch him hard.

My hand rings out with pain as I quickly step back, placing myself in a defensive position. I peek at Abraham from the corner of my eye. The fucker releases a peal of thunderous laughter as he watches Zeke and Sammy try to scramble to their feet. My breath leaves my chest in heavy pants. I haven't felt this gloriously alive in weeks. *Fuck, I want to hit them both again.* I hope they decide to fight back so that I can unleash all this pent-up rage inside of me.

“SN...OW!”

“Nightstar! What the fuck are you doing!”

“Oh...my...fucking God, that...that was so...good. Do it again, Atasi, but...but this time...slower so I can watch their expressions as you give them a beat down.” Abe laughs so hard that his words struggle to make it out of him, and tears run down his face.

“It’s not funny, dick. That fucking hurt!” Zeke bellows out, rubbing his lower chest.

“Pretty funny from where I’m sitting,” Abe retorts with mirth.

“I’m sick of all your shit! I’m sick of being a prisoner in this house! I’m sick of the three of you behaving like assholes to me! I refuse to allow you guys to treat me this way. Keep fucking around, and you’ll see what happens! That goes for you too, Abe!” I bristle with vehemence.

“What the fuck did I do, Atasi? Huh, tell me? Did I force you to marry me? No, I fucking didn’t. Did I take you from your life? Again, a big fat no! Let’s see, did I fucking shoot you point blank in the abdomen?” Abe gets up from the chair, all traces of humor gone from his face and only anger remaining, as he takes a menacing step towards me.

He studies me just as I study him intently, watching his movements, waiting for him to strike out at me. Having the three of them now filled with aggravation and violence puts me at a slight disadvantage, but I don’t care. I may go down, but I’ll hurt all of them in the process, so they understand I won’t take any more of this shit.

‘You know exactly what you have been doing, Abraham.’ I step back, putting the entrance to the room at my back, and getting ready to run for it. Abe’s stare is invasive, seeming to see right down to the emotions I try to keep hidden inside. His disarming glare hardens as his mouth ticks up in a psychotic and frightening smile.

“I dare you, Atasi. I dare you to fucking run. You won’t make it two feet before I strangle the life out of you!” I can see the excitement in the depths of his eyes. He’s looking for a challenge; he’s craving violence just like I am.

“Snow, don’t move,” Zeke shouts.

“Dinah, listen to Zeke, baby. Don’t run,” Sammy urges, his expression marked with concern. These are the first words he’s spoken directly to me since my wedding, and his words implore me to do something I don’t want.

A cruel smile reaches my features, my blood pumping fiercely in my veins and reminding me that I am alive. Unadulterated pleasure sweeps through me at the thought of being chased. I glance in Sammy’s direction, and I see the moment he realizes what I’ll do, displeasure instantly crossing his features. He always could read my mind.

I grab the nearest stone bust on a pedestal and launch it at Abe’s head, then turn for the door, managing to close it, before I hear the pained sound of impact and a crashing noise. I take off running through the hallway towards the dining room and out the glass patio doors, the skirt of my dress becoming an impediment as I run for my life, down the patio steps and towards the wooded area in the distance.

I can hear yelling behind me and things crashing, but I don’t stop to look back. I push harder, forcing myself to run faster than I ever have. My feet slide in my stupid flat ballerina-style shoes, so I whip them off as I dive behind a thick oak tree. I grab the hem of my dress and yank as hard as I can, until I

hear the material rip, and I tie it quickly on both sides so it stays away from the tangle of my legs.

My eyes survey the landscape around me, and I set off running again towards a crop of thick trees. In the distance, I can hear them already making their way across the garden towards where I just was. The cliffs are to one side of the property with a harsh drop into the ocean. *I should stay away from that area for as long as possible.* Adrenaline races through me, and pure joy bursts out of me. At this moment, even though I'm being hunted, I feel free.

“DINAH!” Sammy’s voice shouts closer than I hoped.

Fuck, too close. I dive into a thick grouping of junipers, and wrap my hand around my mouth to silence my breath. My shins and knees scrape across the rough ground, but it doesn’t faze me. It’s a minor pain compared to the thrilling feeling overtaking me. I know that, eventually, they will find me. There are three of them and only one of me, plus Sammy is a tracker. I know he’ll come for me, and I won’t be able to escape him.

“Her shoes are over here!” Zeke’s voice rings out across the now-silent forest floor.

“She can’t be far. I don’t know what has gotten into her. You fuckers are making her insane! Why couldn’t you have just left her alone?” Sammy questions, the sound muffled as he moves through the bushes.

“What, and have left her to you? That’s what you mean, isn’t it?” I hear Zeke’s angry voice and then the sound of a scuffle.

“She was never yours! She was always mine. Even when you had her first, she was fucking mine.”

“If she enjoyed bouncing on my cock all these years, it was through her own choice. Not because she was forced, unlike what you two fuckers are doing to her. Using her for your sick pleasure,” I hear Sammy’s response.

The sound of flesh hitting flesh and rustling plants, motivates me to move silently while they are distracted by their caveman bullshit. Let them fight each other over who I belong to. I know the truth; I belong to myself. I quietly make my way another fifty feet, the sound of their fighting still going but in the distance. I’m just about to jump up from my current hiding spot and take off running, when something large and heavy tackles me to the ground.

All the air is forced from my lungs, and my head and back slam onto the forest floor. “Got you, Atasi!” Abraham’s large body presses me with force into the ground.

“GET OFF OF ME!” I try to shove at his heavy weight and roll him off of me, but he just presses me further into the dirt. There’s a sharp rock digging into my back, and I have to grit my teeth, so I don’t cry out in pain and end up alerting the other two fuckers.

“You thought you could run. I did warn you what would happen when I got you alone, Atasi. You’ve been a bad girl, fighting and causing mayhem. I think it’s time someone punished you.”

His hand reaches up and tightens around my throat, squeezing until my breath gets caught in my chest and then loosens. I try to buck him off, but I'm barely able to move him and only succeed in giving him a better purchase between the cradle of my legs. His other hand slips up the side of my thigh with rough strokes, and grips my hip painfully. His hand wraps around the material of my underwear, and then he yanks. The fabric pulls tight on my other hip, then snaps with a tearing sound.

“Did you know I got to watch as Zeke ate your pretty cunt on your wedding day? The way his mouth glistened after being on your cunt made me crave a hit of you, Atasi. The way his cock fucked you hard, punishing you. Hmmm, that was perfection.” He licks his lips like a deviant, as his amber eyes glare down into mine.

My left hand moves around on the forest floor next to us slowly, as I grab a handful of dirt and clench it tightly in my fist, keeping my movements slow and subtle so he doesn't realize what I'm doing. My right hand scratches at his grip on my throat, trying desperately to dislodge his painful hold.

“The only thing that would have made it better was if it was my cock inside of you, or maybe both of our cocks in your tight holes.” He grinds his rapidly hardening dick against my core, and my mouth goes slack as moisture seeps from my pussy, coating what's left of my panties. I can feel every thick inch of him pressed up against me, and it causes heat to rise throughout my body.

“Stop, Abe. I don’t want this.” I stare at him wide-eyed and try once again to push him off of me.

“Lies, Atasi. You want this; you want me just like I want you. Did you enjoy watching me fuck the maid, hmmm? Did it make your cunt wet when I called your name instead of hers? Did you wish it was you bent over and taking my hard cock?”

His hand roams over the skin of my hip, then down to the side where my leg meets my core, pushing aside the useless fabric of my underwear. His warm fingers trail over the skin on my mound and then right over my pussy lips, brushing them with rough strokes. I know he can feel the wetness that is making its way out of me. His finger strokes between my pussy lips before tapping on my clit, and it’s like a zap of electricity goes through my body.

“This naughty cunt is all wet for me, Atasi. Does it want my hard cock inside of it? Do you want me to fuck you like the little whore you are?” He thrusts against me, and a whimper escapes my lips. “Do you want to be fucked on the dirty forest floor like an animal, hmmm?”

“Nooooo...get off of me.” I try halfheartedly to shove him off again, my hand rising with the dirt as I throw it into his eyes, but at the last moment, he turns his head, and I only get the side of his face. Dirt falls all over me, getting in my face and eyes as my legs open wider, and I feel more of his hardness pressed against me. An evil glint crosses his eyes, and his lips turn up in a devilish smile, all teeth and menace.

“No can do, my little blue flower. You are such a pretty sinner, a demon under all that temptation, aren't you? This cunt is craving my touch, and I won't be the one to deny it.” He lifts his body just enough to tug down the front of his sweatpants, and before I even have a chance to squirm away from him, his hard cock is pressing into my opening.

Amber meets blue, and my breath hitches at the feel of his warmth and hardness against me. He leans forward, his lips slamming over mine and taking my breath, at the same time as his cock shoves inside of my drenched core.

A metallic taste seeps across my tongue from where his teeth have split my lip. A groan leaves his mouth and buries itself in mine, filling me up just like his cock is doing inside of my needy cunt, stretching me until it hurts with his thickness. He pulls out to the tip and slams back inside of me with such force that a scream leaves my lips, and he swallows it with a groan.

His mouth pulls away, and I try to focus my vision on the man on top of me. The one fucking me into the ground with each deep thrust, until it almost hurts with pleasure. His fingers tighten into the flesh of my thigh with a bruising grip, and knowing I'll have his brand on me makes my pussy contract harder around him.

“Scream for me, Dinah! Scream, my little whore, like your very life depends on it, because it just might!” He groans as he tightens his grip around my neck and lifts my head, only to slam it back down on the forest floor with a groan. My pussy

clenches, tightening my hold on his large, thick cock as it throbs within me.

His thrusts are so deep that they have my ass sliding across the ground before he pulls me back into his body, using his grip on my throat and around my thigh. His pelvis rubs against my throbbing clit with each harsh and demanding stroke, heightening all my senses and pushing me closer to the edge. He's using me like a madman, uncaring if he breaks me, only concerned with his own pleasure.

The sensation of electricity starts at the very base of my spine. The hit of pain from the rock digging into my skin, coupled with how he's stopping my air from flowing, and how violent his thrusts are, are causing a rising tide within me. One that threatens to drown us both under its ruthlessness.

“You're my whore, Dinah. You're their whore too, and together the three of us will use you until there is nothing left of you.” His grip slackens as his face nuzzles my neck, inhaling my scent. Then his teeth bite down on my jaw as I scream for him, my body lighting up like fireworks.

I try fighting back in earnest, using my feet to brace on the forest floor and lift me up on an angle. My head slams forward into his with a hard thud, causing momentary dizziness. My hand grabs a fistful of his hair, and at the same time, I punch him where I know his bullet wound is still healing. I'm a feral animal, deranged and completely lost in the moment. A wild thing that cannot be contained.

I manage to flip us over, and he has no choice but to pull out of me. I immediately feel his loss and an inhuman cry leaves my lips as I scramble on top of him and slam myself down once again on his hard length, riding him hard and fast into the ground and changing the power dynamic between us. I'm no longer the hunted prey; now, I'm the predator.

I no longer know who I am, what I want, or even who I'm supposed to be. All of my emotions and thoughts are in upheaval inside my head. *Am I a fighter? A killer? Some unhinged bitch that can't get enough of this depravity?* I'm all those things and so much more; for the first time, it doesn't scare me. I feel alive on this forest floor with the man I almost killed, taking back some of my power.

A part of me wants to climb deep inside of his mind, heart, and body, and stay there forever, where I know he'll fight for me. Where I know with a certainty that I never realized until this very moment that Abraham Mercier was always destined to be mine, just like in this moment, I'm his.

My fingers dig into the skin of his jaw, forcing his glazed eyes to stare up at me as I lean forward. "You are fucking mine, Abraham, and I will not share you with other whores. The next time you slip this cock in another woman's pussy, be ready for me to cut it the fuck off."

He reaches up and cups my breasts through the ragged and torn fabric of my dress, and twists my right nipple through the material. A low groan hums from his chest, and at the same time, a cry leaves my lips.

“Harder,” I demand.

He slams up from underneath as I ride him, ramming his cock deep inside of me like a ruthless animal determined to mark his mate. Our rhythm fighting each other as he fucks me, and I do my damndest to ride him into the ground. His hand clenches hard on my ass before slapping it once, then again and again. The sting and heat of the slaps adding to the already intense overload of emotions.

“I...own... you, and you own me. Now be a good girl for Daddy, and cum all over my fat cock.” He hits me again on my ass. At the same time, his hand leaves my breast, and he slaps me on my face before pulling me down to his lips for a blinding kiss.

I should fight this. I should try to regain some of my sanity, but a burst of pleasure erupts at the base of my stomach and forces my eyes to close, as I pull away from the kiss. All my thoughts trail off at the sound of our bodies slapping together violently in the large open space filled with nature. I let him take what he wants while allowing the euphoria to explode inside of me in a blinding rush of heat and light.

My whole body tenses as my breath falters, and white spots flicker in my peripheral vision. Abe’s hand wraps around my throat and squeezes tightly. “Come for me, my little whore. Soak my cock with all your juices. Show me how you enjoy being used by me, how you enjoy being mine.” He groans as he cums deep inside of me, the warmth of his cum flooding

my pussy, the last vestige needed to push me head-first right over the edge.

I cum in a rush of emotion and heat, my body lighting up from the inside and then going slack in his embrace, as he releases my throat at the last second before darkness tries to claim me. I fall forward over his body, my eyes closing tightly and my breaths escaping me in ragged pants.

When I can finally open my eyes, I pull away from his tight embrace to stare down at him. He's a mess of dirt and leaves. His face is flushed and sweaty, and his eyes glow with a golden light. A myriad of emotions flicker across his expression, one chasing the other away until satisfaction is all that's left.

At that very moment, with the way he's looking up at me like a combination of the boy I used to know, and the ruthless man he has become, I realize that I've given him more than just my body. I've given him my mind, heart, and hopes for the future, and I still don't know if he will use it to hurt or break me.

“Well, isn't this fucking cozy out here in the woods, you both going at it like animals mating in the dirt?”





Sammy

“Well, isn’t this fucking cozy out here in the woods, you both going at it like animals mating in the dirt?” The words leave my lips and taste like ash, as I stare down at the woman I love more than life, draped against a man who is our enemy. Is he, though? Would he truly hurt her? Of the two of them, which one is more dangerous to Dinah?

She shoots up from his body as if I had hit her with a lightning bolt and scrambles off him with wide eyes, a striking shade of deep blue-gray, like the calm before the storm, and filled with guilt. When I look deep into those mesmerizing eyes, I feel a sense of need, a longing to protect her from this world that would use and hurt her. *She’s mine, my Nightstar. My only reason for living.*

A part of me wants to comfort her, knowing that this was always inevitable, that they would always claim her, and a part of her would always belong to them, just as she would always belong to me. The other part of me, the one filled with male aggression, wants to wrap my hands around her throat, and choke her until she stops breathing, for betraying me yet again with one of these privileged assholes.

I shake the thoughts away; in my heart, I know that is not what is happening here. She’s mine, but she is also theirs. It’s a realization that brings with it nothing but despair and anger. I

will have to share her if I want to keep her. They can help me protect her from the Brotherhood, from this world that seeks to destroy her, from her very self.

“Now that you two have made up, can we return to the situation at hand, or do you two want to roll around on the forest floor some more?” Ezekiel questions with aggravation, a tic jumping in his jaw.

A tear slides down Dinah’s face, as she tries to gather the fabric of her dress and pull it close to her frame, to disguise what she has done. Another tear follows, and soon, a river of diamonds slides down her beautiful face. I move closer to her and allow myself to fall to my knees in front of her, pulling her to me and tightening my arms like steel bands around her.

The floodgates open wide as she falls to the ground before me and sobs against my chest, her tears soaking the front of my shirt. I can hear the other two rustling behind us, but I ignore them. This moment is ours alone, and I won’t allow them to taint it.

My voice trembling, I squeeze her tightly. “It’s alright, Nightstar. You are safe, baby, and I’m not angry anymore. You did nothing wrong. It’s all going to be okay. We will always be together, you and me.”

A grunt leaves my lips with acceptance of our situation. “We just have two more now to our group. I will have to learn to share you, Nightstar. It won’t be easy, but I refuse to give you up, and I cannot live without you. You will always be mine, too. Nothing will change that.”

She pulls away from me, tipping up her head and offering me a sad, vulnerable smile that doesn't quite reach her eyes. "I'm sorry, Sammy. I...I betrayed you. You have to believe... me, I love you. I...I need you. Please don't leave me."

"No one is leaving anyone! Both of you get off the forest floor. We have shit to do," Ezekiel grumbles from behind me.

Dinah's surprised eyes question mine, but I'm as bewildered as she is. I have no idea what he is talking about. I rise from the ground and pull Dinah to her feet, spying the teeth marks on her jaw, the red spot on her cheek that looks like a slap, and the bruising already forming around her neck from Abraham's fingers.

My fist flies out before I can stop myself, and I slam it into Abe's mouth, forcing him to take a few staggering steps backward. "That's for being a fucking animal with her. She's not one of your whores to abuse, Abraham Mercier. I'll kill you if you try that shit with her again."

He stares at me with eyes filled with white-hot rage and adrenaline, his fists clenched at his sides, and the vein in his neck protruding before nodding. Does he understand that wasn't just an idle threat but a promise? If he hurts her or betrays her, I will kill him.

"In his defense, which really he doesn't need nor deserve, since he just rutted my wife into the ground, she looks like she gave as good as she got," Zeke says nonchalantly, and the tension breaks. A chuckle escapes Dinah, and then I find Abe and I are also laughing.

“What shit were you talking about, Zeke? What do you have in mind?” Dinah questions as she starts to move away from all of us, and back in the direction of the house. The minute she passes me, I spot the blood on the back of her cornflower blue dress. Zeke must spot it, too, because he grabs the front of Abraham’s dirty white shirt and hauls him towards him.

“She’s fucking bleeding, Abe. You took it too far. You hurt her!” He shoves him back, spittle flying from his lips as his face goes blotchy with anger. I guess good old Ezekiel’s threshold of acceptance is seeing Dinah bleed; good to know.

Dinah stops in her next step and looks over her shoulder, a grimace across her features. “It was a rock, Zeke. I’m not worried about it, and neither should you be. I’m not some delicate flower that needs a soft touch.” With a shrug, she walks barefoot across the lawn towards the house, ignoring the three hormone-raging assholes behind her.

“Fuck, we are all done for, aren’t we? Look at us fighting over and following her like love-sick puppies.” Abraham rubs his hand across his mouth, wiping the blood from his lips from the hit I landed.

“Would you change it, Abraham?” I question, needing to hear his answer.

He spits blood onto the ground, a grin breaking across his harsh features. “I wouldn’t have it any other way, old man.”

His comment causes amusement and a flare of anger to spark inside of me. Yes, the two of them are closer in age to my Nightstar, and the ten-year difference might seem like a bit

much between her and me, but I don't feel old, and I can still knock his young ass out.

When we almost reach the house, I spy that maid, Elizabeth, watching us from one of the family room windows. *She's going to be a problem for us.*

One, she's fucking Abraham, and not against her will. She seems to think that he will be able to pull her out of the position and class she's in and make her his permanently. He won't; that's not how our world truly works, and even if it was, Dinah would never allow it. She's territorial, and what she did in the forest with him has claimed him as hers.

Secondly, she's a threat because she could report what is happening in this house to the Brotherhood out of spite, because she's been discarded. I have no doubt that Abraham won't be going near her again. Either way, she's a threat to my Nightstar, and that just won't do. *Elizabeth has run out of time on this earth; she just doesn't know it yet.*

Ezekiel must also spy her; his face turns towards me in acknowledgment. No words need to be exchanged; he's allowing me to read his thoughts across his face. He agrees; she has to go, and so she will.

We step back into the study we left in shambles, Dinah trying not to slice her bare, dirty feet on the broken pieces of stone from the bust she threw at Abraham's head. She plops herself down on the wing chair that Abe vacated when he chased her - a weary queen back from battle.

Ezekiel stares at her, and I can see the hunger in his green eyes. He wants her, not just as a plaything or a tool to get him power, but as a woman, as his. He's staring at her as if she is the real-life version of all the naughty dreams he's ever had come to life, and the minx is staring right back at him, daring him to take her. *Jesus, she has no sense of self-preservation, tempting a monster like him.*

"The 'Unholy Ghost' needs to kill again; in fact, he needs to kill again tonight." He drops the words as if he's releasing a bomb.

"What the hell are you talking about, Zeke? Dinah is not going back out there. It's too much of a risk. I won't allow it; you've lost your damn mind." Abraham roars as he faces off with Ezekiel.

"We will be with her. We can help her and protect her," Ezekiel counters, his eyes meeting mine. I see a question in their depths. Is he asking me for my opinion, or my acceptance of whatever plan he has in mind?

I won't agree to anything that will hurt Dinah, and he should have already realized that. She comes before everything.

"This is insane; you're going to get her captured or killed!" Abraham shouts.

"We need to keep up the premise that the 'Unholy Ghost' is still out there hunting high-ranking members of the Brotherhood. You know this. Speculations are already swirling, and they are questioning how we survived. The 'Ghost' needs to kill again," Ezekiel replies with frustration as

he paces back and forth. The tension in his body pulling it tight, like a live wire about to explode.

“He’s right. We need to divert attention elsewhere so they don’t start questioning the rush of Ezekiel’s wedding, and why you two are still alive,” I agree, even though it pains me to accept anything from Ezekiel Rothesay’s mouth as truth.

“How do we do this and not get caught? It will be much harder to get out of this house, sight unseen, than where Sammy and I lived,” Dinah quizzes while biting down on her bottom lip. I can almost see the rapid thoughts flying through her head, trying to figure out how she can kill more members of the Brotherhood without getting us all caught.

My little Nightstar is always ready for some more murder and mayhem, if it means fewer men of the Order are left breathing. The little blood-thirsty siren wants to kill them herself. That need for vengeance for what has been done to her family, and to women in general, is a constant pulsation inside of her. I’m always worried that the need will overcome any sense of self-protection that she has and will get her killed.

“Tonight, Dinah and I will be dining at my parent’s house, and staying the night there. Sammy will accompany us as our guard, and you, Abe, will convince your parents and yourself to join us.” Ezekiel smiles like the cat that ate the canary.

“How does that help us?” I question with concern.

“You sly dog, you’re going to use the same trick we did years ago?” Abraham chuckles and sits himself down on the arm of the wingback chair Dinah is occupying. His hand

reaches out and trails down the side of her neck to her shoulder, where the fabric of her dress is torn, and her shoulder tattoo is visible. I watch as he traces the outline of an old-fashioned pocket watch I painstakingly inked into her skin, with the tip of his finger, causing her to shiver.

“Exactly. It worked then, and none were the wiser. I have already called my mother earlier in the day and advised her we would be joining them.”

A snort leaves Dinah’s lips. “I’m sure she loved that.”

“For the rest of us that are not privy to the joke you two asses are sharing, what is the plan? How does changing houses to dine in assist us with killing another member of the Brotherhood? Unless you’re suggesting we kill one of your parents?” I question with concern. I don’t like feeling out of the loop, especially concerning Dinah’s safety. I have no intention of agreeing to anything that may get her killed, and I am not allowing her to walk into any situation blind.

I don’t trust Ezekiel. I believe he might have genuine feelings for my Nightstar, but do I firmly believe that he and Abraham would actually fight for her, and put themselves in front of any danger to keep her safe? I’m not sure about Abraham, but my gut is telling me that Ezekiel won’t. That if it comes down to a choice of saving himself or Abraham, versus Dinah, he won’t choose her.

“When Abe and I were a bit younger, we realized that anytime our parents get together at my house, they drink way too much. Our dads end up doing a few hits of coke together,

and more importantly, they sleep with each other's partners for the night. Which is convenient because they try to be discreet and sneaky about it, giving all the staff the night off once dinner is complete."

I give him a confused look, not seeing where this is going. *Okay, so his parents are swingers with a drug problem. Great, how does that help us?*

He rolls his eyes at my questioning gaze and continues, "just like the house you had with Dinah, there are hidden passageways in mine that lead out to the wooded area surrounding the house. That house has been in my mother's family since the time before prohibition in the old world. Her family used to smuggle alcohol; that's how they made their fortunes." *Great, so they were original sinners, too, not just sinners of the Order.*

"We used to dose the coke our parents snorted with his mom's sleeping pills. That way, they would have a real good time but be out hard, and we could leave without anyone being the wiser. The next morning, they would think they had gone a little heavy on the drugs and never question it. It also saved my mom from being forced to fuck Zeke's dad." Abraham picks up the story with a frown.

"Where would you go?" Dinah questions.

Zeke and Abe turn to each other with sadness crossing their faces, and my breath hitches in my chest, knowing whatever they say next will hurt my Nightstar. "To meet Gabe and fool

around with some of the girls in the serving class village,” Ezekiel answers her in a whisper.

Dinah smarts in her seat, her body tensing as if he had struck her. I want to reach over and comfort her. *Fuck, I want to pull her in my arms.* I know what the mention of her brother does to her. Why the fuck did he mention his name? Is he trying to hurt her? If he is, I’ll break all his pretty boy teeth.

Before I can make even the slightest of movements in her direction, Abe has her hand intertwined in his and brings it up to his lips, in a gentle kiss that has her releasing the breath she was holding, but tension still racks her body. I know my Nightstar, and she is still unconvinced that these two didn’t have something to do with Gabriel’s suspicious death.

Neither of them has offered an explanation yet of what truly happened to Gabriel, or apologized for their disrespectful behavior at his funeral. I make a note in my mind to beat it the fuck out of them later and get the truth. I need a reward for not already murdering them in their sleep.

Dinah’s trying to brush off the mention of Gabe’s name and their explanation, but I can feel the hesitation and the pain still vibrating off of her. She and I are so attuned with each other. What she feels, I feel. I try to distract her from the pain by asking the question Ezekiel seems hesitant to divulge.

“So, we will use the tunnels to get out and drug your parents, but who is the target? Dinah and I do research beforehand; we don’t just go in blind. That’s how you get yourself captured or

killed.” My mind is blaring an alarm inside my skull. This doesn’t sound safe; it sounds rushed. What is he up to?

“One of the founding families from out of town is still here from our wedding. My information tells me they will return to their own state in the next two days. They are staying at a small manor near my parents’ house with limited security.”

“Why them over anyone else?” Dinah pulls her hand from Abraham’s grasp and narrows her eyes on Ezekiel. She looks just as suspicious as I am about the timing of this. My girl is not stupid; she knows something is off here. The question is, what?

“The Founding Father was present at your father’s execution. He also objected to Gabe gaining power, and being installed as your head of household,” Zeke replies, his expression set in stone.

“Gabriel...” The name leaves her lips in a benevolent tone, her beautiful eyes becoming glassy instantly as she moves away from both of them and closer to me. The mention of his name a second time is too much for her to ignore the pain that rises within her. My girl instinctively knows where her safety lies, always with me. I will do everything I can to protect her and keep her safe.

The impact of Zeke’s words is evident not only on my Nightstar’s face, but also on Abraham’s. I watch him immediately tense up, his eyes glancing at Dinah with so much raw pain across his features. The room seems to become

colder; all the life and happiness from a few moments ago, are now gone, only leaving frigidness in its place.

“Atasi...the funeral. Shit, fuck. I’m...I’m sorry for the way...I behaved. I...I was a mess. Losing him felt like someone took a jagged blade to my chest and ripped my heart out. I...loved him. We loved him.” His eyes meet Dinah’s, and I see the truth in their anguish. He did truly love him, not just as a friend or a lover, but perhaps as a soul mate, the way he loves Zeke and I love Dinah.

There’s a long, silent pause as Dinah muddles with his confession and apology in her head. “Did you have anything to do with his death? Did you betray him?” Dinah questions, her voice small, almost like she fears the answer, as tears break away from her control and slide down her dirty face.

“Not in the way you mean, Atasi. I should have done more to keep him safe. I...we should have tried harder to stop him...from...pushing for change. Or at least not to push so hard, so fast.”

Abraham stands up from the chair and kneels before her, his head bowed in reverence. “I failed...we failed to talk reason into him, and we think... we think the Brotherhood silenced him because he was a threat.”

My gaze intensifies as it roams over Ezekiel, who remains eerily silent, a subtle yet unmistakable tremor coursing through his body, as he struggles to rein in his emotions. A solitary tear breaks free from his eye, tracing a ragged path down his cheek before he hastily wipes it away. The weight of

Abraham's words hangs heavily upon him, rendering him speechless.

Is it the sheer agony of these truths that holds his tongue hostage, or is it something more? The mere thought of losing Dinah in such a manner sends shivers down my spine. I doubt I could have endured such a torment and continued breathing.

"I loved him...so much." Dinah's arms wrap tightly around herself, as if she's trying desperately to keep all her shattered pieces from bringing her down to her knees. My strong Nightstar, who has been dealt so much loss and hardship at the hands of the Order, but continues to push fiercely forward.

"He loved you so much, Atasi. Everything he was trying to do was for you, and your mom. He was always thinking about you." Abraham's voice breaks with the words, and it almost has me feeling compassion for him.

I can see from her expression that she believes Abraham's words, and I'm also swayed. How could I not be if he loved Gabriel, if *they loved Gabriel*, even a fraction of the way I love my Nightstar?

I watch her pull herself together, her shoulders squaring as she wipes away the tears from her face. Her eyes meet mine, and I see the resolve in their depths. To keep going, to keep ridding the world of the Brotherhood members. This man will die for his actions, but I still have reservations about the timeline.

Zeke shifts forward as Dinah's eyes center on him. There's a fierce determination on his face, wrath making itself present

on his features. “There’s something else you should know, Snow. He was in our wedding chamber. He was one of the men who watched.”

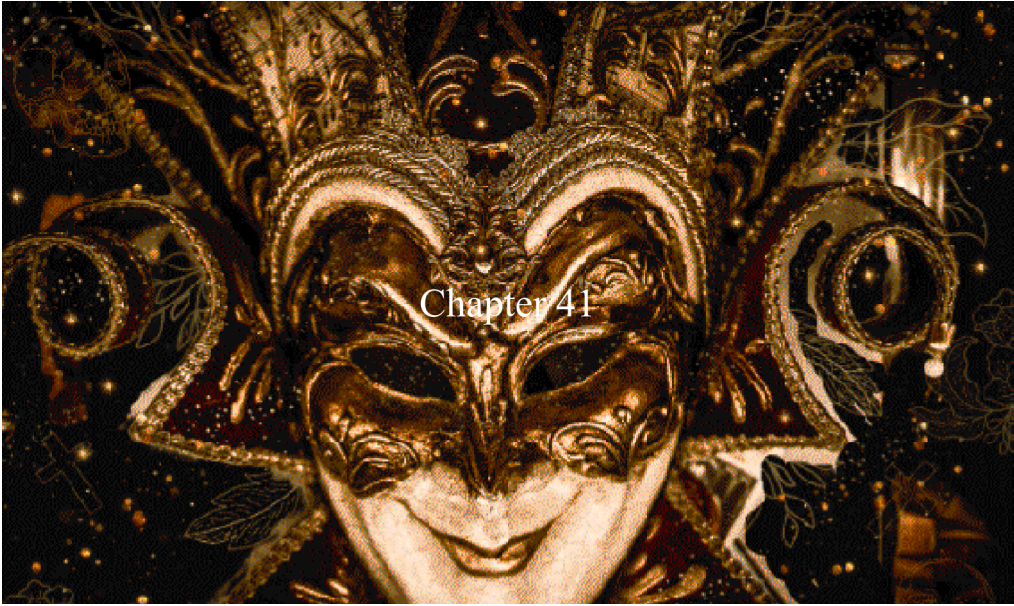
His words have the desired outcome he’s hoping for. Rage crosses Dinah’s face as her eyes widen and become stormy and dark. Her mouth settles in a hard line, and she begins to pace in front of the fireplace.

“What is the family name?” I demand.

“Saint Andrews,” Zeke replies, but never takes his eyes off of Dinah.

“Then they have to die.” Dinah stops moving, her gaze landing on mine, her expression imploring me to agree with her. Just like that, I know there will be no changing her mind. That he has picked the target that she could never walk away from. The temptation is too great to end someone like that, who has caused her family pain at every turn.

Fuck, I hope he isn’t betraying her. I hope his intention isn’t to serve her up on a platter to the Brotherhood. If it is, he better get himself right with his God because if anything happens to my Nightstar, I will kill him.





Zeke

I watch Dinah from behind my wine glass as my mother picks up the conversation, her self-important voice and air of grandeur, starting to really grate on my nerves. She seems to get worse with every visit, becoming increasingly entrenched in her belief that she's better than everyone around her. I've never truly considered matricide before, but as I hold my sharp dinner knife in my left hand, I envision stabbing it into my mother's throat and shutting her the hell up.

It doesn't help her cause to dissuade me from my violent thoughts with how she has treated my wife since arriving. She all but sneered at her and tried to make my Snow feel self-conscious. Making snide comments about the fit of her dress and her gorgeous, unbound dark hair. Hair that I long to have my fingers entangled in as I fuck her hard and fast from behind.

My cock twitches in my lap as the image in my head changes, from my mother bleeding to death on her pristine white tablecloth, and all over her cherished fine china to my wife, sprawled out beneath me on this very table, my cock deep inside her pussy, her breasts swaying with the brutal impact of my thrusts, and Abraham's cock down her throat, choking and muffling all her sounds. I wonder if she'll be

willing to let us both fuck her after we commit murder with her?

It hasn't been easy staying away from her since having a taste of her sweet, tight cunt at my wedding, and that night with Sammy in her room almost two weeks ago. Her taste lingered in my mouth for days, driving me insane with the need for a repeat. Whenever I tried to approach her, however, she rebuked me immediately. The little unhinged psycho even slept with a large knife under her pillow at night, just waiting for me to make an attempt to fuck her into the mattress so she could slice my throat.

My eyes pull away from her form and make a sweep of the table. Abe's busy ignoring everyone and shoving food into his mouth. If anyone hates being in his parents' company more than me, it's him. Then there's my father and Peter, both patiently listening to my mother ramble on about this family and that one. I wonder if my father also dreams of stabbing her? *I wouldn't be surprised if he did.*

My gaze lands on Sarah Mercier, and I find she's watching me with a severe expression. What does she see when she looks at me, I wonder? Does she see the boy I once was, who loved the hot chocolate she used to make us when we had sleepovers at her house? Does she see the man I have become? The one who is possessive and in love with her son, or does she worry that I'll be like my father, and use Dinah to climb the golden ladders of the Brotherhood seeking power?

Her eyes break from mine, and she turns to watch Dinah as she pushes the food around her plate with her fork. She's barely eaten anything, and has kept unusually quiet throughout dinner. Are her thoughts all on what we will do later? Is my little serial killer sitting there fantasizing about murder?

My plan is to give her this kill; this gift is very important to me, because I need to win Dinah over. I need her to want me like she does Sammy, and be carefree with me like she is with Abe. Deep inside, I know I shouldn't be jealous of either of them; after all, I am the one she's married to. It's my name that she carries, and it will be my children she bears first.

Still, it doesn't stop the wound that constantly festers inside of me, the one filled with poison. The one that says I am less than. That I will never be good enough. Not for Dinah, my father, Abraham, or this bullshit world we live in. *I wasn't good enough for Gabe to survive for.* There will always be something lacking in Ezekiel Rothesay, not quite enough for anyone.

I want Dinah to stop that wound from festering any deeper. I know she can change how I see myself with her affection and belief in me. I'm losing my humanity little by little until nothing will be left of me. When we were kids, her love and admiration were everything to me. My little Snow, perfect and gentle like a fairy tale princess. Always ready to soothe my aching soul with just one hug. *I need that version of her back; I need my Snow.*

“Ezekiel, are you listening, boy?” My father questions from the head of the table, and I have to shake myself out of my morose thoughts.

“He’s too busy enthralled by his lovely wife, isn’t that right, son?” Peter questions with a grin.

“My apologies, father. I tuned out when Mother started to describe what people were eating.” I feign a yawn, and Dinah kicks my shin from underneath the table, while trying to suppress a smile. I give her a wink and then focus back on my father.

Sammy catches my eye just over my father’s shoulder, as he stands guard with a blank expression. I know he doesn’t trust me. He doesn’t believe my affections for Dinah are true. He’s fucking wrong about me, and I look forward to proving it to him. She’s as much my priority as she is his. I may not have always shown it, and I hate myself for turning my back on her in the past, but I won’t let anything happen to her. I promised Gabriel that I would always protect her, and I have no intention of breaking that promise any longer.

She’s mine. I will never let anyone take her from me, not him, my father, or even death.

“I said that us men should retire to the study for after-dinner drinks, and to discuss business, and leave the women to their coffees and decadent desserts.” My father raises his eyebrow in question with displeasure across his features.

Really, when is he not aggrieved at my presence? The man really should have kept trying for the perfect son;

unfortunately for him, that would have required him to keep fucking my mom. We all know he prefers to fuck other men's wives rather than his own.

“Of course,” I nod and rise from the table, my gaze meeting Dinah's one last time before heading out of the room with the other men.

I stop before crossing the threshold of the room, unable to help myself from getting another glance at her like some love-sick fuck. I look back at my Snow and witness her shyly smile at me, a warm sensation hitting my chest. She is beautiful, even in that hideous light green gown my mother had sent over for her to wear. I hope she'll let me rip it off of her frame before we head out for our night's adventure.

Sammy follows me out of the room and down the hall to the study, my new ever-present shadow. I watch as he again takes up residence against the furthest wall, hoping to be forgotten.

I sit across from Abraham, who quirks his lips at me as my father starts pouring expensive scotch into glasses, and handing them out. Abe got in here earlier with the pretense of needing a drink to deal with his father, and spiked my father's coke. The bastard still keeps it in a silver metal box in one of the study's desk drawers. I almost want to roll my eyes at how easy he makes it to fuck him over.

“So, will we be expecting the sounds of a grandchild before the year is out?” My father queries as he hands me my glass, and I watch Abe choke on the sip of his own drink. The question has me pausing in my motions. I never questioned

whether Dinah was on anything when I fucked her at our wedding. Sacred Wives are not allowed to use birth control methods; they are encouraged to be broodmares for the Order. Could she possibly be already carrying my child?

I yank myself out of the pleasure that soars through me, at the thought of her stomach filling and growing round with my child. She must be on something, she's been fucking Sammy all these years, and he wouldn't have risked getting her pregnant. That would have been hard to explain, with her requirement of being a virgin before I married her. Whatever she's on, I want her off and filled with my spawn immediately.

"We are certainly trying," I lie through my teeth as I take a deep pull from my drink.

"Good, that's very good to hear, son. The sooner she starts producing heirs for the Rothesays, the better. The Lord's army needs Brotherhood soldiers to fight the evil in the world," Peter exclaims as he sits beside his son, who purses his lips at his words.

"All of the Camrose holdings will be transferred to you in the next day or so, Ezekiel. The Holy Father seems to be dragging his feet in releasing Dinah's vast fortune. Once you have those in your possession, and with the Rothesay fortune, our family will be the second wealthiest in the world, second only to the Holy Father himself." My father moves towards his desk, pulls out the silver box, brings it back, and settles it on the table between us.

From the corner of my eye, I see Sammy shift, his attention centered on my father's words. Did he not realize how wealthy the Camrose family was? How Dinah stood to inherit all of it so that it could be passed onto her future husband? In our world, fortunes are held in trust through the female line, and passed down to the males who marry them. Dinah Camrose Rothesay was and is one of the wealthiest people breathing on this godforsaken earth.

I watch as my father opens the lid of the 'coke' box and pulls out a baggie from within, spilling its contents on the glass coffee table between us. He uses a small metal ruler from the box's contents to separate small, neat lines. Then, he takes a short metal straw and snorts the first line. He passes the straw to Peter, who doesn't hesitate to snort the next one, before passing the straw to Abe.

I watch with apprehension as Abe stares longingly at the white powder before us. I can see the craving for just a taste crossing his features. Abe's been dabbling more and more with drugs since Gabriel's death, and I really worry that the fucker has gotten himself addicted.

I reach forward, pulling a joint from the pocket of my dinner jacket and waving it in front of him. "We much prefer this to that old-timey shit, old man." I grin at Peter as I hand the rolled blunt to Abe.

"Of course you do; your generation doesn't understand a good thing. Always trying to tarnish what the ones before it have built." My father reaches forward, removing the straw

from Abe's hand, and takes another hit. I would say something about him slowing down, but really, I don't give a shit if he leaves this world in a coke haze. I can guarantee my mother will be dead within an hour of his death, at my hands, and then I can be the orphan I always wanted to be.

Abe sparks up the blunt that is more tobacco than marijuana. I couldn't have either of us stoned off our asses, as we need to be in our right minds to help Dinah. There is no way I'm risking her getting hurt or caught, because one of us was too shit-faced to see the danger. Plus, a part of me worries that she'll run away from me with Sammy at the first opportunity she gets.

My father and Peter start to discuss business, and grumble about who's trying to gain more power within the Order. I tune them out, taking the blunt when it's handed off by Abe and enjoying the feel of the rich scotch, as it burns its way down to my stomach.

Tonight, I'll prove that I care about her. That she's important to me. She will see it, and so will that fucker, Sammy, then hopefully she'll come to me willingly. She'll want me the way I want her, with a desperation that makes me more insane every moment that I don't touch her. She's mine, and I mean to claim her again tonight, and every day of our lives.



I watch as Dinah drags the sharp blade down the side of Blaine St. Andrews' face, blood instantly rising in its wake.

He groans behind the thick gag that Sammy placed in his mouth and tries to flinch away from the pain, but the constraints around his body keep him firmly in place.

It's fascinating and exhilarating, watching her derive pleasure from hurting someone else. She's completely enthralled in her work. Her gray-blue eyes shine with a madness that is both frightening and enchanting. Her mask, the lower part of her face, neck, and chest, are already splattered with blood from when she stabbed the St. Andrews' heir repeatedly while he begged her for mercy. One she refused to grant him before ending his life and cutting off his cock, then feeding it to him.

I won't stand here and say the sight of a man's dick being cut off didn't affect me. I cringed and cradled my own junk, and so did Abe, but watching her shove it down that whining cunt's throat, and how she giggled as she did it brought me immense pleasure. The fact that Sammy didn't even flinch tells me he's already become desensitized to the whole thing. *I think we are all a little psychotic here.*

“Death must come for us all, Blaine St. Andrews; none will be spared my wrath. You cannot live with your sins in the darkness forever, and I cannot wait for my vengeance in this lifetime. You must pay the price.” Dinah stabs the blade into his shoulder, and blood rushes down his chest.

“You are trapped in a nightmare from which there is no waking; there is no longer a time for the sacred. No one will be left to save you when I am done. Today, you will meet your

maker; may he have mercy on your blackened soul.” She removes the blade and slams it into his other shoulder as he screams in terror and pain.

Abe circles them, a manic look across his half-masked face. He’s enjoying her savagery and how she’s dealing out punishment and pain. Her fury and bloodlust speak to his, and he looks ready to throw her on the ground and fuck her in the circle of blood staining the floor around them.

I bet she would taste divine, fueled by rage. Her hot, toned body covered in the blood of her enemies as her tight pussy strangles my tongue and then my cock. I slide my hand down the front of my pants and palm my dick. Abe’s eyes follow the movement, and before I can say anything, he’s before me and dropping to his knees.

“Shhh, let me worship you,” he utters.

My eyes rise above his head and meet Dinah’s, as she watches Abraham from the short distance, the blade still clutched in her blood-covered hand. She turns away from me just as Abe reaches up and undoes my button, and pulls down my zipper, freeing my hard cock from the confines of my pants. He strokes me up and down, his thumb circling my pierced tip and spreading the drops of precum already spilling from my rigid length.

“There is no God left on this earth. There will be no salvation from your false Order. I will show you no mercy as I send your soul to the depths of hell. You will be forgotten, Blaine St. Andrews.” She pulls the blade from his shoulder

and slides it across his throat, slashing harshly and causing blood to arc up and cover her. *She's beautiful, a creature filled with sin.*

Abe takes me deep into his warm mouth and sucks. Watching her commit horrific murder while Abe takes me deep into the constricting haven of his throat almost has me staggering and falling to my ass. I have never been as turned on as I am right now, watching her lose herself in stabbing Blaine repeatedly, until there doesn't seem to be a part of him that she hasn't reached.

Sammy moves forward and takes the blade from her, his hand rising to gently cradle her face as he speaks words to her, too quiet for me to hear. My head tips back and I deepen my stance, as Abe's mouth starts to bob up and down on my cock, bringing me so much pleasure that it has my balls threatening to tighten up and spill down his tight throat. His groan vibrates along my length and has me digging my fingers into his thick, brown hair and pulling him closer, forcing him to swallow more of me.

A loud moan sounds in the room filled with Abe's slurping and gagging noises, and my deep groans. I raise my head to stare at Dinah and Sammy. He has one of his hands down the front of her pants, thrusting his fingers into her pussy while the other is wrapped tightly around her throat. Her face has gone slack, her pretty pouty lips, speckled with another man's blood, are open, and her eyes are wide with dark desire.

Abe uses his hands to pull my pants further off my hips, and give himself full access to my cock and balls. He pulls his mouth off my cock and swirls his tongue around my throbbing crown, as his hand wraps around my base and strokes me. His other hand reaches between my legs to roll my sensitive testicles in his fingers, and a deep moan leaves my lips just as a shuddering cry leaves Dinah's.

My hands yank Abe forward forcibly, and I shove my cock down his throat as I use my hands to grab fists full of his hair, and fuck his face without mercy, until I'm roaring my release and coming down his throat. My cum just keeps gushing out of me until I can feel it spilling out of the seal of his lips around my length.

“That's a good little cum whore, Abe. Fuck, your lips and throat feel so good around my dick.”

Once I'm spent, I release my hold on him and pull away. I watch, captivated, as he turns around to Dinah, grabs her by the bloody shirt front, yanks her away from Sammy, and pulls her down to her knees, before forcing his mouth on her shocked lips.

He pulls back and pushes her mouth open with his fingers tight around her jaw, and I see a glob of my semen inside her pretty, pink mouth. He licks her open mouth, taking it back into his own and then spitting it right back into hers. It's so erotic watching them pass my cum back and forth.

I move forward, grabbing a handful of each of their hair and pulling. “Swallow,” I command and watch as they do. Then I

hold my hard cock between their faces, slapping it first on Abe's face and then on Dinah's. "Lick me clean, my dirty whores."

Their tongues snake out and lick my throbbing cock from tip to base. More drops of cum escape me, and are quickly licked up by both of them. I release a tight groan, knowing that if I don't stop them, I'll be fucking both of them, right here, on the bloody floor, for hours. I pull back, and Dinah releases a whimper. My eyes meet Sammy's, and for a quick second, I'm sure I see desire in their depths. Desire for me or her, I can't tell. *Well, fuck me. If he gets on his knees for me right now, I'm done for. I won't be able to resist.*

"It's time to go home. I want to fuck you both, but not here, not like this." I regretfully pull up my pants and tuck my hard cock away, despite its throbbing protests.

Dinah gets up from the floor with a sigh. "Okay, just one more thing to do then." I watch as she dips her fingers into the mess that was once Blaine St. Andrews' chest, and begins to write on the wall.

**"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,
but against principalities, against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places."**





Sammy

We returned to our new home after murdering the St. Andrews', so that Dinah could get cleaned up and we could attempt to process what we all just experienced. I feared us showing up at Ezekiel's parents' house with a blood-soaked Dinah might be a risk too significant to take. For once, all three of us males were in agreement, a bloody miracle if you ask me. *All puns intended.*

Dinah just walked into the large bathroom in her room; I can hear the water running and her humming, as she prepares to wash off all of the sins she committed tonight. She seems lighter than when we left here earlier for dinner. As if the murdering of Brotherhood souls has helped reawaken a part of her. If it helps bring her back to me, I will lay them all gagged and bound at her unhinged feet so she can go on another killing spree.

I desperately want to get in there with her and lose myself in her warm heat. The image of her on her knees for Ezekiel keeps rising within my mind, bringing sinful and illicit desires with it. I start shedding my clothes, determined to have a moment alone with her, just us like it used to be, before those two fuckers come sniffing her out, and they will. They are both now just as obsessed with her as I am.

My thoughts return to earlier in the day when I had to dispose of Elizabeth, removing another possible threat to my Nightstar. It brought me a sense of peace I hadn't felt in some time. How many more threats must I extinguish, before we are released from the cuffs that bind us to the Brotherhood? *Will we ever be free?*

My morose thoughts leave me when I step inside the bathroom, and spy Dinah through the glass shower door. I am mesmerized as she uses the shower head, trailing it across her body in slow, sensual motions. The water adds to her seduction, creating a vision of a frolicking water nymph before me. One destined to bring me to my knees and lure me to my death willingly.

I don't hesitate, stepping inside the shower area, a man lured forward by a siren. Her head rises, and her stunning, bright eyes meet mine. I watch as her pink tongue peeks out and licks her bottom lip, and before I can restrain myself, I'm on her, shoving her against the tiled wall and caging her in with my body. My lips crash onto hers with the hunger of a starving beast, as I devour her gasps and moans.

I grab hold of her thighs and lift her body from the floor, her legs wrapping tightly around my waist. My hard cock slides between her slick folds as I thrust, nudging her clit and inducing a needy moan to escape her that I swallow. Her arms wrap around my neck as her fingers make their way into my hair, and she pulls on my strands, trying to crawl inside of me through our joined mouths.

Fuck, she feels fantastic pressed up against me, her soft, warm, wet skin against all of my firmness. I pull back from her tight embrace, my fingers tightening harshly on her flesh, the thought that later she will bear the imprint of each digit making its glorious way across my mind.

“Slip me inside of you, Nightstar. I need to feel my heaven, baby.”

She doesn't hesitate, reaching down between our wet flesh and grabbing a hold of my rigid cock. Her fingers trail over it with reverence before her thumb strokes the crown, forcing an animalistic growl to leave my lips. A satisfied smile graces her mouth before she positions me at her entrance, and I push inside her warm, tight pussy with a moan.

I slam myself inside of her pussy until her pelvis is pressed flush against mine, and a small scream leaves her mouth. My harsh thrusts slide her across the slick tile, forcing moans to escape her lips. Her fingers return to my shoulders, her nails digging in and offering the sweet hint of pain I crave. She tightens around me until she's strangling my cock, and electricity races along my spine with a desperation to unleash my load inside of her.

“Baby, rub your clit for me. I need you to cum for me, my beautiful Nightstar.” My words are mumbled against her lips, all the sensations threatening to bring me to my knees. I use one hand to brace her small body against the wall and wrap my other one around her throat, tightening when she doesn't

immediately comply with my request. *My naughty, defiant Nightstar.*

“Who do you belong to, Nightstar?” I thrust and grind into her until her head bows back against the wall and her eyes close with a whimper. “Who does this pussy belong to? Tell me, my dirty girl.”

“Ah...fuck...you...yours...it’s yours,” she moans as I keep up my relentless pounding pace into her sweet pussy. The sound of skin slapping skin is a stunning symphony of sounds.

“That’s right, baby, you fucking belong to me. This pussy is mine. Your heart is mine.” A deep groan escapes my lips as her fingers make contact with her clit between us, and rub against where we are joined. I need to hold off; I need her to cum first so that she’s reminded of whose dick her pussy belongs to, and will always belong to.

“Sa...mm...y, I’m goi...ng...to...cum,” she gasps as her whole body tightens painfully around me and trembles with her orgasm.

Her orgasm pulls mine from my body, and a wave of bliss crashes over me as heat rises up my spine, and along all of my limbs. My knees weaken momentarily, and I have to use my upper body to crush Dinah to the shower wall so I don’t drop her. My forehead leans against hers, our breaths leaving us in harsh pants. Her blue eyes are open at half-mast, staring back at me with sleepy satisfaction. *Fuck, I want to pat myself on the back for putting that look on her face.*

“I’ve missed you and I’m sorry. I love you, Dinah. I will always love you, and you will always belong to me regardless of whose ring you wear or the name you bear,” I whisper the words between us, needing her to hear and understand their validity. No matter what happens from this moment forward, nothing will change that. She will always be mine and my everything.

“I love you, Samuel Wendover; nothing and no one will ever take me away from you.” Her soft lips meet mine as water drizzles over us, cocooning us in this moment of love, passion, and paradise. There is nothing that I wouldn’t do for this woman. No one is taking her away from me, not while I still draw breath in my lungs.

The bathroom door opens, and murmured words reach our ears over the sound of the water still pouring around us. I break my embrace with Dinah and allow her feet to find purchase on the floor before looking over my shoulder and spying the other two, already freshly showered, making their way into the room. I was right; they couldn’t stay away for long.

Abraham starts to immediately strip his clothes, and before I can even withdraw from Dinah’s warm pussy, his lips are making contact with hers over my shoulder. I wind her hair around my fist as bolts of pleasure rise once again inside me, watching his lips devour hers and hearing the breathy moans leaving her mouth.

I pull back, releasing my hold from Dinah and pulling out of her warm heat, as Abraham falls to his knees before us. His hands slide up her toned thighs, parting them and exposing more of her to our hungry eyes. “Do you have some delicious cream inside this needy cunt for me, baby? Is my little Atasi a dirty girl who needs her daddy to suck her clean?”

Fuck, his words have my cock hardening again and drops of precum escaping my tip. His head leans forward, his tongue sliding out and licking her from clit to puckered hole and back again. Whimpers escape my Nightstar as she widens her stance, and reaches out to grab a fistful of my hair, pulling me back in for a scorching kiss.

One of Abraham’s large hands trails over my thigh and has me freezing in place, my lips on Dinah’s. “Let him touch you, Sammy. Let him make you feel good,” Dinah moans into my mouth. “You don’t want to admit it, but you’re turned on. Let him help.”

Abraham takes my inaction as the invitation it is, and his fingers wrap around my thick, hard cock, tightening and stroking me in his warm palm; all the while, he continues to eat Dinah’s cum-filled pussy like it’s his favorite meal. Moans leave all our lips, echoing loudly in the confines of the shower.

I pull away from Dinah’s sinful lips and stare over my shoulder at where Ezekiel stands, watching us with deep green eyes filled with illicit heat. I can see the need across his expression, and for a moment, the need to share her with him, too, rises within me. A part of me wants to watch them both

bring her pleasure, and cement this bond between us. *What the fuck is wrong with me?*

Am I finally ready to share her with them? No. I still want her for myself, but am I willing to share her with them? I know that it will bring her pleasure. I also know that guilt and worry accost her whenever she does something with one of them. I don't want that for her, for us. I don't want their ability to also pleasure her to become a divide between us.

For better or worse, we are all now tied together, four strings tied in one fucking messy knot. Fuck my life. I can't keep lying to myself. I know that I will never have her solely for myself again; I need to cherish the time I did have with her and move on to this new reality. *Whether I want to or not. What do I want right now is the question?*

“Nightstar, your body is ours to use, baby, as we wish. All your pleasure belongs to us. You are going to take all of us into your tight holes. You will be our dirty, depraved whore, baby.” The words leave my lips in a rush before I can think twice. It was the go-ahead Abraham seemed to be waiting for. He pulls away from Dinah's cunt and licks up my shaft, causing my balls to tighten. *FUCK! That feels so good, better than it should, considering I still hate the fucker.*

The rustle of clothes is our only warning that Ezekiel is joining us in the shower. His warm body presses against my back, his cock hard against my asscheeks as his arm skates around my waist and grabs a fistful of Abraham's hair. “Open, Abe. Swallow him like the cock whore you are.”

Before I have a chance to say anything, Abraham's lips wrap around my cock, and a hoarse moan leaves me. My fingers wrap around Dinah's throat, as Ezekiel leans further into me and takes her mouth in a sinful kiss, as his fingers grip the base of my cock, and Abraham sucks my tip. *Fuck, at this rate, I'm not going to last long.*

“Do you want this, Snow? Will you allow all of us inside of you? I don't mean one at a time, Dinah. You will take all of us at once. We will fill all *our* holes and claim you forever as our little whore,” Ezekiel moans against Dinah's lips, just as Abraham swallows me into the back of his throat and gags. My eyes nearly cross with the pleasure racing through my body.

Fuck, maybe I was wrong, perhaps this will be paradise between us. I never considered being intimate with a man, and now with Abraham's mouth wrapped firmly around my cock, I'm enthusiastically embracing the possibility.



Chapter 43



The Sinner

Dinah

My nipples pucker painfully, my body so aroused not only from the situation of my captivity in this shower with three large males surrounding me, the loss of control, but also their threats. Threats to own me, to give me no choice in being theirs. To use my body for their pleasure, filling me up with their cocks, until there is no me and them, but only us.

Ezekiel's eyes light up with smoldering lust, depravity, and possession. He wants to hurt me, to tear the pleasure right out of my body and consume my soul. "That's right, my dirty, pretty animal. You will take all of us. Everything we have to give. You want to be our cum whore, don't you, baby?"

"You want me to destroy your mind, your sinner's soul, and that dark, vengeful heart that beats in that chest, the one that already belongs to me, don't you, Snow?" Fuck, I can't even answer him, his words are pure seduction to my depraved soul. *The truth is that I do want all those things.*

Abe pulls back from Sammy's cock and tips his head to look up at me, as Sammy releases his tight hold on my neck. Abraham's lips glisten from my pussy and Sammy's cum that he ate out of my cunt. Saliva coats his chin from taking Sammy deep into his throat and gagging on him.

I can see by the unhinged look on Abe's face that he's looking forward to ripping the pleasure from me by force. Hurting me while also making me crave his touch. Their touch. *Do I belong to all of them now?*

I want to immediately answer no. That I belong to myself, but a voice slithers in the back of my mind, calling me a liar. *I want them all.* I need to feel them holding me down, using me for their depraved pleasure. The desire to hear myself gasping for breath when they force me to cum, lighting a fire within me.

“Look at how your nipples pucker with anticipation of us using you like a whore, Snow. You want Abe's fingers inside of you, baby? You want my cock choking your very air?” Zeke's palm slaps down on the round globe of my left breast, the sting and heat making a whimpered cry leave my lips. I want everything he's offering and more.

Abe's hands trail down my stomach, his fingers parting my swollen pussy and two slipping deep inside of my tightening, drenched core. His thrusts are slow, teasing, as if he's trying to drive me insane with need, as the heat rises once again inside my body, lighting me up like fireworks.

Zeke cups my swollen and wet pussy, as Abe's fingers continue moving inside me, but his mouth goes back to sucking on Sammy's hard cock. Fuck, just the sight of his head bobbing and the feel of his fingers cause my whole body to tighten, in anticipation of the orgasm attempting to roll me within its depths.

The heat from Zeke's hand, adding to all the other sensations, is almost too much to bear; my body is overstimulated and begging for release. He grinds the meaty part of his palm against my throbbing clit, forcing shivers and moans to escape me. My traitorous body undulates and tries to follow his movement, seeking more friction.

I force myself to swallow the words that attempt to leave my lips. The ones that would have me begging for more. Have me beg him to fuck me with his long, pierced cock. To have all of them slip inside of me and fill me up, until I am bursting with them.

The three of them admire me as I struggle against them, a fly captured in their web. They look like little boys on Christmas day, ready and waiting to be unleashed on their gifts. Ready to tear me apart and play with me. "Please..." The word leaves my lips on a whimper.

Sammy watches with dark midnight eyes filled with desire, the pleasure Abe is producing with his lips latched around his cock, undisguisable. As the other two continue to touch me and bring me to the brink of madness, his eyes are riveted on my face, on their hands. Hands that are touching what has always been just his. "Beg us louder, Nightstar. Beg to be our little slut."

The desire to allow them to defile me, dirty me up, and use me for their own depraved pleasure is rising inside of me, like a tidal wave that threatens to overwhelm me and have me drowning at their mercy. *I want this; no, I need this.* Am I

ready to give up my power to them? Is that what I will be doing?

As I watch the three of them, I realize that I hold the power in this situation. They want me. They want to use and share me. The choice has always been mine. Even when their words make it seem like it's the opposite, I know that I hold the control here.

Abe pulls off Sammy's cock with a loud slurp. "Beg, baby, beg us to fill your every hole. To bring you to ecstasy, Atasi." He nuzzles the inside of my thigh as his fingers pick up speed, and his thumb rubs against my puckered hole, causing goosebumps to rise across my fevered flesh. I'm so wet that the sounds are obscene, and I can feel it dripping out of me and coating his hand.

Their words and touch are my undoing. A seal breaking over my restraint, my very hold on my sanity. I feel it all crumble under the onslaught of their combined need. Their demands for my surrender, for my screams. *I want to be their sinner.*

I spread my legs wider in invitation, my stomach clenching with a desire to be ravished. To be filled over and over again by their cocks. Stretched. All my holes filled, and my will challenged. I want to be their whore as much as I want to be the altar they pray at, worshiping me with their words, mouths, and touch. *This was always meant to be. I was always destined to be theirs.*

"Lie down on the shower bench, Abe. We are going to stretch our Snow's tight pussy while Sammy fucks her ass. I

want to hear her scream with pleasure as we take all that belongs to us,” Zeke murmurs calmly as he pulls away and shuts off the water cascading over us, causing shivers to break across my skin.

“Don’t worry, baby; in a moment, we will have you so full you won’t be cold anymore,” Abe chuckles as he pulls his fingers away from my needy cunt, and flicks my hard nipple; a mewling protest leaves my lips. He moves to the large stone shower bench and lays his tattooed body across the surface, his feet and legs hanging off one end and his lips curved into a dirty grin.

“Come here, Atasi. Come ride daddy’s cock like a good girl.” He motions me forward, and like the lust-possessed slut that I am, I readily climb on top of him and impale myself on his thick length in one go, causing a whimper to escape my mouth as he hits the end of me with his long, thick cock.

“So fucking tight, fuck, your pussy is strangling my cock, baby,” Abe groans.

Sammy shifts forward and cradles my face in his large hands. The scar on his face pulled tight with the emotions crossing his features. “Open wide, baby,” he commands, his cock bobbing before my lips.

I take him inside my mouth and to the back of my throat, swallowing and moaning around his thick length. A warm hand in the middle of my back pushes me forward until my sensitive breasts crush against Abe’s tattooed warm chest. I can hear Zeke spit behind me, then feel it as it slides down

between my asscheeks, and meets where Abe's cock is thrusting inside of me.

A burning sensation, pressure, and then a hit of pain commences from my entrance as Zeke starts to force his way inside my tight hole, already overfilled with Abe's thick cock. I almost beg him to stop; even though I crave the pain, it feels like I am being torn in half. Neither of them are small men, and I am not sure my body can take it. "Too much, fuck, it's... too...much!"

"That's it, baby, let us inside of you. You can take us both inside your pretty cunt. Try to relax, baby. We are going to make you feel so good," Abe whispers to me with a groan as tears slide down my face with Sammy's cock deep in my throat and trapping my air.

The mixture of pain, desire, and the need to be used is my undoing. The orgasm I held at bay rushes over me, and rolls me under its wave of pleasure. My eyes roll into the back of my head. My whole body tightens and then spasms, as heat floods all my limbs and electricity races across my nerve endings. I scream with Sammy's cock lodged deep in my throat as Abe and Zeke pound into me without mercy, both using me for their pleasure. *It's too much, both of them, together deep inside of me is too much!*

Sammy pulls out of my mouth and climbs on the bench, straddling my ass as Abe's arms wrap tightly around me, holding me to his body. All my senses are on fire, and my body is overwhelmed with the pleasure they are causing. I try

to capture a breath, but my lungs are on fire. I can feel Zeke's piercing rubbing against my pussy walls, over that spot that makes me see stars.

Sammy's thumb dips inside my puckered hole, thrusting in and out, stretching me before replacing his thumb with two fingers and spitting inside of me. Then, his hard tip replaces the fingers and presses against my puckered hole. His hand comes down hard on my ass in a stinging slap, as he begins breaching my ass with his large cock.

A scream leaves my lips that Abe swallows, as the feeling of being full races through my body. It's too much, all of them inside of me simultaneously. My body detonates, crashing with another orgasm that steals what's left of my sanity and breath.

“That's it, my little depraved whore. Cum for us, Snow. Show us how well you can take us. Show us how you want to milk all our cocks, like the cum whore you are.”

The three of them move in tandem as Zeke and Abe find a rhythm fucking my tight pussy, while Sammy thrusts deeply into my ass. The heat in the small space is rising along with the combined moans. Sweat now drips down my skin, and my hair becomes an anchor that Abe threads his fingers into and uses to hold me to him. His lips move over my jaw and neck, leaving bites behind in his wake that have my toes curling.

“You are so beautiful, Atasi. So perfect for us. This tight pussy is ours. Ours to use anytime we want, baby. Scream for us, show us how you love our cocks. Show us how you cum

for your monsters,” he growls, his hands fisting my hair tighter and ripping out strands.

I release a strangled whimper, knowing that I am their whore. I’d willingly be their sacrifice as long as my body could keep feeling the euphoria they were producing within me.

“We are going to cover you in cum, Snow. You’re a depraved whore who enjoys whatever her husband wants to do to her, aren’t you, wife?” Zeke pulls out to the tip and slams back inside me, pulling another scream from my lips. My vision starts to go black; all the sensations are too much for me, and my body can’t hold on. I’m drowning in depraved lust.

Just as I feel like darkness is coming to take me, the bathroom door bursts open with a deafening crash, and a group of figures clad in the dark uniform of the Order storm into the room, their weapons trained on us. My heart skips a beat before pounding relentlessly, strangling the breath trapped within my chest.

Zeke and Sammy pull out of me with a furious cry, and Abe yanks me off of him and shoves me behind his body on the stone bench. My mind and body are still warring with each other, one realizing the danger we are in, the other still gripped by denied pleasure.

Noah Rothesay strolls in, a wicked grin and satisfaction across his aged features. His eyes stalk the scene before him. All three of my men desperately try to use their large bodies as

shields to protect me, putting themselves between me and the enemy. I shift behind Abe's broad, naked back as he keeps me safeguarded against the vicious eyes of the guards before us.

Ezekiel steps forward, towering with a commanding presence, his head held high and his body poised to strike at those threatening us with their weapons. "What in the fuck is this?" He bellows. "How dare you intrude here! GET THE HELL OUT, IMMEDIATELY!" His voice reverberates with fury and authority.

"Oh, son," Noah sneers, "I'd advise you to temper that rage for a moment. Your demands are as worthless as your self-entitlement. It's clear to me now that you've always been destined for failure, Ezekiel. A letdown to both your mother and me, despite our best efforts to mold you into something more than this pitiable creature you've become."



Chapter 44



Dinah

Noah nods, and one of the guards steps forward, firing a shot into the shower glass. The glass shatters, raining shards down on us. Abe's body instinctively covers mine, shielding me. From beneath his protective frame, I witness Zeke and Sammy being overwhelmed by a dozen or more guards, their desperate struggles to fend off the attack in vain.

Three guards make their way over the shattered glass, one brandishing a taser. They seize Abe, forcibly yanking him away from me, repeatedly administering electric shocks that contort his body in agony. I'm forced to watch as the electricity races through his body, causing it to bow painfully and ripping agonized groans from his lips.

"STOP! You're killing him!" I scream as I disregard the shattered glass and attack the one holding the taser, only to succeed in being grasped from behind and forced out of the shower area and back into the bedroom by my hair, all the while trying to fend off my attacker with my legs and arms.

"Tsk, tsk, Dinah. You really are a violent psychopath, aren't you, my dear? Not obedient like your mother at all, but it seems you take cock well like her. Good to know that some things were passed on," Noah chuckles as the two guards restraining me force me to my knees before him, placing a blade a couple inches from my throat.

I hawk up a glob of spit and aim it at his face, as the struggles continue all around us as my guys try to break free from the sheer number of guards in the room. The spit slides down Noah's chin, bringing me immense satisfaction. His eyes flash dangerously with fury as he wipes at his face.

"Break her arm, the disrespectful cunt," Noah orders. Before I have time to react, one of the guards yanks my arm back sharply and uses his knee to snap my wrist and dislocate my arm from my shoulder, while the other moves the blade closer until it nicks my throat, keeping me hostage in my spot. The pain has a scream immediately leaving my lips, and nausea rushes through me as darkness threatens to take my vision.

"STOP! DON'T FUCKING HURT HER!" Zeke's desperate voice rings out.

"Remove my son out into the hallway; I want to have a word with him without these sinners present," Noah demands. Three guards push and pull Zeke until he is forced violently from the room, and the door closes behind Noah as he follows them out.

"Dinah, baby, don't fight, please," Sammy's panicked voice rings out in the room, followed by the sound of skin being hit and a pained groan. I try to turn my face to look at him, but the guard with the blade at my throat growls and uses his other hand to yank painfully on my hair.

"Stay still, whore."

"Motherfucker, I am going to kill you!" I see Abe raging, from the corner of my eye, attempting once again to fight his attackers, only to be subdued.

“I’m going to feed you both your dicks,” I rage against the two holding me captive, trying to rise to my knees but being forced right back down. I can feel blood trickling down my chest from the cut on my throat, and my hair being ripped out from this fucker’s vicious grip.

Minutes drag by as pain takes over my body, and the nausea becomes too much, forcing me to vomit to the side while trying desperately to cradle my arm to my chest. My feet are cut with glass shards deeply embedded and stinging. My head hurts from where one of the guards got me with an elbow.

Terror races through me at what is happening here, but I still try again to pull away from the two gorillas behind me. I can hear shouting outside of the door and the sound of fighting. *Are they beating on Zeke out there? Are they killing him?*

“You’re a pretty little sinner. I hope they let us have a taste of you before they send you back to hell.” The one holding my hair leans down to whisper to me, and I take the opportunity to lunge my teeth and bite his cheek. He screams in shock and pain and slams his fist into my jaw, before pulling away from me. I’m now seeing double, but it was fucking worth it to hear the cunt scream.

How is Noah even here when he should be in a drugged stupor back at the mansion? The sheer number of guards suggests the Order has come for us, and found us in the worst possible situation. We were reckless, filled with the high from the kills. We thought we were safe, but we were wrong. *Do*

they know that I am the Ghost, or do they just believe us sinners?

Ezekiel is shoved back into the room, his mouth bleeding and his eye swollen almost shut. He staggers forward, and that's when I see the deep cut on his leg, dripping blood down to his bare feet. He stumbles to his knees, trying to break the hold that two out of three guards have on him, but they don't release him.

His frightened eyes meet mine before pulling away and staring at Abe. The horror and devastation I witness on his face has terror rising inside of me and my blood rushing in my ears. What the hell happened out there?

“Snow!” My nickname leaves Ezekiel's lips in a pained cry, before one of the guards slaps his face.

“Keep silent, broken prince.” The guard's smug face leans away from Ezekiel's.

Noah calmly walks back into the room with a bloody blade in his hand and a grim look. He moves towards me, and a smile breaks across his face. “Oh, little goddaughter, how wicked you have been. Who would have ever imagined that little Dinah Camrose was the Unholy Ghost?”

His smirk deepens, and his eyes light up with a manic glee. “You, my dear, are a serial killer and devil in disguise. The devil does send his minions in the most delectable packages. You are his daughter, a sinner.” His eyes slide over my naked tattooed skin, causing further rage within me and my skin to crawl.

“Ask for redemption, Dinah, and your Lord may still save you. Kneel at my feet, demon. Prostrate yourself at his altar, and I will pull you from the fires of hell.”

“Come closer and give me that blade, and you will see just how much of the devil I am.” I lash out with fury and try to slam my foot into his leg. How fucking dare he think that I would beg at his or anyone else’s altar. I’ll see him dead first.

Warning bells are blaring loudly in my head, pulling my attention momentarily away from my boiling anger. How does he know I am the *Ghost*? How did he find out? Did someone tell him? Has one of them been betraying me this whole time? Have they led me here to my death, while promising me safety in their arms? How many times will I have to learn the lesson of betrayal at a man of the Brotherhood’s hands?

“Hold her tight; it seems she has yet to learn her place. The lesson must be repeated until she understands that she is nothing.” Noah nods towards the two guards flanking me, and as much as I try to fight them, I can’t escape their grasps with only one functioning arm.

“Father...please!” Zeke shouts as he tries to break away from his guard’s hold.

Noah moves forward, clutching the blade still dripping with Zeke’s blood, and before I even have a moment to take my next breath, he slams it into the side of my stomach until only the handle is still visible. The pain is instantaneous, forcing me to fall forward before he pulls the knife back out. Blood

gushes down my side, coating my naked body. The pain is sharp and forces my breath to halt in my chest.

“SNOW!”

I’m frozen. My brain and body are trying to comprehend what just happened to us. *Holy fuck, I’m going to die. I’m going to die right here surrounded by Brotherhood men who hate me.* This can’t be my end. I can’t let them take my life, like they have taken everything else from me. *FIGHT*, my mind, and heart scream within me.

“Atasi!” Abe desperately attempts to rise to his feet, but one of the guards slams his arm into his back before another kicks him, landing a blow to his side.

“DINAH! I’m going to kill you, old man!” Sammy’s scream echoes out of my sight, filled with rage and desperation, before pained grunts meet my ears.

“You see, Dinah, you cannot fully corrupt my useless son with your sinful ways. There is still a part of him that belongs to me and the Brotherhood. Isn’t that right, son?” Noah questions, his voice laced with dark satisfaction, as he wipes his bloody hands on his pant leg with distaste.

“No...” The whispered word leaves my bloody lips as my vision dims.

Noah crouches before me, vehemence emanating from his pores as his green eyes sparkle with hate as they meet mine. “You have made the right choice here, Ezekiel, just like you did when it came to that traitor Gabriel Camrose. He was a

threat to our holy Order, just like she is.” Noah drags a finger down my cheek as my brain tries comprehending everything he says.

“Don’t touch her!” Ezekiel shouts, trying to rip out of his guard’s hold.

“You were right not to give him a warning, son, when we discovered that he was plotting with the rebels to overthrow our government. You shall do the right thing again, Ezekiel. You shall honor your vows to the Brotherhood, where you will grow in power, son,” Noah intones, his words heavy with ominous authority.

Devastation makes its way up my spine, as everything this monster says clicks in my head. I’m not the only one who’s putting two and two together. Abe’s lips part in a shocked gasp and his murderous glare shifts from Noah to Ezekiel. He tries once again to break from the guards restraining him. “I’LL FUCKING KILL YOU. I’LL KILL YOU ALL!” One of the guards slams his knee into Abe’s face, and he drops to the floor with a gush of blood.

“YOU FUCKING TRAITOR!” Sammy’s hoarse voice echoes in the room, accompanied by a grunt.

I lunge for Noah again, only to be dragged back by my hair, with my broken arm yanked painfully behind my back. “Settle down, demon!” The guard hisses behind me.

“ATASI!” Abe tries to crawl across the floor towards me, his nose gushing blood and his eyes wild with fear.

At this moment, I realize that my suspicions were correct all along, despite their claims of innocence mere hours before; one of them has betrayed me and my family, only it wasn't Abe. He wasn't a party to my brother's death, and his shock and devastation confirm that he didn't know. No, it wasn't him. He wasn't privy to Ezekiel's treachery. Ezekiel not only abandoned my brother to a horrific death, but was complicit in it.

I should have listened to my gut feeling, and murdered Ezekiel Rothesay weeks ago. I spared him on that cliff, the weak and sentimental girl inside of me who longed for the boy she used to care for. Look at what has befallen me for allowing my emotions to lapse my judgment. I was forced to marry a traitor, a deceiver loyal to the Order, after all. He's been playing me all this time.

Abe struggles against the confining restraints the guards have placed on him, dragging two of them forward as he attempts to get closer to Zeke. The rage and disbelief on his face wars within me. We have both been manipulated by someone who was supposed to have cared deeply for us. Who led us to believe that he would protect those he loved, and yet my brother is dead, and I'm not far from meeting the same fate.

“WHAT THE FUCK IS HE TALKING ABOUT, ZEKE! How could you fucking do this? Tell me they're lying! TELL ME!” Abraham shouts as tears race down his bloody face.

“I’ll fucking kill you, Noah! I’ll kill you all! Release me!” Abraham shouts as three guards hold him back.

Worse than knowing I allowed Ezekiel Rothesay to play me for a fool, is knowing that I let him infiltrate the dark recesses of my heart, convincing myself that he genuinely cared for me and would protect me, when nothing could be further from the truth. He betrayed me; if he ever had real feelings for me, he was able to put them aside. Something that I was unable to do, and look where it has led me.

Noah looms before me, his fingers trailing down the side of my head in a twisted display of false tenderness. I feel like a chained beast, subjected to his sick version of affection. His voice oozes with malevolence as he utters his ominous words, “I warned you, Ezekiel.”

He turns his gaze away from me and glares at his son. “When you made your threats, you forced my hand, son; I knew the day would come when you’d pay, and here it is wrapped in a pretty package.”

“Don’t make me do this, please. Please, Father,” Ezekiel begs, but his face is filled with rage. Rage that is consuming him now that his treachery has been exposed.

Noah’s fingers dig into my scalp, eliciting a small whimper that escapes my lips, a testament to the pain coursing through me. I grit my teeth, determined not to grant him the satisfaction of my cries. I try to pull away, and turn my face to sink my teeth into any part of his flesh that I can, but the pain

rising inside of me threatens to overwhelm me, and my vision keeps flashing in bright colors before my eyes.

“You see, son,” he sneers, “just like Icarus, you flew too close to the sun. And just like him, you have fallen from the sky, crashing down into the merciless sea. You’ve fallen from grace.” A malevolent smile twists his face.

“You have broken our laws, Ezekiel. You have allowed your Sacred Wife to be defiled by a man of sin, a lowly guard. You have corrupted another Order brother to commit sins against the Brotherhood, and our Lord and Savior, with you.” His malignant glare focuses on a struggling Abe as one of the guards restraining him uses the taser once more. *How much more can he take before they kill him?* Fear soars within me for his life.

“And if none of that was sinful enough, your Sacred Wife is a psychopathic murderer who kills members of the Brotherhood. Her soul cannot and will not be redeemed. She has doomed herself to eternal suffering in hell, where she belongs. To save you, boy, and cleanse you of your sins, this temptress and murderer must die.” Noah grabs a fistful of my hair and yanks me forward on my knees. The pain is sharp, but it’s no match for the fear rolling in waves through me.

My eyes desperately seek out Abraham and Sammy, both restrained. Their figures are almost obscured by the overpowering amount of guards surrounding them. “DINAH!” Sammy’s frantic scream pierces the chaos, reverberating through the air, and is soon accompanied by the sound of flesh

striking flesh. *They are going to kill him with how many blows he keeps taking.*

“You fucking traitor! I’m going to fucking kill you, Zeke! How could you betray her? How could you do that to Gabriel?” Abraham shouts, and a few guards give way under his forceful attempt to reach me. All the while, Zeke refuses to look in their direction. *Fucking coward.*

“You’ve finally done the right thing, son. By choosing to sacrifice the whore, this demon trying to corrupt you, and save yourself, you will be forgiven. All of your sins will be cleansed. The Holy Father doesn’t need to cast you into the fires of hell. When the time is right, you will be given another Sacred Wife, and this one will be wiped from the pages of history. Forgotten.”

“You piece of fucking shit!” Sammy’s voice rings out.

“Her fortune is yours, son. You have gained even though you have sinned. You will serve penance, but then you will see everything will be alright in the end.”

“That’s why you betrayed us? Her fucking fortune?” Abe grunts out with pain.

“Take the blade, son. Do the Lord’s work. Cleanse the earth of this disgusting sinner. The Brotherhood commands you to do your duty. If you don’t, she will still die, Ezekiel, but we will torture her first. Each taking a turn with her and making her pay for each of her sins, one by one, and of that, there are many.” Noah stares at his son, daring him to defy him. Urging him to make a choice that will damn him either way.

“ZEKE! Don’t...fucking...do...this.” Abe screams, his voice almost gone.

Ezekiel falls to his knees before me, taking the blade from his father’s hand, his eyes refusing to meet mine. The pain in my side is becoming sharper and almost unbearable. I watch as Zeke slides his bloody tattooed hand down his face. His skin painted with the red of my blood and his, with our sacrifice for the Order he serves. The Order he has betrayed me for.

“Don’t do this, Ezekiel! Please, don’t do this!” Sammy’s screams are heart-wrenching, and cause tears to slide down my face. My knight, forever trying to protect and save me. This time, he can’t. This time, I will have to pay for the consequences of my actions and the betrayal of others.

Please take the blade and stab him. Please fight for me, fight for us. Prove to me that you have not betrayed me. Please. The thoughts race through my mind only to be replaced by sorrow, knowing there is no way he will choose me. *It was all a lie.*

“What’s it going to be, Ezekiel?” Noah questions, running the tip of a finger over my collarbone. “It’s too bad I never got a taste of you, Dinah. I wonder if your cunt was as good as your mother’s?”

The mention of my mother lights a last spark of fury within me. I try to fight the hold on my hair and swing my battered arms at him. My left one refuses to even rise from where it hangs limply at my side. It’s no use; my body is spent. Nothing is left of me; I know this is the final moment of my

life. This is where all my sins have led, to this moment, where I am surrounded, outnumbered, and defeated. *Betrayed.*

My only solace is that I'll soon rejoin my family in the afterlife, and I'm sure my brother is waiting with open arms. My failure to rid this world of the Brotherhood is a heavy stain on my soul.

Zeke finally looks at me, and I swear I see unmeasurable sorrow in his eyes. *How dare he feel sadness when he is the one betraying us.* "You are the... worst of them. You have betrayed...people who would have...protected you. People... who loved you. You're nothing...but Brotherhood scum. Death...will be a kindness...you don't deserve. Gabe is... lucky...to be at peace away from you. He would...be disappointed, disgusted. Pathetic. Traitor." The words stumble from my numb lips.

Zeke's emerald eyes brim with shadows and torment as he trails them down my face. There's no effort on his part to conceal his anguish, or the devastation that gnaws at him from the words I uttered and because of what he's done, the choice he's already made. A choice to betray me and lead me to my death.

I should feel overwhelmed with anger at being proven right in the end, but exhaustion now reigns supreme, and this knowledge offers me no solace. It is done; there is nothing left of me. There is only one way left to break from the bonds of captivity I have lived in all my life. They murdered my soul long ago, and now they take my life.

A thunderous roar erupts behind him, a deafening sound akin to an anguished beast. This noise shatters the remnants of my heart, coaxing more tears to cascade down the sides of my face. I shift my gaze beyond Zeke, witnessing all the men in the room struggling to restrain Sammy. Even though they outnumber him, he fights with unwavering determination, attempting to reach my side.

My warrior. My Knight. My forever protector. *My love.*

“NIGHTSTAR! Don’t you dare fucking leave me!” Grunts and sounds of struggle emanate from the men surrounding him, as Sammy desperately attempts to land blows, and free himself from their grasp. “I’m going to fucking kill you, Ezekiel!”

“Atasi! Fuck! No!”

I return my eyes to Zeke just as Abe’s large body manages to break free from those restraining him, and he slams his body into Zeke, shoving him away from me. His shaking hand, fingers broken, trembling in the air between us, before the guards are able to drag him backwards. His dark, soulful, golden eyes meet mine, and I see the desperation to try to save me in their depths. “What have you done, Zeke? What the fuck have you done? Don’t do this, please!”

“Do it, Ezekiel, kill the sinner. Remove her stain from this world. The Brotherhood commands you; I command you. You must keep the Order safe from her sins!” Noah’s voice booms with authority and fury.

I watch with a sense of distance, as if everything around me is moving in slow motion. More guards rush into the room and throw themselves into the fray, trying to restrain Sammy and Abe. The bodies landing blows on the two men fighting fiercely to free me from my inevitable fate. This was always meant to happen; I knew when I decided to rid the world of the Brotherhood. I was always destined to die. It was never an if but a when, and now, my time has run out.

“KILL THE WHORE, EZEKIEL! RID YOURSELF OF YOUR SINS!”

Zeke’s eyes meet mine, and I see the indecision inside their depths. Is he having regrets now? Will he defy his father? Will he fight with us against the Brotherhood? He hesitates with the blade in his hand, pure anguish across his features. I try to take a deep breath. This is what he chose and must want. Why is he hesitating?

He’s not going to do it, he can’t. His feelings were real; he cared for me even if it wasn’t deeply. My brain screams pathetically hopeful thoughts at me. My eyes feel heavy, but I swear I see his body tense, and he moves as if he’s going to turn around and stab Noah instead.

“If you don’t kill her now, Ezekiel, our agreement is null and void. Abraham will die here a sinner and traitor just like her, and I will have his body burned. Both of them can go meet the fires of hell together.”

Clarity hits my fogged brain, causing my eyes to center on Ezekiel. His green eyes meet mine, and I see the regret deep

inside of his soul shining out at me through those emerald depths. He didn't betray us; he betrayed me. He chose himself and Abraham over my life. Can I blame him for wanting to save the man that he loves? Would I have sacrificed him to save Sammy? I don't know; all my thoughts are becoming jumbled together.

“If there is...any part of...the boy I knew...inside of you... promise...me you...will protect...them. Promise...me, Zeke,” I manage to croak, my words filled with pain as I try to reach any part of Zeke that may still help me, that hasn't betrayed all of us.

Any part that will at least save the other two from the wrath of the Brotherhood. Agony courses through my body, and it feels as though the air in my lungs is choking me. A tear slowly descends from my eye, and blood trickles from the corner of my lip, tracing a path down my quivering chin.

A harsh breath wrenches itself from my lips as my vision darkens rapidly. My mind and heart are shrieking at me that we're running out of time, that this is our end. I can't accept this fate; I need him to promise me. He must protect Sammy and Abe. He has to ensure Abe doesn't lose his sanity, and that the Order won't lay a finger on Sammy.

Will he? Will he grant me this final desperate request? Was any of it ever real? My heart beats slowly, and my mind denies me the reassurance I crave. Not even in this desolate moment, can I deceive myself. Perhaps it was never real, and I just fooled myself all along.

“Kill her, Ezekiel. Do it, or Abraham dies!” I stare at him with the bit of energy I have left, knowing full well what will happen. I try to raise my head in a nod to tell him I understand, but I can’t seem to move it enough for him to notice.

“I’m sorry, Snow,” he whispers. His hand slams forward, and the blade buries itself in my stomach, his emerald eyes brimming with tears. I understand now that it was never really a choice for him. He loved him first, and always. He would do anything to save him, even sacrifice me.

I close my eyes tightly, unable to continue looking into my betrayer’s eyes, into the eyes of the man who betrayed my brother. My strength and desire for revenge proved insufficient to destroy the horrors that plague our world. It will survive relatively untouched by the flames of my vengeance long after I am gone. The Order of the Brotherhood of the Sacrament wins yet again.

“If...” A rattling fills my chest. “If...you...ever...cared for...me.” A wet guttural sound escapes my mouth as more hot blood pours from my lips and down my face. “If...if it... was...ever...real. Promise...me... you’ll protect them.”

The sounds of screams are getting further and further away. My eyes feel so heavy, and my ears are drowning in the sound of my blood pumping through my body. Soaking me in puddles of my own life-giving fluid. I’m so cold; every part of me feels frigid, as if a northern air blew across my chilled skin.

Exhaustion courses through me, a relentless wave dragging me into the abyss. Perhaps, at last, I'll find the rest I crave. I may have faltered in my revenge, but with each painful, fleeting breath, the possibility of reuniting with my brother and mother in the ethereal unknown grows stronger. It's a chance to finally escape the clutches of this relentless and malevolent world that has held me captive for so long. *I will finally be at peace.*

My last thought before darkness takes me is that he didn't promise.

Even in death, he betrayed me.

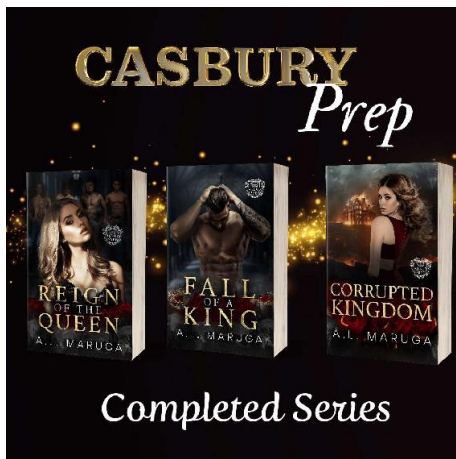
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To the readers - If you have made it this far, I hope I haven't scarred you with my darkness and depravity and have left you craving more.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart and soul for reading my books. I am humbled and honored by each kind word, post, and video. Know that without you, there are no books! Thanks for giving this Canadian indie author a chance!

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To my daughter- Katie, I love you, and I'm really sorry that I have probably scarred you for life with my dark, depraved, and unhinged mind. Thank you for following me into the darkness with a flashlight and pulling me out when I dive too deep. You make me a better writer, mom, and human. I love you, *little momma, now and always!*

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I have so many new worlds and books to be published. I hope you all stick with me and continue on this amazing journey.

I love ya, lovelies!

A.L. Maruga, xoxo



About the Author

Author A.L Maruga grew up in the big city of Toronto, Canada, reading romance and watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer. She always seemed to fall for the villain.

Her love of all things romance and paranormal has stayed with her over the years, and now she devours books at an alarming rate!

Drinker of gallons of coffee, a lover of all things chocolate, and a collector of broken souls. You can find her wandering around her small town in Southwestern Ontario with her trusty writing furbaby assistants ‘*Daisy and Rayo*’ or spending time with her two grown kids and her soul mate.

2022 was her debut as a romance author with her first book, ***Reign of the Queen*** a dark enemy to lovers romance. In 2023, she released another five dark romance books, and she’s just getting started.

She writes about demanding, unapologetic, possessive, dark alpha a-holes and the strong women who bring them to their

knees.

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