



— ❧ — **DION** — ❧ —

BROKEN DEEDS MC

NJ CHAPTER

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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Dion: Broken Deeds MC NJ

Chapter

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BLURB

Dion - Going undercover is what our Broken Deeds MC chapter is all about. A contract with the government allows us to legally do anything within our power to let justice prevail. The case of a missing biker princess I'm working on quickly spirals out of control. It leaves me with only one solution to keep her safe; claim the woman whose strength is radiating through the shattered pieces she now consists of from when they tried to tear her apart.

Taite - As the daughter of the president of an MC, I was raised to be strong, loyal, and to make my own choices. Loyalty toward my father and his club gave me the resistance to make a decision needed to keep him alive. When I'm close to failing, it's the vice president of another MC who offers me a solution. Yet, choices made with virtuous intentions start to bleed out when bullets start to fly in every direction.

The good can only out balance the bad if both rise to the occasion. Finding love in unusual situations seems as impossible as saving lives.

CHAPTER ONE

– DION –

“Any progress?” Spence asks.

I drag my gaze from the file in front of me and give my prez a grim look. “This case is like a stick in the damn mud. Except, it’s anything but boring.”

The man shrugs. “It’s why it was placed on my desk by a retired detective when he caught wind of the missing daughter of an MC president.”

“It’s been four weeks since you handed me this case and there’s still no trace of the woman. Roux is tracking a lead for me. I’ve been hanging around their clubhouse and have discussed shit with Mercer, the president of Ciro Eris MC. Mercer thinks a cartel is behind the kidnapping of his daughter. Some of the club brothers, mostly from the second generation, want in on a deal the cartel has offered them. Ciro Eris MC sells pussy, the cartel as well, but they want to trade said pussy to mix shit up and add some coke dealing in the process. The first generation wants nothing to do with drugs. As I said, only some of the second generation have dollar signs in their eyes.”

“Tension between members. That’s fucked-up,” Roux rumbles from my left.

I snort. “Tension doesn’t begin to describe the shit I’ve seen inside and outside of that clubhouse these past few weeks. Not to mention, Mercer said his daughter warned him

three days before she went missing that some of the members couldn't be trusted. That she knew for a fact that they were planning on going behind his back for the deal with the cartel. Now I have a murder on my hands along with it, a member of Ciro Eris, and everything points at the fucking cartel."

"What cartel?" Spence questions. "Did you research them?"

"Mireya," I grunt. "I've connected six names to this cartel that's been throwing blow on the streets as of last year. Main player is Eloy Mireya. He has a son, Brock Mireya, though he only took his father's last name recently. The fuckers only have a handful of men, but they have been slowly working their way up."

My prez rubs his jaw with two fingers. "Sounds like this case is getting a little more complicated. We might need to put a few extra brothers on this case with you."

He's right...except, "I'd welcome any help as long as it's in the background. These fuckers are skittish. I've been undercover for four weeks now and some members still haven't said one word to me. On the other hand, if I have someone in on this case it will give me some space to focus on finding the woman. I also need to research who exactly is responsible for the dead body. Adding some backup will give me room to do that, instead of worrying about getting my own head blown off with these untrustworthy fuckers."

"Start taking Roux with you when you're going to their clubhouse or meeting up with any members for that matter. Mercer vouched for you, right? Your cover is still in place and not questioned?"

I touch the dog tags I'm wearing under my shirt. They once belonged to Mercer. He gave them to his daughter years ago who never took them off. Mercer found the dog tags out back, in the dirt, the day she went missing. He gave them to me when I promised I wouldn't give up searching for her, and told me to give them back the day he could place them in his daughter's hands.

"Yeah, Prez," I rumble. "Mercer is the only one who knows I'm there to find his daughter. From what he told me, he's the one who reached out to the retired detective who made sure this case landed on your desk. Every other member thinks I'm staying in town to keep my head low for some shit I've done for my chapter. Since I'm a doctor they all liked the idea of having one available at their beck and call. Fucking hell, I've been there ten times in the past few weeks to stitch fuckers up, that's how many times they go head-to-head with each other."

"Like I said, take Roux with you next time you go near them. Grayer will be on standby and will also work on the case with you. If you need anyone else—"

I cut my prez off. "I'll be sure to ask both Hawks and Shawn. They are almost done with the murder case they've been working on. The dead body I have on my hands isn't connected to the missing person's case I'm handling, but because it's the MC I'm investigating and since the dead body is a member of said MC, the case automatically landed in my lap. Homicide is working it right now with me overseeing it. If I think we need to step in and take over, I'll let you know."

He doesn't have to know the body was tortured in an overly fucked-up way. My prez has enough on his plate as it is, and like I explained; I have everything under control right now.

“Sorry, Dion,” Shawn quips, not sounding sorry at all. “After I’ve closed this case my ass is on the plane to Ryckerdan, remember?”

Fuck. I’m so focused on this case I completely forgot, even if we had a going away party for this idiot. He’s going to take over the chapter in Ryckerdan, the country Spence’s sister and his brother-in-law are the king and queen of.

“Out of the country doesn’t mean I can’t call a brother from another chapter,” I fire back.

Every single one sitting at the table smacks his hand on the table to cheer my comment.

Spence grins at me. “Then it’s settled.” He rises from his chair. “I’m gonna go check on my old lady. Keep your ass out of trouble. My folks are coming over this weekend, so if you need help?”

Now I’m the one grinning. “I can call you if my ass isn’t in trouble if you’d like...you know...in case you want to dodge your mother.”

“Excellent. I’ll keep you to that. Fucking hell, she’s determined to visit as much as she can, all because, and I quote, ‘the baby needs to hear Grams’ voice.’ Seriously.” Spence rubs a hand over his face. “I’ve even told her to send some damn voice clips instead, but she said that isn’t the same, and how I probably wouldn’t put the phone near my woman’s

belly and delete the messages. She'd be right about that. No need to teach my unborn kid curse words he or she can't even understand. Dammit, the kid might pop out voicing 'fuck' instead of screaming."

Laughter erupts around us and Spence chuckles as well as he strolls toward the door.

I smack his shoulder. "Your kid might be coming out yelling fuck anyway with you being raised by your mom, and she taught your woman how to curse, remember?"

"Fuck," Spence grumbles and releases a deep sigh. "That's true."

Roux comes to a stop next to me. "I texted you an address. Her father's guess turned out to be not so much a one in a million shot. His daughter did purchase property without anyone knowing. It's a cabin in West Creek. Do you need directions?"

"No, I know exactly where those cabins are. Keep digging into the woman's background, see what else the father might not have known about," I order.

Roux gives me a thumbs up and wanders out of church with his laptop under his arm.

"Don't you have a cabin up there as well?" Spence asks in a low voice.

He's the only one I've mentioned this to and the man knows I like my privacy when it comes to this cabin. I simply need my own space every once in a while, and it's why I go to the cabin I built with the help of my father over a decade ago.

"Yeah. I guess I'll be heading there now."

Spence dips his chin. “She might be there hiding out, or the kidnappers could have taken her there if no one knows about it. Hell, she could have ended up there in a bad state and fucking died. If she is still alive and you do run into her, then there’s no need for her to be skittish. I can imagine her hiding out and not contacting her father would be due to the unstable environment the club is in. Either way, you have a valid reason to be there and not raise suspicion.”

I release a deep breath. “At this point I’m hoping she is hiding out ’cause the shit I’ve gone through when it comes to this MC is seriously fucked-up. Did I mention she’s the only woman connected to the club? No other sisters, mothers, or old ladies running around there. Only pussy they bring from the whorehouse they own.”

A look of disgust slides across my president’s face. “To each his own, but it sounds like Mercer made more than a few errors running his club, especially when it comes to his daughter.”

“He knows,” I grimly state, remembering the many discussions I had with the man these past few weeks. “It’s why he asked me yesterday to check if she owned property he didn’t know about. Seems they made a pact when there was an altercation with another MC last year. They both bought property no one knew about so they’d have a safehouse if shit went bad. It slipped his mind with all the shit going on. I had Roux look into it and thank fuck she did buy a cabin ’cause I now hopefully have a new solid lead. It damn well shows shit hasn’t been going well in that MC for a long-ass time. I’m heading out and will take the weekend off to focus on the

details of the case while Roux does some more digging. Call if you need me to save you from your mother.”

Spence chuckles. “Expect my call. Hell, I might go out there looking for your cabin.”

I snort. “There’s a reason no one knows where it is.”

“You don’t want anyone in your space, I know. Don’t fucking care. If I need an out, I’m damn well coming your way.”

The corner of my mouth twitches. “Good luck finding me.”

I stalk toward the door when Spence rumbles, “You do know you have a tracker inside your body, right? I can easily find your ass.”

Instead of answering the fucker with my mouth, I raise my hand and flip him off. The bag I packed with my laptop, iPad, and some personal shit, is near the door and I swing it over my shoulder as I head out to my bike.

I shove my bag into one of the saddlebags. The other one is always stocked with a ready-to-go EMT bag, one I’ve personalized with some extra stuff. Being the VP of an MC that solves crime cases for the government isn’t always as clean and flawless as it sounds.

Injuries are bound to happen, and I’d rather be prepared than wait for an ambulance to show up. I’m not saying I can perform surgery in the field, but with my fully stocked kit I can damn well get as close to saving a life as I can get.

I straddle my bike and grab my phone to fire off a text to Mildred, the old woman who owns a shop near the cabins. This way I'll have fresh groceries for the weekend and only have to make one stop on my way to my cabin.

Besides, I always swing by to say hi. She and her husband were good friends with my parents. Mildred is the only one still living out of the four of them, and even if she isn't family, I always check in on how she's doing.

The long ride is something I definitely need to clear my head. When I finally arrive at Mildred's store, I'm itching to dive back into the case I'm working on with a fresh pair of eyes. I park my bike and head inside.

Mildred is helping an older couple standing near the register. I lift my chin and she shoots me a grin. The store is small and knowing Mildred, she'll be chatting and helping her customers while taking all the time she wants. Which is her right and it only shows how big her heart is.

I'm not in a rush anyway and decide to wander around the store to grab some snacks, even if Mildred already packed my usual grocery order. When I glance at the back of the store I notice a woman leaning forward. She's glancing at bandages and antibiotic ointment, but it's her forearm drawing my attention.

My feet are eating the distance between us, and before I so much as realize what I'm doing, I point at her forearm and rumble, "Patching it up clearly doesn't do shit. I'm fairly sure you need antibiotics by now and some IV fluids. Get this checked out by a medical professional otherwise you'll end up in the hospital anyway. Are you running a fever?"

I look up to check her face and am stunned into complete silence when I realize the person I just reprimanded about an untreated wound is none other than the missing woman of the case I'm working on.

Taite has her eyes narrowed as she takes in my leather cut. There's a hint of relief flashing over her face when she sees the Broken Deeds MC patch, but it's gone when she defensively tips up her chin.

She's about to say something when I hear Mildred's voice behind us. "Taite, sweetie, don't let this big oaf scare you with his overbearing medical advice. He's a bull who goes straight for the red shit whenever he sees an injury."

Taite's gaze shifts to Mildred and back to me. I shrug, not really knowing how to reply to Mildred's statement because she's right.

Mildred pats my shoulder. "My advice would be to let Dion here take a look at that wound you've been trying to fix, sweetie. He has a medical license."

Taite shakes her head, her lips part but Mildred steamrolls right over her upcoming denial when she adds, "He's good people. His momma used to drop him off with me when she picked up a shift at the ER while his daddy was out catching criminals. Yes, I've wiped his butt, so I can vouch for him, no need to run, honey."

The corner of my mouth twitches. Gotta love the old woman. She's perceptive and could tell Taite was about to bolt.

“True story,” I rumble and jab my thumb over my shoulder. “I have a medical kit along with antibiotics in my saddlebag. You could follow me to my cabin and I’ll treat your wound or I could do it right here if you don’t want to trust me or be alone with a stranger for that matter.”

She eyes my patch once more. “You’re an outlaw while your father’s law enforcement? How does that work?”

“My parents are both dead, died when they both responded to an accident on the interstate. My mother joined the medical crew to help out at the scene when a truck drove straight into the scene. Trucker fell asleep. They never saw it coming. Six people gone because one person fell a-fucking-sleep behind the wheel.” I clear my throat, not knowing why I spilled those details. “Anyway, the issue of outlaw and law enforcement isn’t an issue. I followed in both of their footsteps to make them proud.”

She frowns and I can’t help but grin. I know what I just told her doesn’t make sense.

“I’ll be here all weekend. You can ask Mildred for the directions to my cabin, but I’d advise you to go get some medical attention today instead of waiting any longer.” I turn to Mildred. “Do you have my groceries ready?”

“On the counter. I’ve put them on your tab,” the good woman murmurs.

I lean in and brush a kiss against her wrinkled cheek. “Thanks, doll.”

Mildred pats my shoulder and I stalk in the direction of the counter. I hear the two women murmur but chose to ignore

them both. For now I think it's best to leave the choice up to Taite to take me up on my offer instead of confronting her with the fact that she's a missing person.

Clearly, not so much missing but rather hiding. Not to mention, she has a nasty looking wound on her forearm—and even though I didn't see the exact wound except for the color of puss seeping through the bandage—I suspect it's a defensive wound.

Meaning some shit went down that sent her running and into hiding, even from her own damn father. That doesn't sit well with me at all. I'm shoving my groceries into the saddle bag after I've pulled my other bag out when I hear footsteps approaching. I turn to see Taite standing near my bike.

Holding out my bag I tell her, “My saddle bags are full so you need to swing this over your shoulder if you're gonna put your ass on the back of my bike.”

Without a word she takes the bag and straddles the bike. To my own surprise I have to grit my teeth when she slides her arms around my waist and presses her front to my back. Fuck. This is a bad idea. She's work. The missing person of a case I'm solving for the government. I can't fuck her.

My cock, on the other hand, is rising to the occasion and practically bouncing in excitement in the confinement of my jeans. Not just because I've found the missing woman, but the fact that said woman is a stunner and feels perfect molded against me.

Once we arrive at my cabin, I unlock the door and let her get inside while I return to get the groceries and my

medical bag from my saddle bags. I lock the door behind me and place the medical bag on the couch on my way to the kitchen. It's an open kitchen. I don't want to spook Taite and decide to put away the groceries first.

“Have you eaten yet or are you feeling a bit under the weather?” I jerk my chin in the direction of her injury.

Her shoulders sag and she grumbles, “Not much.”

That doesn't really answer either question. She's not looking at me, though. Her gaze is taking in my cabin and mostly the shit I have plastered against the walls. There's a reason why I keep this space all to myself; I don't like people butting into my private shit. The walls are littered with family memories. In this case she's taking in details I gave her in Mildred's store which definitely puts her at ease.

“You were in the Army,” she states. “Do you become a doctor in the military faster?”

“Nope, same amount of time.” I continue to put the groceries away.

“Are you still a doctor? I mean...with the whole being a biker thing. I can imagine it's frowned upon...bikers have a shitty reputation. Not that I'm judging you or anything...it's just...let's just say I know more than a few who are—” She falls silent until I hear a heavy sigh that sounds like it's ripped from deep down from her damn toes.

I turn to face her and lean back against the counter. Crossing my arms in front of my chest, I casually place one ankle over the other as I quickly wonder how the fuck I'm going to answer that question.

I'm undercover and the true activities of Broken Deeds MC are classified and only shared with either old ladies or in some cases where there's a need-to-know basis to work with people.

This woman in front of me is skittish, knowing the shit her father shared and the fact that she warned him about the cartel and everything else? It leads me to the one and only option...and that's to follow my gut and hope I'm right in trusting her.

"I'm still a doctor and the vice president of Broken Deeds MC. I don't work at a clinic or a hospital, but my medical license comes in handy because we work cases for the government." My eyes slide to her forearm. "I don't need to remind you some criminals, or bikers for that matter, are dangerous, and dealing with them can be tricky and risky."

Her eyes widen and when they hit the door I know she's aware of what I just hinted at—that I know who she is—and that she's gonna make a run for it.

CHAPTER TWO

– TAITE –

He works cases for the government. Criminals. Bikers. Dangerous. Holy shit. The way his eyes went to my wound with a knowing look. The urge to flee hits me hard, yet if I do...there's nowhere else for me to go. He might not know which cabin I own, but then again, he might because he works for the government.

My fingers curl into tight fists and instant pain flares through my forearm as a reminder of the many wounds that were inflicted. Some healed but the one on my forearm is deep and clearly, I couldn't get all the dirt out and it got infected.

Why does this man know so much? It feels as if he can see right through me and pick the shit I went through from my brain. I want to run out the door, knowing very well it's a bad decision. It's dangerous to flee, but it's riskier to stay. And how the hell does this man remain cool and relaxed, leaning against the kitchen counter?

My heart is slamming against my rib cage and I decide to throw up a ball and see how it bounces before I decide to run or stay. "Do you know who I am?"

There's a slight inclination of his head. "Taite Kenzie. You've been missing for a little over four weeks. Your case was handed to Broken Deeds MC and I've been put on the case. Your father is very worried about you."

"Fuck," I mutter and add a little louder, "I have to go."

Dion pushes off the counter. “No, you don’t. I’m undercover and no one except for my president knows I’m here.”

I frown. “Undercover?”

“Undercover,” Dion echoes and stalks closer. “Let’s just say your father’s MC isn’t like Broken Deeds MC, but then again I don’t have to tell you since you warned your father about that fucked-up gang.”

His hand reaches for a necklace he’s wearing and he pulls it over his shirt. My heart skips a beat when I recognize my father’s dog tags. The ones he gave me years ago and never took off, but they were gone the night I was taken. How...why does he have them? My mind is blown and my jaw practically hits the floor along with it.

Dion gently wraps his fingers around my wrist. “Come. Sit. I’m gonna give you some pain meds and antibiotics before I clean the wound. We can chat some more in the meantime.”

My ass hits the couch as he stalks back into the kitchen to grab a bottle of water from the refrigerator. He then roams around in the medical bag he places on the table next to us and hands me a few pills along with the uncapped bottle of water.

I swallow the pills and place the bottle on the table. At this point there’s nothing else to do except for letting this man help me. For now, at least. The wound on my forearm is throbbing and like Dion said, I haven’t been feeling well these past few days.

Hell, the past four weeks have been hell, but I really thought I was doing better the last week. It’s why I took the

first step in taking revenge. My eyes widen when I watch Dion's gloved hands take a pair of scissors and before I can blink he's cutting off my shirt.

"What the hell?" I squeak. "I could have taken it off. You didn't have to ruin it. Fuck. I don't have many clothes, asshole."

"I'll buy you some new ones," he murmurs and winces as he takes in the cuts on my forearm.

"As a doctor, you should really work on your facial expressions. Wincing doesn't give me much assurance...either for you to do your freaking job or a heads up that it's gonna get really bad...especially in the 'here comes the pain' department," I grumble.

He doesn't take his eyes off my forearm and grunts, "The patients I deal with nowadays don't require polite etiquette."

Dion takes a tiny bottle from his bag and a syringe. "I'm going to numb the area."

I stay quiet until he cuts away more fabric.

"Stop." I grab his wrist and keep him in place.

"Not happening, T." He places the syringe down and instead of taking action he retreats by sitting on the table next to his medical stuff and pins me with his gaze as he softly asks, "Can you please show me the parts of your body you were hurt?"

I tear my eyes from his. "Not all, but some."

“Fair enough.” He taps my knee. “Sorry, love...I gotta ask—”

Knowing what’s coming I cut him off. “Yes, they raped me.”

“They,” he echoes through gritted teeth. “I assume that’s the part you don’t want me to check?”

“You assumed right. Besides, it’s already been a few weeks, so it’s useless.” Hoping to shift the conversation, I grab the hem of my shredded shirt and stand to strip off my clothes until I’m standing before Dion in my panties and bra.

Anger overtakes his face as he takes in the scars littering my skin. “When I’ve taken care of you, I’m going to give you a piece of paper and a pen. You’re going to write every single detail you remember about the fuckers who did this. Then I’m going to call in a favor and have a brother stand guard to watch over you so you can catch some sleep.”

I frown and wonder out loud, “What are you going to do if you’re asking one of your brothers to stand guard?”

He gives me a feral grin. “Kill them all.”

My eyes are about to pop. Did he really say that? Out loud? For a heartbeat or two, I truly believe him. But then reality sets in.

“Yeah, right.” I snort.

He points at the couch. “Sit that pretty ass down, T. I’m going to numb the area of your forearm and then I’m going to check out every damn injury you sustained before I’ll treat that infected wound.”

“No one calls me T,” I mutter, more to myself than to him as I glance at the syringe. “I’m not looking forward to you poking me with that needle.”

The corner of his mouth twitches. “You can handle a little poking, especially when I’m the one doing it.”

I narrow my eyes. “Great, sexual innuendos. Very professional coming from a doctor. No wonder you joined an MC to become a biker doc. Did it slip your mind I just mentioned being raped?”

He gently takes my wrist and keeps eye contact when he states, “You’re no shrinking violet. The impression you give me is one where you’d rather have me acting normal instead of beating around the bush.”

“I hate people who beat around the bush,” I mindlessly reply as he starts to poke my forearm with the syringe.

“Agreed. Besides, a bush needs to be nicely trimmed or do you wax yours?”

It takes a few seconds for my mind to process his words. “Dude. How does one obtain a medical license when your head is always in the gutter?”

“High IQ,” he fires back as he tugs my arm to make me turn and show him my back. “How did you take care of these?”

“I put a plastic bag over the bath brush and put the antiseptic cream on there so I could rub it in.” It’s a good thing I’m staring at the wall and can force myself to stick with the aftercare instead of being reminded of how it happened.

“Fuck, woman,” he growls. “That must have hurt.”

“Everything hurt for weeks.” I shrug. “It’s a reminder of survival. I used it to give me focus and determination.”

“Revenge.” His fingertips slide over the bumps and uneven skin of my back where Rodrigo used his knife on me.

“I have the same marks on my breasts and inner thighs,” I tell him. “Those I could see and took care of them. The only one causing issues is the one on my forearm. I’m lucky I had superglue in my purse and the fact that they tossed my shit along with my body in the shallow grave they left me to die in.”

Dion abruptly stands and stalks toward a tiny desk in the corner. He pulls a notepad and a pen from a drawer and stalks back to me.

Holding them out he orders, “Give me the names of every fucker who was involved and add exactly who did what to those names.”

Instead of taking the items I simply glare at the overbearing man and say, “I don’t want them in prison. If I did, I would have gone to the cops when I managed to crawl out of—”

“The shallow grave those fuckers put you in,” he finishes for me. “Yeah, I get that. What I also know is the fact that the fuckers who did this are members of your father’s MC. But for fuck’s sake...why not go to your father and have these fuckers dealt with?”

Anger overtakes my big mouth. “Because he would die. My father would fucking flip and probably manage to kill one or two before the others kill him. Those who hurt me are

just a handful, but they have many who agree with them and want the deal that cartel offered them. Why the fuck do you think they raped me a week before I was kidnapped, huh? They wanted what you just mentioned...for me to run to daddy so he could go on a suicide mission and they could easily take over. I knew, *knew* what Dad would do, so I kept quiet about what happened to me when I drove back from a shopping trip. When my father asked about the bruises, I told him I fell down the basement stairs, which happen to be a death trap and an easy explanation. Luckily, he bought it. I gave him a warning how a few members were trying to turn the club against one another. I thought my actions to keep quiet showed them they couldn't break my father. I was careful not to be alone again, but I also didn't recognize the guy who raped me the first time. I underestimated them...it won't happen again."

"Shit happened to you twice?" Dion bellows in utter fury and leans in so our noses are almost touching. "You bet your sweet ass it won't happen again. Not. Fucking. Ever. I'm not letting you out of my sight until I've killed every single one of them."

"You can keep saying that, but it won't make it any more believable. I don't know you, and I trust you as much as I can throw you. Which isn't very far 'cause you're a huge and heavy dude."

His head tips back and he barks out a laugh. For a heartbeat or two I'm absolutely captivated by his rugged handsomeness and how easy the man switches from fierce to open and kind. It would be easy to lower my walls and let him

in, except...the last time I gave a person the benefit of the doubt I almost lost my life.

I don't have it in me to make the same mistake. The only one I can trust and count on is myself. This man talks smooth, seems kind, honest, and trustworthy. Right now? I'm going to take him up on what he offered and what the older woman at the shop vouched he could do; give me the meds and medical care I need to regain my full strength.

I'm going to need it to succeed in the plan I made to take them all down and hopefully save my father. Even if deep down I know it's a lost cause because he's in too deep with those members and won't go down without a fight.

"I have to clean your wound now that the numbing has taken effect," Dion says and sits down on the table to be near his medical supplies.

I hold out my arm and he gets to work. At least the discussion died down, preventing me from getting angry at him and running off if he kept pushing about the names. Vengeance isn't his, it's mine.

He's a complete stranger and doesn't know the depths of my father's MC. Dion might be a VP of one, but by the way he described his, both clubs are very different. I frown and suddenly realize how much he shared with me.

The question falls over my lips without thinking. "Are you allowed to give me so many details about your club?"

Dion doesn't glance away from his fingers working on my wound. "You're a biker princess, you damn well know the answer to that question."

“Maybe I’m questioning your sanity,” I fire back.

The annoying man snorts.

A few minutes pass and he’s making preparations to give me stitches when he says, “The only one I’d give these kinds of details to would be my old lady. I wasn’t planning on telling you shit. Hell, I did come up here to see if you were hiding out in the cabin you own, but I sure as shit didn’t expect to run into you the way I did. The way this case was going I either thought you were eating worms or enjoying life with the fishes. Missing for weeks never entails good shit.”

“It didn’t entail good shit,” I state, hoping we don’t go down the same road again.

“Well, there’s your answer.” He adds a few more stitches while I process his words.

My spine stiffens a bit. “So, you’re telling me it was a pity share?”

The man has such a sexy chuckle. One would think getting raped multiple times by different men would be an overkill for my libido. Yet, his teasing appearance and vibe is gentle, comforting, warm, honest, and somehow soothing something deep inside me. It’s as if my gut tells me he’s safe, knowing he wouldn’t act on any of it unless I make the first move.

Dion places the instruments he used on the table and rips the gloves from his hands. “Definitely not a pity share, T. Seeing you, your wounds, the way you hold yourself and the details I’ve read and heard about you? All of it led me to a

decision. One where I followed my gut and decided you were trustworthy.”

Trustworthy. Not a weakness or a bargaining chip. I have no clue what to say to that, so I keep quiet. Dion gets to his feet and takes the trash from the table and strolls toward the kitchen.

When he comes back, he tells me, “There’s not much I can do about the other injuries you sustained. The scar tissue—”

“I don’t care what my body looks like,” I snap, cutting off his ramblings.

I need a reminder of what’s carved into my skin by those assholes as much as knowing I have a rotting tooth in my mouth; definitely something I can do without.

“I meant medical wise,” he growls and narrows his eyes. “You’re fucking gorgeous. Anyone who can’t handle a strong woman and allows a few scars to shrink his cock is fucked in the head and unworthy of you in every damn way.”

I blink a few times at his weird rambling and then an unexpected giggle flows from me. I’m suddenly hit by a wave of laughter and I’m bending over while tears fall from my eyes. There’s no logic to my reaction. Maybe it’s the whole situation I’ve been in and on top of it all this man crosses my path to add his slice of weirdness.

Weeks of trauma, being alone and in a world of pain, crawling out of the darkness to do things I never thought myself capable of—add whatever this might be with the man before me—and all I can do is welcome the laughter flowing from me. It’s a release. Blow off steam. Flipping the switch to

let all negative emotions and overwhelming darkness flow out of me by laughing my ass off.

Dion suddenly snatches my wrist. “Don’t lean on your forearm.”

My laughter is cut off and I quickly tug my arm free to wipe my cheeks and get to my feet.

“Thanks.” I turn to look him in the eye. “I appreciate everything you did.” Pointing at the door I state the obvious. “I’d better go.”

“No,” he rumbles and is standing in front of me before I can so much as blink.

“No?” I snap. “No as in you’re going to keep me against my will? Kidnap me like those—”

“Do not fucking put me in the same box as those dead men walking,” he growls in utter fury.

Dead men walking? I frown and murmur, “Dead men?”

He points at two bags sitting against the wall. “I’m not going to kidnap you or keep you with me against your will. You and I are going to work together.”

“Work together?” Shit. Why do I keep repeating his words?

“I told you I was on your case, and with the gang involved, a dead body connected between them, I’m going to keep you safe while we bring them all to justice.”

Fuck. Good intentions are a pain in the ass. Especially when the first man who showed me kindness in the darkest

period of my life is about to screw everything up. Why? Because the whole 'bring them all to justice' also means me behind bars.

"We can't," I grit.

He grabs my father's dog tags that are still around his neck.

"We can, and we will," he says with determination. "I gave your father a promise and I'm keeping it no matter what."

He's such a stark contrast with the bikers of my father's club. Dion is muscled, handsome, kind, skilled, but most of all? The look in his eyes radiates invincibility. As if the man's head is filled with solutions to whatever problems he might run into. Completely insane.

The ones who raped and kidnapped me don't have that look. They have glazed over eyes due to the coke they snort and any hint of invincibility they have is for themselves when they feel high enough to do stupid shit. Money, more drugs, a warm hole to shove their cocks in. No sense of value, respect, loyalty...nothing means shit except for the things they want and need to sustain their petty lifestyle.

I still wonder when the turning point was when the club started slipping down that road. My father sure didn't allow it and none of the older generation wanted anything to do with drugs, a cartel, and other obvious illegal shit. Not that everything my father has done in the past has been legal. I know the club owns a whorehouse and sells pussy for money. Dealing in women, though? Hell, the fuck, no.

A gasp rips from me when I realize Dion is standing nose-to-nose with me. I must have drifted off inside my head when he moved this freaking close.

“We will work together,” he repeats.

Gritting my teeth, I snarl, “We. Won’t.”

A slow grin slides across his face. “Scared?”

Is he insane?

“Fear is a word that triggers survival.” I jab a finger against his muscled chest. “You have no clue what I went through.”

He leans in closer and whispers, “I threw out that word in question, but I wasn’t hinting at being scared about those fuckers who hurt you.”

Goose bumps spread over my skin the way his hot breath caresses my ear.

It switches to chills when he states the cold hard truth. “I asked because I know you killed a man and made it seem like the cartel did it.”

The air is stolen from my lungs. I feel as if I can’t breathe. Crawling out of the shallow grave they left me to die in was only possible because I found the strength in my bones to swear vengeance.

With this man working for the government, knowing what he just mentioned? All is lost. I’m lost. My knees slightly buckle and I feel myself falling into the darkness of the nightmares that haunt me. I can’t pass out. I have to keep

focus. Why doesn't he stop staring at me? My body locks down and there's no damn way to escape this man.

CHAPTER THREE

– DION –

Her whole body is frozen to the spot. I had a hunch and took a risk by saying those words to her. The way she went rigid just now is a telltale sign of admittance. I pull back to stare into her wide eyes, filled with shock.

I want to reach out and touch her so damn bad. I have no damn clue why she brings out these protective instincts inside me. I want nothing more than to pull her into my arms, flush against my body, and tell her no one will ever harm her again.

It's something I can't do. This isn't about me; she's what matters. And the fucking fact that I can't control the future. Fuck. Besides all of this? I have no damn clue how she'll react to affection or male closeness.

They fucking raped her, carved into her skin, held her against her will...that damn shallow grave she keeps mentioning. My mind can easily fill in the damn blanks from all the twisted shit I've seen, read, learned, and heard about in the fucked-up cases that I've come across while working for the government. Those scars littering her body are an indication of what's probably reflected inside her head.

The verity of Taite standing before me shows how damn strong she is. If I want to move forward in any way—either with this case or have a shot at having this woman to cherish in a bed with me—I have to proceed with caution.

“Smart,” I compliment in all sincerity as I stare into her blue-green eyes. “Taking one of those fuckers out who hurt you while shoving the blame on the cartel to cause waves between both parties. It’s like throwing acid on the deal those fuckers want to force upon the MC.”

Taite swallows hard, throat bobbing and it causes an image to slide into my brain. One where she has my cock sliding deep into her mouth as she tries to take all of me. The tip hitting the back of her throat, swallowing...fuck. I need to focus instead of being a horny teenager. With the trauma she went through, she definitely doesn’t need me lusting over her.

“Are you going to arrest me? Put me in jail?” Her voice is small and I hate hearing the defeat that’s also written on her face.

I release a deep sigh in an effort to calm myself down. “What part about you and I working together don’t you understand?”

“Work together,” she echoes. “As in I give you a list of names and you throw them in jail and me along with it?”

Fucking hell, stubborn woman. She reminds me of Spence’s mother. I stomp toward my bags and take a file from it, the one with all the details of the dead body.

I hold it out for her to take. “This is all the information they have on the dead body. Read it through. You did your job well and no one suspects you nor did they find any DNA or fingerprints. I knew in my gut you did it because I connected the fucking dots a moment ago when I confronted you.”

“What if one of your brothers also connects the dots? What then?” she questions as her eyes eat up the details of the pages in front of her.

There’s only one solution that will wipe her slate clean. “Then I’ll claim you as mine. As a Broken Deeds MC old lady, you will gain full immunity.”

Her hands curl into fists. “That makes even less sense. Why would you claim me as your old lady? Me.”

“Let me cut you off right there,” I snap. “Before you call yourself broken or something along those lines. The festering wound you have on your arm shows me exactly how tough you are. I’ll be blunt to make you fully understand that there won’t be any surprises. I would like to bury my cock deep inside your pussy. Your mouth or ass too for that matter. Definitely not something a woman who has been raped wants to hear. But, on the other hand, these facts tell you I desire your body along with that smart brain of yours.” I point at my hard cock. “I’m also not whipping it out of my pants and know how to get myself off to give you the time you need to heal mentally and physically. I’m a patient man and know a good thing when I see it. You, Taite, are a damn fine woman, no matter what you endured. Hell, maybe because of it ’cause it made you even stronger, resilient.”

She keeps those pretty blue-green eyes locked on me. The muscle in her jaw jumps as she clearly takes in the shit I just told her.

“I don’t trust anyone. Why the hell should I so much as give a single thought about what you’re offering or saying for that matter?” she huffs.

Trust is a funny thing and a very fucking thin, untouchable layer we need between us for this to work. Not only to close this fucked-up case, but also to help the woman in front of me.

It's why I try to offer a solution. "Would it help if I called my prez and asked him to confirm what happens if you become my old lady?"

She shrugs as if she doesn't care. I take my phone in hand and call Spence.

I put it on speaker and he instantly picks up and starts to ramble, "Perfect timing, VP. Listen, can you tie my mother to a chair and keep her locked up somewhere if I bring her to you? You can give her a feeding tube through the nose so you can duct tape her mouth shut."

Taite's eyes go wide and I'm about to rip my prez a new asshole, but he keeps rambling, "I swear my old lady and I are ready to pull out our hair. She...and I kid you not...gave our unborn kid a tiny leather cut that states 'Grandma's Fucking Property.' How the fuck does that even work? I told her the kid is mine, and my woman's. Hell, the head isn't even rimming my old lady's pussy and my ma already has a cut waiting for the kid with a damn swear word stitched on it." A deep sigh rips from him. "I swear the woman never turned in the title of president's old lady. Not to mention, it's my chapter, far away from the one my brother took over from my father. Then there's the chapter they founded in Ryckerdan where they fucking live. That's three chapters. Three. And she still thinks she's the damn boss of all of them."

The corner of my mouth twitches and I keep my gaze connected with Taite when I tell my prez, “That will never change, Prez. Besides, if we tie her to a chair you damn well know she’ll find a way out of it and have both our balls shoved through a feeding tube.”

“Yeah,” Spence sighs in defeat. “It was worth a shot, though.”

“Your parents will leave on Monday, asshole. Suck it up and be glad they’re still here to drive you nuts.”

Spence chuckles. “I bet my ma would still be able to drive me nuts from the grave. Wouldn’t have it any other way, though. Okay, enough with the sappy shit, especially since you’re not here to have my back...why did you call, eh?”

“Need you to confirm something for me,” I tell him. “If, hypothetically speaking of course.”

“Great, I’m not sure I’m liking the sound of this. Maybe I should put my ma on the phone instead of me,” Spence grumbles.

Ignoring the fucker, I ask, “What happens when a woman has done some legally bad shit, but I’d claim her on the spot.”

“Said woman would be one lucky old lady ’cause she’d gain a clean slate if she gets the patch inked on her skin the same time as her old man,” Spence states. “But, VP? Your neck would be on the line. So, the woman in question must be worth sticking it out for, yeah?”

Taite’s eyes are wide with understanding, and I have no issues telling my prez, “She is. Now, go entertain your

parents.”

I disconnect and hold up my phone. “Sorry. Lynn, his mother, is—” I shrug ’cause I have no fucking clue how to describe her.

“A tough and unique woman?” she offers.

Bobbing my head, I add a few keywords. “Honorable, fierce, foulmouthed, strong, twisted, crazy, inventive, kick-ass...all of the above and more. Sometimes I think Lynn isn’t human. Seriously, she’s one woman you don’t want to mess with, and definitely want to have on your side if all hell breaks loose.”

“Yet you and her son speak as if she needs to be—”

“Nah,” I quip and shoot her a grin. “That woman invented the hate-love relationship. Even with her old man. Hell, Deeds was intrigued when he called to talk to her brother. First time they came in contact with one another and from what I heard she hung up on him. Deeds managed to get her cell number and they texted back and forth until they met face-to-face. Unplanned, I might add, and no one knew about their heated, head-to-head, interaction. Zack, Lynn’s brother used to be the president of Areion Fury MC. Deeds was the president of Broken Deeds MC. I don’t have to explain how well Zack took the news about Deeds claiming her, right?”

Taite winces and then chuckles. She’s a woman born and raised in an MC herself and knows not to fuck with another MC.

I feel the need to share a bit more history. “Deeds claimed her in the hospital, after Lynn was attacked by a

criminal they were working on taking down. Lynn's attack was a warning for them to back down. Deeds kissed her on the street and they saw it and assumed she was his, which she wasn't...only because she fought him tooth and nail." I grin at the reminder of hearing it for the first time. "Their story is one that's shared on multiple occasions and well-known by most members of Broken Deeds MC of any chapter. Deeds and Lynn are fire. A team, an example for each and everyone. Those two have solved so many cases together and have created a legacy to be fucking proud of. They have four kids, two sons, two daughters. Their sons, Spence and Archer, each run their own chapter. Esmee, the oldest daughter, also works in law enforcement. Linnette, the youngest daughter, used to work with Spence's chapter. She's happily married and the queen of Ryckerdan. Her husband was a prince when she was put on the undercover job to screen him to see if he was fit to be king one day." I lean in to fake-whisper, "Mafia bloodline and all."

"Wow," Taite muses and glances down as if she's processing everything.

I throw my thumb over my shoulder. "You can take a nap if you like. Bedroom is through that door, bathroom as well. I'm gonna clean this shit up and make some food. You hungry?"

"I could eat, and help fix dinner," she offers and takes a step toward the bedroom. "I'm gonna freshen up first if that's okay."

Her words soothe the tightness in my chest. Thank fuck she's not bouncing on the balls of her feet to hightail out

of here anymore. For now, I'm not going to push to get the names of the ones who hurt her. Trust is what needs to build between us, once that's set, I'm going to damn well get the names and make sure they can never lay a hand on her ever again.

"Take your time, I got this," I rumble and she bobs her head.

Taite disappears into the bedroom and I take my time to tuck my medical bag away, making sure to leave a bottle of antibiotics for her. When I step into the kitchen it's to pull all the ingredients I need to make chili mac and cheese.

It takes me about half an hour to make. I'm filling a bowl when Taite steps back into the room. There's an imprint of the sheets on her cheek and she's rubbing her eyes. She looks like she could have used more than the thirty-minute powernap she took.

Jerking my head in the direction of the bedroom I tell her, "You should get some more sleep."

She winces and mutters, "Can't."

Fuck. I'm an idiot.

"Nightmares?" I guess.

She gives a slight inclination with her head and steals the bowl from my hand.

"Spoon?" she questions.

I point at the drawer and she takes one out and stalks to the couch. I fix myself a bowl and grab a spoon before taking a seat next to her.

Keeping my eyes on the food I tell her, “I’d like for you to give me one name.” I scoop a spoonful of chili mac into my mouth and slowly chew. “Think it over which name of all those fuckers who hurt you you’re going to give me because we are going to take him on together.” I enjoy another bite of food. “Then I’m going to torture some answers out of the fucker and see exactly whatever shit, and how deep, they’re in with the cartel.”

From the corner of my eye I can see her staring at me with a spoonful of food hovering in front of her mouth.

I turn to face her. “I’m gonna let you inside the room when I get answers, but I don’t want you near the fucker when I take him down.”

She places her untouched bowl on the table in front of her. “You’re telling me that if I give you a name. One name. One asshole who was part of the group that hurt me. You’re going to just take my word for it and grab a member of my father’s MC to torture him and see what he says?”

I point at her food. “Eat. And yes, that’s exactly what I’m saying, and what I’m going to do. Those wounds you have on your forearm are defensive wounds. The rest littering your body? The ones on your fucking back? Not something you can inflict on yourself, sweets. Your father reaching out, you being alive but steering clear of the club, warning your father before you went missing? All of it makes alarm bells go off inside my head, that’s an inside job. You can protect your father and the club so far, but eventually it will kill you. Besides, I’ve also gathered some information about the cartel I want to verify. We can go through it together.”

“Okay,” she murmurs and reaches out to grab her bowl.

I wait for her to shovel a spoonful into her mouth and tell her, “Good, huh?”

Taite bobs her head and greedily takes another bite.

“Working together will be just as good,” I promise her.

She rolls her eyes and for the first time today I have a good feeling about the two of us. It might be a small interaction, but I have a feeling she’s opening up to the idea of us. Working together that is, or at least knowing she isn’t alone in this shit.

We finish the meal in silence. Taite leans back and pats her tummy. I get to my feet and reach for her bowl as well as mine. Stalking to the kitchen, I wash and rinse both spoons and bowls and dry them off before putting everything back.

Taite turns her head when I wander back to the couch. “Can I glance through the information you have?”

I grab the stack of documents along with my iPad and laptop.

Taking a seat next to her I ask, “Do you prefer digital or paper?”

“I always read ebooks on my phone. So, I guess I’ll go with digital.” She gives me a soft smile.

Tiny piece by tiny piece she’s opening up. It’s not as crazy as it seems, knowing she’s been alone for weeks on end. Hurt, traumatized, the shit she went through, survived, and dealt with it on her own. All to protect her father, his club, the very members who fucking hurt her.

Anger flares hot but I manage to tone it down; not letting it out in the open for Taite to see. I hand her the iPad after I've pulled up the photographs and scans of the details I've gathered about the cartel, the link with the club, and her missing person's report.

I don't expect her to talk and it's why surprise hits me when she says, "I want to give you one name, but I'm struggling which one I should pick."

Her eyes stay on the screen and I feel the need to ask, "Why are you struggling to give me one while you have a few to choose from?"

I probably didn't even want to know the exact number of men who hurt her. Who shoved their cocks, knives, and fuck knows what inside her body against her will and hurt her in a load of different ways as well. I need to know, though. Each and every single one will be ripped to shreds for what they did. Preferably by my hand.

Her head turns and her plump lips purse. "I want to give you a name to see what happens. What you'll do. Only, there's one name...one I can't...who—" A breath of frustration flows out in a tiny growl. "Rodrigo—"

"The VP's son," I grunt, cutting her off because I now know the reason for her struggle. "You want to be the one who handles him. I get it. He's the VP's kid and from what I've seen the fucker always has two members around him."

It's as if she's tasting lemon, that's how her lips curl in disgust and her eyes flare with fury. "He's the one who likes knife play and is acting as if he's earned to walk in my father's footsteps. We grew up together and he has always had a big

mouth about turning me into his old lady. He considered me his because he's the VP's son. With my father only having a daughter—”

“Bullshit,” I snarl. “Titles are earned and not by one member deciding who belongs where and what their fucking position will be.”

I grab my phone and decide to jump right on this. My anger is practically making my whole body shake and I need a release. Which means I'm going to take Rodrigo and beat him to a pulp. My thumb hits Spence's number and I hit speaker when it takes a moment for the man to pick up. Although, I instantly know it's not my prez who's answering his phone.

“Dion, just the man I need. Can you come to the clubhouse and hide a body for me? 'Cause I love my son and all, but if he doesn't let me talk to my grandchild, I'm gonna pet his skull with the hammer I have in my purse.”

A sigh rips from me and I mutter to myself, “Why can't those fuckers answer the phone like normal people?”

Taite softly chuckles. “You can definitely tell they're family.”

The corner of my mouth twitches and I give her a small nod. “Lynn. Do they let you on a plane with a hammer in your purse?”

I hear the smile in Spence's mother's voice when she says, “It's a private jet, you know I only fly like the queen my daughter is.”

“Yeah, you sure do.” I clear my throat and switch topics when I say, “I actually called because I need to hide a

body. Not your son's, though.”

“Oh thank fuck. I was getting bored with driving Spence nuts. His expression was priceless when he saw the little gag I had made special. A leather cut with—”

“I heard.” I chuckle. “He wasn't amused.”

“You should have seen his face when I shoved my face near Penny's belly to sing the fuck song I made up,” she proudly states.

Taite and I both laugh, but it's cut short when Lynn asks, “Who's the girl, VP? Are you holding out on me? You're not one to fuck stray pussy and I know you're in your hiding place...oh. You found the girl, didn't you? Taite Kenzie, is that you, chickie?”

CHAPTER FOUR

– TAITE –

I can't help but think how differently Broken Deeds MC works. Exceptionally. The woman on the phone being a huge example. She seems to know everything and besides from being a female, she's the president's mother who doesn't even live in or near the compound, from what I've heard. Yet, she knows a lot, if not all the details of what's going on.

And I'm not even touching the law enforcement part of this club. Like I said, exceptionally different than any motorcycle club. Then there's the part where both son and mother have answered the phone without so much as saying hello and instantly rant about hiding bodies, strangely both in an affectionate way while creepy as hell.

"Yes, I'm Taite," I confirm. With everything going on I decide to jump this crazy train and add, "Dion offered to help me get those who kidnapped and—" I grit my teeth, hating the reminder and voicing it out loud. "Raped me."

Saying what they did to me, even if it's only a word without explanation of the extent of the trauma, along with the knife carving, humiliation, defiling...everything...I'm still reminded of it all by saying that fucking word. All while I'm the victim, it's shame that fills me in a wave of cold chills.

Dion reaches out and covers my knee with his large hand. A gentle squeeze allows warmth to seep into my skin. His eyes hold firm on mine. There's not a hint of pity in his gaze that makes me feel like damaged goods.

There's a moment of silence and then Lynn's voice comes out in a snap. "VP, tell me what you need and we'll get shit ready. And Taite?"

"Yes?" I question.

"I assume you want in on this? Being a daughter of a president, talking firm and sane, you're ready to see this through? And by this, I mean you and I will be in a room with those fucks to give them a little payback."

My lips part in surprise. Okay, I expected they were going to give me some form of help, but letting me—

"Lynn," Dion rumbles, cutting through my thoughts. "I'm the one who will be dealing with them."

Lynn snorts. "You can help, but if the girl wants—"

"I want," I quickly quip, shooting Dion a grin as the man shakes his head.

"We'll talk about it once we have them in the interrogation room," Dion orders. "Tell Spence I'm on my way to the clubhouse. I want Taite to stay there while I pick up Rodrigo. I'm gonna need Roux, Grayer, and Hawks to come with me."

"You got it," Lynn states and breaks the connection.

I jump to my feet. "Do we need to pack a bag? I can rush over to my cabin and grab a change of clothes."

Dion shoves his phone into his pocket. "No. I have shit in my room at the clubhouse, but I hope to return here if it doesn't get too late. Otherwise, I'm sure you can borrow some

clothes from my prez's old lady...if you don't want to wear one of my shirts in case we do crash in my room."

My heart jumps at the thought of wearing one of his shirts and sleeping in his bed. Before we ate, I went into his bedroom here and sat on his bed after I went to the bathroom to freshen up. I literally thought I'd sit on the mattress for a minute or two to get my bearings before I returned to the room with Dion.

He's such a massive, overwhelming presence. Not in a bad way, more in the lines of fierce protector. I needed a minute, but then his scent surrounded me and when I curled into the pillow and took a deep breath I started to drift off.

For the first time in weeks, I felt safe enough to close my eyes instead of crashing due to the lack of sleep. Sadly, it didn't last long. It never does due to the nightmares. This is why I bob my head in agreement.

Fifteen minutes later we're on the road. I have no clue where their clubhouse is, and I guess it doesn't matter. My arms are wrapped tight around Dion. The details I read in the files he showed me, my father's statement, Dion's personal notes and thoughts...all of it lifts a few bricks off the walls I've built to protect myself.

I wasn't kidding when I told Dion I didn't trust anyone. My father I knew I could, but there's a huge risk for the both of us if I did go home. I mean, I returned home the first time I was raped and kept my mouth shut. Then they took me again and this time they clearly wanted me dead.

I can only assume they wanted my father distracted and ruined so he would step down or they could take over. There

have been many scenarios going through my head. All I've had these past few weeks was time to think while my body healed.

Clearly, I needed some help with the large wound festering on my forearm. The antibiotics Dion gave me are in my pocket. He made sure I had them on me and reminded me when to take the next pill. This man is not only helping me heal my body, but my mind along with it by taking care of the revenge I'm dead set on having.

I didn't want to give up Rodrigo's name. I wanted to keep it to myself, take my time to get him alone. Then, when I finally had him locked up, I would spend days torturing him the way he hurt me. Only where they left me for dead, I would make sure he's not breathing. Each and every one of them.

My plan is completely shifted due to the man in front of me. Dion holds his hand out over his shoulder to gallantly help me off his bike. Gallantly. Not how I would describe a biker. Hell, my own father might be affectionate toward his own daughter, but even he wouldn't hold out his hand to help me off his bike.

My father raised me the way some raised a boy. Meaning I went to fight training instead of ballet. I never wore fancy clothes or makeup for that matter. Maybe it was because my mother wasn't in the picture, and he was left to raise me on his own. I didn't care about any of it; I had a happy childhood and love my father.

I also don't blame him for what happened to me; what the members of his MC did to me. Though, I won't be returning to that clubhouse. Not out of shame, but out of hate

for those very members. I once felt safe. I was wrong. Safe is another four-letter word, like rape and fear. They hold no meaning unless you can tie emotions, memories, and trauma to them.

I slide my palm over Dion's and he gives me an encouraging squeeze. He must think the storm of emotions raging inside me is due to standing in front of an unknown clubhouse. All while it's the contradiction making me aware of how I feel safer with strangers than going to people I've known all my damn life.

"It'll be all right, T," Dion murmurs and places a large, warm hand on my lower back.

"That's the thing about being plunged into darkness." I give him a tiny smile as we stroll toward the clubhouse. "You notice even the tiniest ray of light."

He releases a string of curses and for a moment I think he misunderstood my words. I mean, I can hardly tell him he makes me feel safe, that I consider him my ray of light in the pitch dark I've been dwelling in for weeks. I gasp when he suddenly pulls me close and frames my face with his hands.

The fierce look he gives me along with the rough rumble of words shakes me to my very core when he says, "The prior shit you went through caged you in darkness, but the flames of your personality weren't dimmed by any of it. You raised hell, let the fucking heat of your inner fire create that fucking ray of light." He swallows and the fierceness is replaced by desire and admiration when he admits on a croak, "I see it, see you. Like a beacon. Strong, guiding, standing fucking tall in a sea of havoc."

I'm still caught in the said sea of havoc right now with the turmoil of feelings going through me. Wanting this man to touch me, not wanting to be touched, the fear of being touched, everything is starting to freak me out.

Dion suddenly turns me toward the clubhouse and tells me, "All in good time, T. I'm right here for whatever you need. We'll both still be there when the dust settles to see where the future will lead us."

We step inside and the warmth of the open space greets us along with a handful of faces. Both males and females. The few members sitting around are muscled and look rugged, but somehow different than the members of my father's MC. Maybe it's because in my mind those are tainted due to what some of them put me through. All the while Dion has only shown me kindness.

I'm still a bit hesitant and partly behind Dion when a woman claps her hands and loudly states, "You're fucking gorgeous with your curly hair. I like the reddish-brown color, it complements your blue-green eyes." She's standing closer and leans in a bit to murmur, "Those scars too, chickie."

The woman—I now recognize her voice—must be Lynn, turns to Dion and smacks his shoulder. "Don't look at me like I'm gonna poke her around, you know me better than that. Besides, I should be the one telling you to glue your cock around your balls 'cause the way you're all protective of this one is all telling. By the time the glue wears off, you'll both be in a better state of mind once we've handled her attackers. Oh. Forget glue, I'll give you a Prince Albert piercing."

Lynn turns to me again. “It’s a ring straight through the slit of his cock and it comes out through the soft part under the head. Or we could do the reverse—”

“Woman,” a man growls and grabs her arm to pull her back. “We talked about this years ago. You’re not taking anyone’s cock into your hands but mine. Do I need to redden your ass to remind you?”

A younger version of the man rubs a hand over his face as he grumbles, “Mom, Dad...killing me here.”

A soft chuckle flows through the air right before a woman appears next to him. Her long black hair cocoons her high cheekbones, pale skin, and whiskey-colored eyes.

Focusing on me she says, “You must be Taite.” Offering her hand she adds, “I’m Penelope, but everyone calls me Penny these days. I’ve heard some highlights about your case from my old man and from his mother. I’m glad you’re here.”

I step forward and take her hand. “Thanks,” I murmur.

Penny points at the man beside her wearing a leather cut with a president patch stitched to the chest. “This here is my old man, Spence. These are his parents, Deeds, and I know you’ve met Lynn over the phone.”

I don’t have time to so much as give her a nod when Spence says, “VP, I have Roux, Grayer, and Hawks waiting in church. Let’s talk shit through.”

Spence takes a step in the direction of what I assume is church when a throat is cleared. I have no clue who did it, but both Lynn and Penny are standing shoulder to shoulder with

their arms crossed against their chest glancing at Spence with one of their eyebrows raised as if they expect something from him.

He glares at both and releases a deep sigh. “I’m the president, but it feels like my balls are thrown into the fridge whenever you fucking visit.”

Lynn wrinkles her nose. “No one needs that visual in their head, Spence. Besides, you need your balls warm and functional to give me grandkids.”

His eyes are bulging as he points at Penny’s stomach. “We already have a bun in the oven, Ma. Her womb is pretty busy with the first one for at least another six months or so.”

“I know,” Lynn huffs. “But I’m just saying you should—”

“Fuck this shit,” Spence snaps. “Dion, take Taite into church before they come up with other fucked-up ideas.”

I’m wondering what crazy ideas and when I glance at Lynn, I notice she’s smirking while Penny grins as Dion guides me toward a room and away from the two old ladies.

“Taite can handle herself,” Dion states as Spence closes the door behind us. “She’s a princess, went through hell, and is still standing proud.”

“Yeah.” Spence chuckles. “Why do you think I asked for you to bring Taite into church, huh? I wasn’t referring to my mother putting ideas in her head, more like the bunch of them coming up with shit we’re supposed to be handling.” Spence shoots me a wink. “No offense, Taite. But your background and being wrapped in a case sounds familiar to

what happened when my parents met. Well, not exactly, but the havoc and shit.”

I nod, remembering what Dion mentioned.

“Have a seat.” Spence holds his hand out and I glance around the table where a few bikers are sitting.

Dion points at every single one and rattles, “The one sitting behind the laptop is Roux, Grayer is a tattoo artist, and Hawks works at the same shop, but he also pierces. All of them work cases even if we have other work to handle in between crime fighting.”

“Crime fighting,” I murmur, more to myself than to anyone in particular.

“You’re the one responsible for the dead MC member?” Spence bluntly asks as I take a seat, making my head jerk up as my body shifts.

My forearm hits the table by the uncoordinated move and I hiss due to the flare of pain hitting me unexpectedly.

“Oy, cut that shit out,” Dion snaps.

He takes my wrist to turn my forearm toward him to check the bandage he put on the wound.

Gently placing my hand on my thigh, he glares at Spence. “Why the hell lay it out like that?”

I bounce my gaze between them, nerves bouncing inside my body like a pinball machine. Dion knowing about it is one thing, the president of a motorcycle club who works for the government stating I’m a killer in the first sentence during a meeting is a completely different ballgame.

Spence shrugs. “You gave me an update before you came here. We all went over the details, my parents included. I figured she’d like to know we’re aware and consider it self-defense at this point.” His hard eyes land on mine. “That doesn’t give you the right to play vigilante, nor does it grant you to kill all of those fuckers who hurt you. Broken Deeds is going to take over.”

Anger surges through me along with gratitude. They believe me and rule my actions—based on the information they have, along with the version I told Dion—as self-defense. But his last line still pisses me off.

“I want to be included,” I grit through clenched teeth and try to make them understand. “Some might consider it vengeance, but I have to save my father from the bad seeds that have taken over the club. The only reason I haven’t reached out to him or returned to the clubhouse is that I have no clue if everyone is in on it or whom I should trust besides my father. If I told him everything, he would confront them and—”

Spence bobs his head and voices the rest of my sentence that was still inside my head. “They’d kill him on the spot if the majority is in the loop of things.”

“Yes.” I sigh in defeat.

Dion leans in and tells me—loud enough for everyone else to hear, “It’s why you’re sitting in church with us, T. You know damn well women don’t belong in here, but yet your ass is in a chair, sitting at our table.”

“But that’s where it ends,” Spence rumbles. “We can’t have civilians thrown into the mix, especially not victims.” His

eyes slide from Dion to me. “Sorry, Taite. We might have free range to do anything we want to close a case, but we still have contracts with the government and our actions are only justified when it entails a member, or an old lady, of Broken Deeds MC.”

“She’s my old lady,” Dion suddenly says.

“Fucking hell,” a man mutters from behind his laptop.

Spence shakes his head. “I’m not going to accept a temporary position within the club, VP. You can’t simply take her as yours and cut her loose when the case is closed.”

My heart is racing and I’m bouncing my gaze between the president and VP as they face off. Anger is written on both their faces and the room is dead quiet.

Dion whips his head toward me and practically growls, “Are you mine? Are you going to carry my ink? Give me and the club your loyalty? Long haul?”

I know what he’s saying. We’ve discussed it earlier when he said he could protect me; give me a clean slate if there were murder charges involved. Yet, his president said I was clear of those and now he’s giving me the chance to be a part of bringing down those who hurt me in order to get to my father; to take over his MC.

Revenge and justice only go so far. Becoming an old lady never crossed my mind. Mostly because I grew up with the members of my father’s MC and saw them more as family, driving the betrayal deeper with the shit that happened.

All while every encounter with these strangers has been honest and open, especially when it comes to Dion. Hell,

stepping inside this clubhouse and experiencing how two old ladies interact and their voices are heard and respected... especially when they stood up for me.

Dion knows what happened, how they carved away pieces of the woman I was; visibly due to the scars on my skin and mentally. He made it clear he didn't give a shit and still throws out a claim, leaving it to me to take him up on his offer.

He's right. From the darkness cloaked around me he still sees an inner ray of light in me, all while I'm warmed by the spotlight he's shining upon me. I might have started out as a case for him, but his focus has clearly shifted. He's pulling me into a spot where we're standing shoulder to shoulder, ready to face and clear up the shit in front of us.

"I accept Dion's claim," I voice with loud determination and give my old man a warm smile I feel deep inside my chest when I murmur just for him to hear, "I'm your old lady and in for the long haul."

Dion gently cups the side of my face and inches closer to brush his lips against my forehead.

"It's done," he rumbles. "Taite is my old lady. We'll get inked tonight."

Security, freedom, warmth, and hope flood my body. Strange how these kinds of things are simply put into words while it's those very words I've lost faith in these past few weeks. While now they are gaining new purpose, all due to the man beside me.

CHAPTER FIVE

– DION –

“Did he give you a timeframe?” Spence questions.

I keep staring out of the windshield. We’re sitting in an unmarked SUV, down the road from a bar where we’re waiting for Rodrigo to show up. A few minutes ago, I contacted Mercer, Taite’s father. It was a club decision to ask him if he could send Rodrigo somewhere so I can corner the fucker and ask him some questions.

Taite wants her father out of harm’s way, and preferably oblivious to what happened to her. We all know it won’t last; the truth has a way of bubbling to the surface no matter how hard you try to hide it.

Especially now that I’ve made this request. The man isn’t stupid. Mercer must know something is up in his MC. I mean, he’s the one who went to the police and filed a missing person’s report. All while his club is in illegal shit and bumping heads with a cartel who wants a deal.

“Mercer only said he’ll order Rodrigo to go right away,” I answer.

“He won’t come alone,” Taite says from the backseat.

Spence slightly turns to glance at her. “Who do you think he’ll bring?”

Her face contorts with anger and her lip curls right before she sneers, “Kalen, and I’m sure that new prospect, Brock, will tag along.”

“Are they on your list?” The question slips out due to her visual reaction.

The muscle in her jaw jumps, but her mouth stays shut. I’ll take that as a yes.

“Two bikes are coming down the road,” Roux’s voice fills the SUV.

He’s sitting in a car further up the road. Another brother is keeping an eye on the other corner and we have two brothers sitting in the bar and three behind the place in case they try to make a run for it.

I turn to face Taite. My old lady. Fuck. I know I gave her the option in case she needed the blanket to cover her ass, but I didn’t think it would come to that. Somehow it felt right to claim her in church for a whole stack of different reasons. She didn’t need me to clear her of the murder she committed.

Yet, I wanted to protect her. To pull her into my arms and make sure she felt my presence and know she’s not alone in this fucked-up world. She was born into the MC life, a different one, but she knows the basic shit and what loyalty entails. Fuck. It’s the very reason she’s in this mess and was hurt because of it, crawling out of a fucking shallow grave to still put her father, the president, first place before everything else.

“Let’s go,” my prez orders and gets out of the SUV.

“Your ass stays inside this vehicle,” I practically demand.

Her mouth turns into a straight line. I know she doesn’t like what I just asked her to do.

It's made extra clear when she mutters, "Only because I don't want to distract you."

"We just met and you already know me too well," I admit.

She holds my gaze and I wish we had more time, but that fucker is parking his bike and I have to intercept him.

Her attention is drawn to something over my shoulder and she leans forward as she whispers, "The two I mentioned are on my list. I think they roofied me or something during the days they had me because I don't remember everything clearly. Rodrigo and Brock never did, they made sure I knew what they did...when they started at least, but I also faded in and out of consciousness with them due to...everything."

Fury heats my veins at the reminder of what these fuckers did to her. The fact that they drugged her and due to this she doesn't remember it completely is fucked-up and yet...maybe it's good she doesn't remember it all. Fucked. Up. Shit.

"Dion now would be good," Spence rumbles from behind me.

I'm about to step away when Taite grabs my leather cut. "I'm not sure, but I think I heard Brock mention his father...I think Brock's father is the leader of the cartel."

Reaching out, I gently swipe my thumb over her bottom lip. The longing to kiss her arises. Not something we can sink into within this moment. Not due to the fact that we have those assholes to grab. Fuck, no. Taite needs time to

process what she went through, to actually put it behind her instead of running on the fumes of vengeance.

“Lock the doors,” I grunt and jog to catch up with Spence.

Rodrigo and Brock wander my way when they notice me and I jerk my chin up to give them a casual greeting. It’s better than using words because they might come out as a snarl.

“Take them out,” I whisper under my breath.

“10-4,” Hawks mutters in my earpiece and right away I hear both Rodrigo and Brock grunt as their knees buckle.

Their eyes widen in a whirl of panic. Their bodies collapse to the ground and I’m grinning when I step closer and squat down next to Rodrigo.

My voice carries a hint of satisfaction when I tell him, “Payback’s like a dry cunt getting fist-fucked without a drop of lube.”

Hawks chuckles. “Dude, that’s one hell of a visual you just painted. Sucks those fuckers didn’t hear ya, though.”

I glance up to see Hawks holding the new taser we’re testing for the government when he says to our prez, “I like this new toy. Smart to have a stun option with an added sedative to knock them out completely.

Tires screech and I glance in the direction it came from to see Roux jumping out of an SUV. He opens the door and I grab Rodrigo by his cut and drag the unconscious fucker in the direction of the vehicle.

Hawks is holding cuffs and is putting them on both Rodrigo and Brock to make sure both are restrained while we transport them to a warehouse we own, one that's specially designed for questioning assholes. They might be out cold now but the new toy we just used is still a trial version, so we have no clue how long they will stay unconscious.

Spence shuts the door and we both head for our own SUV with Taite in the backseat. We get in and glance at one another when Taite doesn't acknowledge us but keeps staring at the taillights as Roux speeds off.

"Everything okay?" I rumble.

She keeps staring into the darkness and mumbles, "You got him. He's never alone...you guys...it's...one zap and he's out cold. The both of them. I could never have done that by myself."

Spence starts the SUV. "Teamwork, Taite. As you could see, VP and I grabbed their attention while Hawks could zap them. Now, how about we head for the warehouse for some good ol' teamwork torture."

The fucker chuckles and it's infectious. Maybe it's a stress release for all of us to laugh as we hit the road, but it sure is a way to break the tension. Soon enough there's a comfortable silence as we follow Roux home.

Spence drives to the warehouse we use for questioning. It has several holding cells along with special rooms where we can torture answers out of suspects who need this special kind of treatment. We might work for the government, but we don't follow normal procedure or do anything by the book. Hell, you can say we write our own rules.

There are two trucks already parked in front of the warehouse once we arrive. Spence parks the SUV right next to Roux. Two of my brothers stroll out the door and help Roux unload Rodrigo and Brock. I place my hand on Taite's lower back and guide her into the warehouse.

“Separate those two fucks and tie them to a chair. I'm going to start with Brock,” Spence instructs and turns to face us. “Are you taking on Rodrigo?”

A throat is cleared and when our heads turn in that direction, I notice Lynn and Penny standing in front of one of the interrogation rooms. Lynn's arm disappears behind Penny and it's obvious she's giving her a tiny nudge when Penny takes an awkward step forward.

“Right.” Penny throws her shoulders back. “We read through the files you gave us and we—” She glances at Lynn who raises one of her well-groomed eyebrows. “I. I think it's best the old ladies handle Rodrigo's interrogation.” She bites her bottom lip and quickly rambles, “But Dion and you can watch through the window of course.”

The corner of Spence's mouth twitches and I frown at my prez, not knowing what the hell those two are doing here.

Spence shrugs and ignores me when he turns to Taite. “My old lady went through something traumatic herself before she met me. My mother helped her—” He throws a quick look over his shoulder at the two women. “My ma still steps up when needed. Point is, they offered their help and support and I heard their arguments. I've given them permission to get up to speed about this case.”

Lynn snorts and I can't help but chuckle, knowing she's throwing his words about having permission into the wind 'cause the woman simply always does what she deems best.

“Anyway, Dion will oversee the interrogation from outside of the room. He will hear and see what goes on inside. Those two old ladies will have your back, but I gather you'd like to take charge of the interrogation.”

Taite is staring at my prez with huge, round eyes and bobs her head.

“Good. Just one thing, though.” His voice is firm when he says, “Do not kill him. At least, not until I have a chance to make sure we have everything we need from this fucker.”

“Thank you.” Taite's voice is as unsure as the look in her eyes.

I fuckin hate the doubt flowing inside her head. It's definitely a trust issue and I can't really blame her due to the shit she went through.

“Don't thank me yet,” Spence grumbles. “You two are getting inked today.” His focus shifts to me. “She needs to be part of the club, especially after this shit.”

“I'll be inking her after we're done here,” Lynn quips and pushes past me. “Ready, babe? Let's poke this little piggy and see how out of tune we can make him squeal.”

Taite moves forward. I reach out to halt her movements by gently wrapping my fingers around her wrist.

Leaning in, I brush my lips against her temple and murmur, “I'll be right outside if you need me.”

Her breasts rise as she takes a deep breath. Taite completely takes me by surprise when she rises on her tiptoes and presses her mouth against mine. Her eyes are wide open. Fucking captivating how we pin one another in place.

I give her wrist a squeeze. As encouragement? Reassurance? A warning? What-the-fuck-ever. All I know is this first step she just made is something I'm taking as a victory. Meaning I'm not gonna stick to kissing her damn forehead or temple any longer.

With my thumb and forefinger I gently pinch her chin. Keeping my eyes on her I slide my tongue over the seam of her lips, coaxing her to open for me. My heart skips a beat when she invites me in to fucking taste her.

Her eyes fall shut and I close mine as I relish in the warmth of not only her mouth, but also the gift of trust she just handed me. The both of us—in the midst of what we're doing here in this warehouse, and what we're about to do—with people standing around us. Not one damn care in the world as she surrenders to our kiss.

I want nothing more than to deepen the kiss, ravish her mouth, grab her face with both hands to guide her head to possessively...no. I can't. It's not something she needs right now, or any time soon, for this reason I pull back and brush my lips once more against hers to let her know I can't get enough.

Placing my mouth next to her ear, I whisper, "You taste like mine already."

I step back and she pats my chest. Her cheeks are flushed as she stares at me for a breath or two before she turns

and heads for the room Rodrigo has been dragged inside of. Spence gives me a chin lift and both Lynn and Penny disappear into the room Taite just entered.

I flick the switch to activate the speaker mounted next to the window, this allows me to hear what's going on inside the room. The large window I'm standing in front of is a one-way mirror. Taite, Penny, Lynn, and Rodrigo won't be able to see me, but I sure as fuck could watch them.

Rodrigo's head is slumped forward. Body, arms, and legs tied to the chair he's sitting on. Lynn strolls toward a table where different items are spread out. She grabs smelling salt and stalks back to hold it under Rodrigo's nose to arouse consciousness.

She grins at Taite when the fucker finally wakes up and realizes the situation he's in. Especially when his eyes land—and lock—on Taite.

“No,” the fucker hisses. “Impossible.”

“What?” Taite quips and crosses her arms in front of her chest. “Surprised to see me still breathing?” She pulls her shirt slightly down. “Clearly you can't handle a knife the way you think.”

Lynn leans in and fake whispers, “No worries, Tiny-Dick-man. She won't make that mistake.”

Rodrigo glares at the both of them. “You're dead. All of you brainless cunts. Do you really think you can get away with this? They'll come for me and—”

Taite moves fast, too fucking fast to see what she just did when Rodrigo bellows and shakes his head. One eye is

squeezed shut and tears are streaming down his cheek. The fucker is cursing loudly.

Lynn chuckles, points at Rodrigo, and tells Penny, “She poked him in the eye like she just rang his fucking doorbell.” She leans forward and grabs Rodrigo by the hair to check his eye before letting the guy’s head drop like a hot potato. “Oh, you got him good. Hemorrhage, broken blood vessels...you rock.” Lynn rubs her hands. “What’s next?”

“Let me go and I promise you your father will live,” Rodrigo growls.

Taite stares at Rodrigo for a few heartbeats. Her head swings in the direction of the table and she strides over to grab a push dagger. The way she skillfully grips it in her hand brings a smile to my face.

Taite inches closer and clears her throat. I expect her to say something, threaten Rodrigo, anything verbally, but she surprises the fuck out of me when she jabs the fucker in the fleshy part of his thigh.

Lynn’s head whips toward the mirror, looking me straight into the eye without knowing it. “I love her. You did good, VP.”

My old lady’s head slides in the direction of the mirror and she slowly shakes her head. I catch the smile on her face, though. And I have to agree with Lynn; I did good. Taite might have been put through hell, but the woman held fucking strong.

The way she’s handling herself is making me hard. Something she definitely doesn’t need and it’s a good thing

I'm not in the same room. Taite focuses back on Rodrigo and lets the push dagger tease the underside of his jaw.

“My father will live while your time here is slowly ticking away. All those tainted dreams you told me about, the cobwebs of your twisted brain? I'm going to grab a piece of steel wire and shove it up your nose.” Taite turns to Lynn. “Do you think we could do a lobotomy this way or do I have to grab an icepick and keep his eye open as I shove it in his frontal lobe?”

“Babe.” A sly grin slides across Lynn's face. “You can do whatever your heart desires. If it were me? I'd start with the wire up the nose and save the icepick for the end.”

“Spence likes to shatter glass and press their feet into it...or let them crawl through it when he's played with them long enough,” Penny suggests.

A chuckle flows over my lips. Penny's come a long way from being a shy wallflower to speaking her mind. Hell, Lynn had to actually teach her how to swear and now she's sharing torture techniques as if these three women are having some girl time.

Actually, they are having some girl time. Twisted as it might be they are bonding. Not only that, they are showing and giving my woman support. The way Taite handles herself shows her strength. I'm sure it would be different if I was in there with her.

My prez was right to bring in his mother and his old lady. This is exactly what Taite needs. Not only to show her we have her back, but to let her feel she's in the midst of it all.

She's holding the reins and with it takes lead on how shit goes down.

Maybe also because Spence knows Brock is the son of the cartel leader and with it holds the most answers. He's in the next room enjoying himself, and yes, I'm pretty sure it involves shattered glass like Penny just mentioned.

Taite grabs a fistful of the fabric of Rodrigo's shirt and easily rips it off his body with the help of the push dagger. Once she has the fucker's skin out in the open is when she starts to slice him up.

All I can do is stare at how patient, skillful, and fucking graceful my woman is carving up a man in front of me. I'm fucked-up. Seriously. On the other hand? I don't have a single ounce of pity for a lesser man who rapes and tortures a woman for his own personal gain.

Karma is a cunt who likes to fuck people dry without remorse. And that's exactly what Rodrigo is getting. The fucker might as well buckle up 'cause the way my woman is handling herself? She's far from being done anytime soon.

CHAPTER SIX

– TAITE –

Every slice through his skin, made by the push dagger in my hand, fuels my hatred. There is no hesitation in my strikes, no regret, no remorse; only hatred. I'm disgusted by myself for being this monster...a cold-blooded killer...they've turned me into.

Rodrigo might be still breathing, but I've already killed one of his buddies. Taking that guy's life was brutal and it hit me hard. Even if it was a haze from the moment I took him to the point where I left his body to be found so the cartel was blamed for his murder.

With the wounds of my body and my state-of-mind it's a miracle I pulled it off. It doesn't compare to this moment right here, though. Especially how things went down with the first guy I took out...I was doubting my abilities to keep going.

So, for me to be able to have Rodrigo tied to a chair, giving him the feel of a blade slicing through his skin the way he hurt me? It's exhilarating. Even with the hint of disgust simmering in the background.

I didn't choose this lane, I was forced to ride, didn't want the feel of blood sliding through my fingers. He shoved me in that direction, cornering me until I was gasping for my next breath and struggled to keep my tattered body alive.

A large hand covers mine to halt the slicing of Rodrigo's skin.

"Breathe, T," Dion softly rumbles. "Don't let revenge consume you 'cause the madness will make the answers you need slip through your fingers."

"Aw, why did you have to stop her?" Lynn pouts. "I was enjoying the show, and I'm sure the fucker wants to take the easy way out."

She takes a screwdriver from the table and nudges Rodrigo against his shoulder. "Hey, you still in there?" Lynn's nose wrinkles and she shows the screwdriver to me. "Bodily fluids are a bitch to clean, and I wouldn't so much as point a nail in this filth's direction." She stares down at herself. "I should have changed clothes 'cause I also would like to shove this screwdriver up this fucker's pee-hole."

Now Dion's the one wincing and I'm surprised by the bark of laughter ripping from me.

"We could still do that," I offer.

Rodrigo moans and looks more dead than alive. He's covered with his own blood and slumped forward, and only held in place by the restraints of the chair.

"I still vote for rolling him in glass," Penny quips, stepping up next to me as she takes the screwdriver from Lynn's hand to nudge Rodrigo's shoulder. "Not much fight left in this rapist, huh?"

Rodrigo spits blood as he growls, "Fuck you. I'm not a rapist. Her cunt was mine all along."

I grab his hair and yank his head back so I can look him in the eye. “Me being born into my father’s MC doesn’t give any member a claim on who would become my old man.”

Rodrigo chokes on half a laugh. “That’s where you’re wrong. We fucking sell pussy, bitch.”

Dion’s arm flashes forward and in the blink of an eye his fingers are tightly wrapped around Rodrigo’s throat as he hisses in a deadly tone, “I’m getting real fucking annoyed by you disrespecting my old lady. If I hear you calling her a cunt, bitch, or any disrespectful shit, I guarantee you your death will take days, not hours or minutes for that matter.”

“You. Fucking traitor,” Rodrigo sneers, as if only now seeing Dion. “Are you even a fucking doctor?” His eyes, one lacking white and turned red from when I poked him in it, slide down momentarily to glare at Dion’s VP patch. “Are you even a biker? Discussing a collaboration?”

Dion’s grin is feral when he states, “I was only ever there for my woman.”

My chest fills with a tidal wave of warmth. I know he doesn’t mean it the way it sounds—as if I was his before I was taken—but it elevates my heart anyway. Besides, watching the shock on Rodrigo’s face is somewhat enjoyable.

Especially when Dion continues with the words, “You hurt her. Took things from my old lady she wouldn’t ever give up freely. A VP’s old lady. And yes, I am a fucking doctor, a biker, but the collaboration? Fuck no, that was my cover. Now, start talking. Give up the names of the members who are in on the deal with the cartel.”

Rodrigo hollows his cheeks and pouts his lips as if he's ready to spit, but Penny suddenly pokes the screwdriver into his cheek. "Think twice, you fucking llama. No more spittle, use fucking words."

"Good girl," Lynn softly praises.

Penny grins at her mother-in-law. "I had a good teacher."

"Enough playing around," Spence booms and we all step back from Rodrigo to face him as Spence stalks into the room, his naked torso covered with blood splatter.

His hand swings forward and he throws something at Rodrigo's feet.

"Do I need to cut off one of yours so I have a matching pair I can send to Brock's daddy?" Spence questions.

Oh yikes. There's an ear lying between Rodrigo's feet. Rodrigo only glares back and keeps his lips sealed shut.

"Need me to grab you some bottles?" Penny cheerfully quips.

I can feel the corner of my lips twitch. "You're really itching to create some shards, huh?"

Penny grins, all white teeth. "I like diversity in pointy angles."

Spence reaches out and cups his old lady's neck to bring her close and gives her a fierce kiss. The man completely ignores his bloody hands and Penny doesn't seem to mind either as she leans into his bloody chest.

I swallow hard at the show of affection. Those two clearly love one another and are standing irrevocably on the same side to face anything together. Hell, amidst torture they make time to remind themselves of their closeness.

A jolt of jealousy hits me, even if I'm not at a point in my life where I can surrender myself completely to another person. My gaze slides to Dion and connects with his. He's observing me and I can feel my cheeks heat. It's as if he's caught me voicing my secret thoughts and leaving me bare.

Dion keeps himself rooted to the floor while lifting his arm in my direction. His hand, palm up, is a silent offer. I have no clue what he must have read in my reaction to Spence and Penny's show of affection, but I really don't want to unravel those thoughts.

What I do want is Dion's strength and support. From the moment this man entered my life he's done nothing but give. His skills by taking care of my wound, his connections for clearing me from murder, a safe haven to protect me, and even by capturing two of the scumbags who hurt me.

It's for this reason my legs move automatically. My palm slides over his and an instant calmness seeps into my veins due to his touch. The thought of ever having sex or getting close to another man was repulsing. Yet, the reaction my body has to Dion gives me hope.

"You're so fucking strong," he muses and brushes his lips against mine.

A jolt of awareness spikes my blood and I reach out to fist Dion's leather cut to ground myself as I follow his mouth

to get another kiss. His light rumble of laughter vibrates against my lips and it causes a tingling feeling.

“See that?” Spence’s voice breaks us apart.

I lean against Dion to glance back at Rodrigo to see how Spence holds his head up to force him to stare in my direction.

“She’s found herself a loyal, honest, loving, caring, and strong man who will fucking worship the ground she walks on. That’s how it fucking works. You don’t make deals and switch them around.”

Rodrigo grits his teeth. The one good eye he has left is spitting fire. I have no clue what Spence is talking about and all I can guess is that he might have made Brock talk.

“Oh, yeah. I know all about you not being able to get Taite here. Her father wouldn’t agree, did he? So, you thought to force your cock into her anyway in an effort to push the deal through. Trying to scare her father into joining forces for protection, but her steel spine made shit backfire, didn’t it?” Spence chuckles while confusion hits me.

I have no clue what he’s talking about. I glance up at Dion but his eyes are locked on the scene in front of us. He gives my hip a gentle squeeze as he slightly jerks his chin forward.

I give my attention back to Spence when he starts talking again. “You took your anger out on the woman you wanted because her rejection caused you to be available for an arranged marriage. Obviously, I just checked for a picture of Brock’s sister. There’s no comparing.” Spence chuckles and

throws his thumb over his shoulder. “That woman right there has a steel spine, has been raised in the biker world, isn’t a sheltered princess, but she’s also gorgeous.” He connects his gaze with Penny. “Not as captivating as my woman, though, but that’s a personal opinion.”

Penny beams at her man and it makes my heart smile to see those two yet again interact this way. Solid. Open and honest. Not giving a shit who sees or hears what’s in their heart and mind.

Spence turns toward me and rolls his shoulders. “I’m done with this shit. We could torture him for entertainment’s sake, but I have enough answers. There’s no way I’m going to risk transferring this fucker to jail. From what I’ve been told the cartel would put a direct hit on him anyway when his ass lands in jail. Basically, it would put others at risk. Now, would you like to end him or?”

He doesn’t finish his sentence and leaves the other option open. The things Spence voiced—explaining the reasons for Rodrigo’s actions—is a lot to process. Here I thought he wanted to force my father’s hand by using me. In some ways it was, but it was also a twisted payback because he couldn’t have me and was forced to marry someone he didn’t want.

All eyes are on me and I realize they are waiting for my answer and it’s then I realize something. “I wanted to kill each and every one who had a hand in what I had to endure. When I killed Gib Micks I didn’t feel anything. Revenge left me colder than I was when I dragged my abused body out of my shallow grave. There’s no satisfaction, no justice, nothing to gain...all while I stand here with you guys. Getting answers

I didn't even know I needed to hear. But most of all? Knowing I'm not alone." I glance back at Dion. "Feeling the warmth against my back of someone who believes in me and doesn't overrun me or gives me bullshit. I'm given options." Turning back to Spence I give him a small smile. "I'm fine with leaving you to have your old lady smash some bottles and letting Rodrigo here roll around in it."

"You got it, T," Spence states and the fact that he calls me T, the way Dion addresses me, doesn't escape me. "Why don't you let your old man take you back to the clubhouse? You guys are due for some ink."

"Shotgun!" Lynn yells and jams her fist in the air to show her excitement. "If anyone is gonna ink Taite, it'll be me."

"Ma." Spence shakes his head. "You don't even like to ink. Not even when it was your job way before I was born."

"I don't." Lynn shrugs and reaches out to pat her son's cheek. "But it holds a shit-ton of meaning when I brand an old lady as strong as this one to welcome, and bind her, into our MC for life."

Damn, those are some strong words that hit my chest like a sledgehammer. Warmth spreads throughout my body. This MC is more than a brotherhood who work together to earn their pay. They don't dabble in illegal activities. They are honest, open, protective, and are definitely a family who have each other's back instead of shoving a knife in there the way my father's MC did with me.

Lynn turns to Penny. "I'm guessing you're gonna stay and watch your old man work his magic?"

Penny's already holding two glass bottles and grins. "You guessed right. Oh, and I've made a stew that should be ready. Could you—"

"Sure, doll. I know my way around the kitchen and will feed these two. We all love anything you bake and cook. Now, have fun and we will catch you later. Ta-ta." Lynn gives them a finger-wave and prances out the door.

I shake my head and mutter, "She's really something else."

"You don't know the half of it." Spence chuckles.

"She is the fucking half of me," Lynn states as she shoves her head around the corner and points at Penny. "And that one there is the other half. The old ladies of the prez and the VP together will be a force to be reckoned with, the foundation of this MC. It soothes my soul to know your chapter will have these two to keep you shitheads real and on your toes once I'm dead and gone."

"What the fuck?" Spence snarls. "You're not gonna die."

Lynn snorts. "The one thing set in stone is the fact that everyone dies at some point in life, kid. I might rewrite the song that fat lady sings, but shit will be over one day. Not today, though. Today we ink the Broken Deeds MC patch on a new old lady and eat stew. Oh, and I'm gonna teach my unborn grandchild a few more curse words."

"Ma! You're not gonna put your head anywhere near my old lady's stomach," Spence growls and Lynn simply laughs as she leaves.

Spence rubs a hand over his face. “Fucking hell.”

Penny nudges Spence’s shoulder with one of the bottles she’s holding. “Come on, let’s have some fun before we return to the clubhouse.”

His arm wraps around her waist and Spence pulls her close to kiss her.

Dion’s hand touches my hip. “Come on, let’s get out of here before they start to have sex.”

My eyes bulge and flick to Rodrigo.

Dion follows my line of sight and chuckles. “Don’t you know everyone likes to show a little crazy and twisted in this MC?”

“A little?” I remark with a hint of outrage. “I have a feeling you guys won’t let anyone or anything stop you from doing what you want.”

“That’s the cold, hard truth.” Dion grins as he guides me out the door.

Lynn is already in the front seat of the SUV. I’m smiling as I get in the back while Dion slides behind the wheel. There are no words exchanged as we head to the clubhouse. I don’t know about the two people sitting in the front, but I need the silence to let my mind go over everything that happened.

Strangely the urge for vengeance has shifted. Knowing these people have ways to help me dissolve the threat and havoc surrounding me and my father is enough to soothe the raw emotions that were overtaking my whole being.

When I almost died, it didn't even occur to me that I wanted to live. My next breath that kept my body going was revenge. Now? The decision to leave Spence to deal with Rodrigo was the first step that wasn't fueled by anger, it was made to move toward a future.

My gaze lands on Dion and instantly the turmoil inside my head calms to static in the background. Where I could only see my quest end in death and destruction, I now hold hope. Hope of a future where family and brotherhood hold different meanings.

I do hope my father will be able to save the MC his father before him founded. Sadness, along with a hint of fear, creeps into my veins. Life isn't guaranteed the way he's tied up between the cartel and members who betray him.

Hopefully we'll be able to go to him tomorrow. For now, there's little I can do. It's late and besides being extremely hungry I'm set to get a tattoo. Becoming a part of this club isn't just a necessity to assure a clean slate. For me it feels as if they opened their arms and embraced me as one of theirs.

It's exactly what Dion does the moment he parks the SUV in front of the clubhouse. He takes me into his warm embrace and holds me close. I lean into him and take a deep breath to let his scent calm me.

I want nothing more than to close my eyes and completely surrender to him, but the darkness grants the ability of my mind to remind me with flashes of memories. The helplessness, the pain, the fear...it's hard to block out the things I went through.

It's why I keep my eyes open, even if my gut tells me this man would never hurt me. He's proved as much ever since we met. Still, it's hard to overcome when my wounds are still healing. Those carved deep in my skin and especially those that are inside my mind.

For the first time since I crawled out of that shallow grave I know there will come a moment where I can put this behind me. Never forget, but mute it with good times to overrule and focus on a future that's bright and full of possibilities.

First positive moment I will ingrain into both my mind and skin is the Broken Deeds MC patch. Somewhere visible where I can touch and stare at it to remind myself of the turning point in life this brotherhood has shown and given me.

CHAPTER SEVEN

– DION –

I'm staring at my woman from across the main room in the clubhouse. She's sitting on the couch next to Lynn and Penny. They are chatting and there's a smile on her face, except I also can't help but notice the dark circles under her eyes.

I remember how she had a short nap a while ago at the cabin, and I can imagine sleep has been scarce with all the shit she endured. Feeling safe after experiencing something this traumatic is bound to cause sleepless nights.

Grayer lets go of my wrist and shuts down the tattoo gun. Spence pushes away from the bar—where he was talking to his father—and strolls over to us. He gave me an update earlier about the details he squeezed out of Brock.

The fucker is still alive, only because he's the son of the cartel which makes him a nice bargaining chip. Rodrigo, though? He's not taking up any oxygen. It was an order Spence received from the government when he explained the situation.

Putting Rodrigo in jail would mean the cartel could still get to them due to possible connections on the inside. Basically, it would put others at risk that might get hurt if they are in the way. There was enough evidence to put Rodrigo away for life and in this case the cleanup option was the only good decision.

“Nice, man,” Spence compliments as he takes in Grayer’s work.

There’s a huge grin on my face. “Yeah,” I agree.

Seeing Taite’s name embedded in the Broken Deeds MC patch on the inside of my forearm invokes a flow of feelings to course through my veins. Taite picked this spot and I decided to ink the opposite arm so when we hold hands our patches will be facing one another.

My prez throws a glance over his shoulder. “She fits right in, even if our MC works differently than her father’s.”

“Easy enough when she holds the same values as we do,” I rumble and stare at my woman, noticing she’s trying to stifle a yawn. “I’m gonna drag her off to get some sleep. Church bright and early?”

“Bright and early,” Spence echoes. “We’ll talk things through, make a plan, and head over to her father’s MC to confront the fuckers.”

I bob my head and am about to get to my feet when Grayer grabs my wrist. “Dude, let me wrap this up for you first.”

“Shit,” I grumble. “Sorry, brother.”

I let Grayer take care of my new ink and when he’s done I finally stalk over to Taite and the other old ladies.

I clear my throat and place my hands on the back of the couch. “I’m going to steal my old lady away from you guys so she can have some rest. There will be loads of other times to chat.”

Taite quickly gets to her feet, as if she was waiting for me to offer her an escape.

Turning toward the other old ladies she offers them a smile. “Thanks so much, there’s—”

Penny holds up her hand to stop her. “Hold it right there, T. There is absolutely no reason to thank us. We’re all happy you’re here and I’m speaking for all of us when I say you’re a perfect fit for Dion. We’ll talk some more tomorrow about helping me in the kitchen if the offer still stands.”

“Of course,” Taite quickly agrees.

“Night, babe. Get some sleep,” Lynn orders. “This fucker right here will keep you safe, but believe me when I say no one will slip into this building unseen. Okay?”

Taite gives her a slight nod and though I hate the reminder of her lack of sleep due to feeling unsafe, I also respect Lynn to make sure my old lady knows she’s well protected here. We wander into the hallway and I show her to my room.

I hear her soft voice coming from behind me once the door falls shut and the lock is in place. “I would like to ask you a favor.”

“Anything,” I instantly reply.

The corner of her mouth twitches when I turn around to face her. “You don’t even know what I’m about to ask you.”

I simply shrug. “You’re mine now, so anything you desire is for me to provide. Besides, what we did today should let you know any request you make won’t be as weird as others may take it.”

Capturing Brock and Rodrigo, torturing them, and T getting to decide over Rodrigo's fate shows how there is no limit to what she can ask of me.

"Definitely," she agrees and releases a deep breath. "Okay. Can you...I want...it's—" A tiny growl rips from her, as if she's frustrated with herself. "I want you to take my blood so I can get tested." She looks down at her feet. "I don't know if they used a condom. Not that I want to have sex...I...it's... dammit. I don't know if I can...I want...maybe."

I reach out to place a finger under her chin and gently tip her head back to connect our gaze.

"Darlin', we have all the time in the world. I will draw some blood right now and have it sent to the lab. You're in control here. If you want to fool around, dry hump, only kiss for months on end. I mean, kissing is okay, right? Besides, your body is also still healing and you're taking antibiotics."

She places her palm on my chest and I instantly feel her warmth seep through the fabric of my shirt.

"Kissing is okay," she murmurs and her gaze falls down to my lips. "More than okay. They didn't—" She cuts herself off, probably to prevent an ugly memory from rising, but I can't think about anything other than her mouth connecting with mine.

Our tongues start a sensual dance. My fingers curl into fists at my side. I want to reach out, palm her ass, brush my thumb along the underside of her breast to softly tease, move forward to knead, pinch her nipple. Fuck. I can feel precum leaking from my cock.

I pull back and place my forehead against hers. Both of us are panting and try to catch our breath.

“Fuck, T. There’s no need for me to cram my cock into your sweet pussy. If we kiss like this for a few minutes more I’d blow with only our lips connected.” I curse and rub a hand over my face. “Sorry. I shouldn’t have said that.”

“Hey,” Taite snaps and I feel her fingers wrap around my wrist to pull my hand away. “Don’t you dare behave differently around me. What you just said?” She gives me a small smile. “I need to hear it. My body might have been abused, but what they took wasn’t freely given. Nor were there any feelings connected to it. No pleasure, no desire, no lust, none of that. Us? This? Completely different. I don’t know if I can have sex...get naked together...I don’t know...I...I think...maybe I just need to see what I can handle.”

“Three Steps to Heaven,” I blurt. “The Eddie Cochran song. Have you heard of it?”

I have no fucking clue why my mind jumped to that song, but it fits perfectly, so I’m running with the crazy mind-fart suggestion. She gives a tiny shake with her head.

“Sometimes things are fucked up and sometimes things can be as fucking simple as following a few steps to get to where you want to be in life. Give those lyrics a listen or look them up while I grab my stuff to draw some blood.”

I stalk to my closet and grab my bag with medical supplies. Taite is sitting on my bed and stares at her phone when I get things ready. She doesn’t say a thing through the whole process of drawing her blood.

When I've cleaned up and put everything away—and locked the door behind the prospect who will drop the vials off at the lab—is when she jumps up and lets her body connect with mine. Her arms engulf my neck, holding me tight and she starts to kiss the fuck out of me.

I engulf her in my arms and kiss her back with the same intensity. Our tongues dance and I can feel the beat of the music we create sing through my veins. Fuck. This woman lights me up. It's hard to hold back, especially when we're kissing like a pair of horny teenagers.

She pulls back just as abruptly as she flung herself at me and places her forehead against mine. "I don't know about the love part, but you do evoke a load of emotions inside me. So, I thought I'd skip a few steps 'cause step three sounded mighty fine."

I blink a few times, completely confused about what she's talking about.

A coy smile tugs at her lips when she clarifies with the words, "The song."

Fuck. She's right. She read the lyrics.

"You evoke a truckload of feelings inside me as well," I counter and brush my lips against hers, unable to stop myself.

I tighten my arms around her for a few heartbeats and let her go. "I'm glad we have this solid connection between us. Whatever the pace might be, we both have the same long road visualized ahead of us. First things first, though. We have a big day tomorrow with the confrontation of your father and his

MC. I can tell you're beat and need a few hours of sleep. Do you want to take the bed? Share it? If you feel it's too fast—"

Taite cuts me off right before I can so much as offer to sleep in the chair beside the bed. "The bed is big enough for both of us. Besides, I feel safe when you're around. It's also why I crashed for a tiny nap at your cabin. I...I at least would like to try."

"All right, T." I lift my chin in the direction of the bathroom. "Did you want to get ready first or shall I take a shower before you?"

She bites her bottom lip and I barely suppress a groan. Fucking hell, it's going to be a challenge to sleep beside her. I meant it when I told her we have all the damn time in the world, but I'm not a fucking saint.

If she could hear my thoughts she'd run away screaming. Like now as I stare at those pink lips of hers. I can only imagine how it would feel to coat her bottom lip with my precum right before I slide my fingers into her hair to keep her head in place so I can thoroughly fuck her mouth.

Yeah. Not the shit she needs and I'm not even sure something like that will be on the table for a long damn time. I feel a tiny push on my chest and give my head a shake, realizing I was caught in my own head and completely missed something she said.

"Go on or I'll change my mind and get in there first," she says.

Right. A shower. I should let her go first, but with the thoughts I just had it's best I take this quick exit. I practically

run into the bathroom and lock the door behind me. A cold shower is exactly what I need.

I quickly strip down till I'm naked and turn on the water. There's no need to wait for the water to heat up 'cause my body is overheating and in need to cool-the-fuck-down. Except, the water doesn't help one bit to clear my thoughts about the woman who will be in my bed tonight.

Surrendering to my thoughts I reach down and palm my hard cock. I groan and tightly pump my fist up and down as I let my mind wonder what it would feel like to sink inside her sweet pussy.

The lips of her sweet cunt would part if I would slide the fat head of my cock through her wetness. And she will be wet when I first take her. I'll make sure to give every inch of her body some attention with my mouth first. To suck her nipples, lick and flick her clit until she comes all over my face first.

Yeah. I can almost taste her pleasure as I close my eyes and imagine how it would feel as she takes me inside her body. To pull out and shove right back in as I fuck her the way I want. Hard. Rough. Her gorgeous blue green eyes will be locked on me, filled with desire.

She'll beg me to go harder, squeeze that pussy tightly around my hard length, demanding the cum to coat her...

"Fuuuuuuck, Taite," I groan on a croaked whisper and feel hot jets of cum spurt out and hit the tiled wall.

Damn, that felt good. My heart is racing and I stare down at my cock. Shit. I'm still sporting a boner, even if I just

blew my load. It might have felt good to take the edge off, but it seems both my body and mind aren't conned by rubbing one out with the thought of having her.

The only thing that would sate me body and soul would be the real thing. Tough shit. I'll give my old lady as long as she needs, so both body, and fucking mind, will suck it up. It's worth it; *she's worth it*.

I turn off the water and grab a towel to quickly dry off and wrap it around my waist. When I step into the room I come face-to-face with a very flushed Taite. She quickly dashes around me and closes the bathroom door behind her.

Staring down at my naked chest I mutter a soft curse. I should have brought a pair of sweatpants and a shirt with me instead of walking into a room with just a towel blocking my junk from her eyes.

A frustrated breath rips from me as I stalk to the closet to grab some gray sweatpants. Within two minutes I'm completely covered. It's gonna be uncomfortable as fuck to sleep fully clothed. Again, Taite deserves the reassurance.

Hell, she's taken major leaps by kissing the fuck out of me. Everyone handles trauma in their own way and she's damn strong, both mentally and physically. I never gave it much thought about what my old lady would look like or what kind of person she'd be.

The longing was there of course, especially watching Spence and Penny fall for one another. But lying here in my bed, waiting for my old lady to join me? Even if I can't bury myself inside her? I wouldn't change one fucking thing about her.

Sure, I'd love nothing more than to save her from what happened in the past, but no one can change what lies behind us. The future, the here and now, is where promises are made, and fucking steps are taken.

Love is a strong word, but the adoration I have for this woman is a powerful foundation for the long road ahead of us. The bathroom door opens and Taite steps into the bedroom with a cloud of steam behind her. Fuck. She's a sight to behold. It doesn't go unnoticed how she keeps the door slightly ajar and the lights on.

My hands itch to hold the sheets up and allow her to slide right into bed with me. Instead, I stay on top of the covers to give her another reassurance. Her eyes are on me. She's wearing black yoga pants and—I only now notice—one of my shirts. She must have grabbed it when I was in the shower.

Taite leans forward to flick the switch and lets the darkness somewhat settle in the room. Somewhat due to the light coming from the bathroom.

“Is it okay if we keep that light on?” It pains me to hear the firmness in her voice and the reason for it.

It sure as fuck doesn't sound like a question, more like a necessity for her to stay safe. Just like I noticed she didn't close her eyes the first few times we kissed.

“I don't mind, darlin,” I assure her.

She slides into bed. “You don't have to stay on top of the covers.”

“I'm fine where I am, T,” I softly tell her.

Her face is turned toward me and I feel her stare. Yet, I keep facing the ceiling and close my eyes. The turmoil inside my head and body has to settle. We both need our energy for a new day, and it's already late as it is.

“Goodnight, Dion,” Taite murmurs.

“Night, love,” I reply without thinking.

I probably shouldn't have let the endearment slip. Even if it sounds damn right. The tiny sigh coming from her side of the bed sounds like she liked it as well. Thank fuck. Lying on the bed after the shower, and having my woman safely beside me, causes for the tiredness to hit hard. My eyes are already closed and I start to drift off.

I might be dreaming, but I swear I hear Taite's soft voice whisper, “Thanks for rocking my world back in place and giving me hope. A new reason to live instead of staying alive for the need for vengeance.”

There is not enough energy in my body left to reply. Maybe it was a dream, because the warmth spreading all over my body that comes from her side of the bed is overwhelming my senses. In my dream I hold her all through the night and breathe her in with each breath I take. Knowing she's safe and all mine.

CHAPTER EIGHT

– TAITE –

Waking up these days can be compared with being shocked by a bolt of lightning. My whole body jerks and there's a shot of adrenaline. A fight or flight reaction. My heart races and I quickly take in my surroundings.

“We're okay,” Dion rumbles, his voice thick with sleep.

I take a deep breath and try to calm my body.

“Yeah,” I mutter. “Sorry.”

One of his eyes pops open for a heartbeat or two. “Nothing to be sorry about.”

He's right, but he didn't ask or sign up for the restlessness embedded in my bones. Nonetheless, we're in this together. I will myself to relax and sink down against him. He places his hand on my lower back.

Dion's gentle touch doesn't repel me, even if I was jolted awake and the reminders of what happened wasn't the usual overload of images assaulting me. He soothes the restlessness inside.

“I don't wanna get up.” His eyes stay closed. “Lying in bed, holding you close, sounds pretty damn good.”

I snuggle my cheek against his chest. “Couldn't agree more.”

“Responsibilities,” Dion grumbles, and I feel his lips brush the crown of my head. “Gotta head into church and talk shit through. We don’t know how deep the betrayal runs in your father’s MC. The fact that this cartel has started to sprout roots inside the club is very fucking dangerous. You of all people know how bad shit is, have suffered not once but twice how they don’t give a fuck to get what they want.”

“And yet I still don’t get what they want,” I mutter. “I mean, what’s the benefit of working with the MC when the cartel clearly has enough manpower to...I don’t know what they do.”

His fingers slowly skim up and down my back. “Illegal workload needs to be divided, otherwise they will draw too much attention which will lead the cops straight to them.”

I release a deep sigh. “Makes sense.”

Dion brushes another kiss against the top of my head again. “Come on, get movin’. You feel way too good.”

A chuckle slips over my lips and tell him, “Same,” and roll away.

I stretch and rub my face. Dion slips into the bathroom and for the next handful of minutes we fall into a routine to handle our business and get dressed. It’s oddly comfortable. While I’ve only just met this man it’s as if we’ve been together for months. A gut feeling. Trust.

Where I thought all those things were ruined and tarnished Dion has managed to switch things up again. A smile tugs my lips when I’m fully dressed and he’s patiently waiting near the door for me.

“All done,” I quip.

He glances up from his phone and slides it in the front pocket of his jeans. “Looking good.”

His gaze isn't roaming my body, it's locked on my mouth and I'm pretty sure he indicates my smile with the compliment. It's there because of him. It's why I step close and brush my mouth against his.

“It's you,” I murmur.

Our gaze stays connected and I feel his chest rumble, causing my nipples to pebble from the vibration. He deepens the kiss and my eyes automatically fall shut as I surrender to the warmth filling my veins. A knock on the door startles me and I jump back.

Dion curses while a voice from the hallway bellows, “Church. Now.”

I calm my racing heart and step closer to place a hand on his chest.

Not wanting to keep my fucked-up past alive I tell Dion, “Once the blood test comes back all clear I want to do more than kiss you.”

His nostrils flare and desire swirls hot in his eyes. “Whatever and whenever you're ready, I'll be right there with you.”

I give him a quick kiss. “I know, and I'm thankful to have you as my old man.”

There's mischief dancing in his eyes. “Darlin', I'm not a saint, so don't make me out to be one while I want nothing

more than throw your fine ass on that bed and lick your pussy till you scream my name. Get you all puffy and slick enough to take my cock and fill you up till my balls hit your ass and my cum sprays deep enough that if you clear your throat you'll fucking taste me."

My heart skips a beat and both my body and brain stay in the here and now. My pussy clenches and there's lust and desire running through my veins. No tainted reminders because this right here is a stark contrast of what I endured. I want this, I crave to move forward with Dion, and I damn well will.

I try to seem unaffected by his words and mutter, "Promises, promises."

Laughter rips from him and his face softens. He is so damn sexy. So much has changed since I met him, as if a switch has been flipped. Though, the past isn't completely laid to rest and it's why we're heading into church.

Dion takes my hand and guides me out of the room. Church is filled with at least ten bikers sitting at the table. Spence is leaning back in his chair and is holding a mug filled with steaming coffee. Shit. I could really go for a mug, or a pot full for that matter, myself.

Two steaming mugs enter my vision when a prospect states, "Here you go, VP."

Dion takes both and hands one to me while the prospect turns and strolls out of church, closing the door behind him. Dion takes a seat next to Spence and I sit down in the empty chair beside him.

It means a lot to sit at this table again. Something like this never happened at my father's MC. No way would a woman be accepted in church. To sit at the table and hear club business.

"Eloy Mireya received a van filled with the special kind of company last night. Six men. Scout and Grayer followed Eloy when he left with a few of his men. They went to a house one town over and left after spending half an hour inside. Scout is still there, keeping an eye on the house. Grayer followed them back to Eloy's home and left a prospect there before he came back to the clubhouse. It's safe to say they are getting ready for some action with Eloy bringing in new men." Spence's eyes find mine. "We have to head over to your father's clubhouse to fill him in. He might still have an option to take out the rats before they take over. The tricky part in all of this is the fact that there's a rat infestation. Meaning I managed to squeeze a handful of names from Brock, but I know there might be a few more."

"Funny how Rodrigo kept his mouth shut when it came to cartel details while Brock sang like a fucking canary," Dion remarks.

Spence shrugs. "Brock's a pussy and definitely not one of the brightest lightbulbs out there. Probably the reason why his father let him become a prospect instead of giving him a more important title within the cartel. Brock mentioned his mother was a whore who killed Eloy's wife, along with his half-brother, in a blind rage when he was eight years old."

"That right there is a fucked-up situation," someone across from me remarks. "No wonder Eloy didn't give the

bastard kid a function in his own business, but uses him as he sees fit.”

“I kept him breathing and added some mental torturing technique in case we needed a bargaining chip. Though, I doubt Eloy gives a shit.” Spence sighs.

“We’ll see. He doesn’t have any other sons. Who knows, manpower is manpower, and he might bite if it’s about a show of power...holding something over his head,” Dion remarks. “You know these power-hungry fuckers are crazy in the head and don’t respond like a sane person would. Unpredictable. They seem careless and the next thing they blow shit up for so much as looking at their fucking car or something.”

“We’re in a delicate situation as it is, standing in the middle of an MC, cartel dispute where half the MC is on team cartel,” Spence grumbles.

“Half?” I gasp, mostly to myself, but all eyes land on me.

Deep down I knew there were a lot of members wanting the deal the cartel offers, but to hear it stated as a fact still hits hard. Dion’s hand covers my knee under the table, offering a soft squeeze in silent support.

“If not more,” Spence grimly states.

I swallow hard. “Should I call my father? Get him out of the clubhouse?”

“You can’t.”

My eyes bulge and I glare at Spence. “What do you mean, I can’t?”

His eyes slide to Dion. I'm not liking this one damn bit, even less when I see Dion wince.

"What?" I snap. "Tell me."

"He hasn't left the clubhouse since you went missing," Dion starts. "Your father doesn't know you're with us now, or that you're safe, or what happened. I'm pretty sure he knows something, but what? I have no clue."

My heart starts to slam against my ribs.

"What?" I repeat on a whisper, my mind joining my heart to run a mile a minute.

Does this mean what I think it means? No. It can't be. That would be insane.

I swallow at the dryness in my throat and it makes my voice crack when I carefully ask, "Do you...do you guys think my father is in on it?"

"No," Spence grunts. "What my VP is trying to say is that he's aware his life is in danger and that the gavel he's holding is seconds away from being ripped from his—"

"Do not say cold dead fingers," I snarl and jump to my feet. "That's why he doesn't leave the clubhouse?"

"We think so," Dion calmly states.

"I'm going over there. Right now," I decide and take a step in the direction of the door.

"Now wait a fucking second," Spence grunts.

I whirl around to face him, but instead of staring at Spence I'm facing my old man.

“Take a breath, T. What prez means with wait a fucking second is the fact that we all need to weapon up and join you. You are going to wear a damn vest under your shirt or I won’t allow you to come along.”

Won’t allow me? Anger runs hot until the rest of his words settle.

“A vest?” I ask in confusion.

Spence holds out a dark gray vest. “Bulletproof. Hurts like a bitch if you do get shot, but you’ll live. Just don’t get shot in any body parts the vest doesn’t cover.”

I take the thing and automatically mutter, “Like my head for instance.”

“If you get shot in the head you’ll be dead before you realize it,” Grayer dryly supplies.

I roll my eyes and snap, “Duly noted.”

“Suit up,” Spence bellows and everyone shoves their chairs back to leave the room.

“Hang on, Prez.” Dion places his hand on my hip and drags his gaze away from Spence. “I’d like for you to have something all Broken Deeds MC members and old ladies have.”

“Smart thinking, brother,” Spence remarks.

I keep my focus on Dion as he continues, “Each of us have a microchip embedded under our skin. This sounds a bit extreme, but I don’t have to tell you how dangerous our cases sometimes are. If anything happens, someone is kidnapped, or hurt for that matter, we can check through the microchip to

find the exact location. This microchip also shows our vitals... if we're still breathing or not. If you--"

I hold up my hand to stop him from explaining. "Sold. I'd like to have one of those microchips. If I would have had one weeks ago maybe things would have been different."

Dion reaches out and brushes his knuckles against my cheek. "Yeah. Come on, I'll grab my shit and handle it myself."

"Ten minutes," Spence reminds him. "I want everyone out front in ten minutes."

We head for Dion's room after he's made a quick stop in a room with technical stuff. I look away when he inserts the chip. The whole process doesn't take more than a few minutes. We quickly throw on our bulletproof vests.

Dion straps on his weapons when he asks, "Do you know how to shoot a gun?"

"Yes," I automatically reply.

A proud grin slides across his face. "Good."

He hands me a small handgun in a holster and when I've placed it on my belt, he hands me a small switchblade.

"I don't have to ask if you know how to use this." The corner of his mouth twitches.

We stroll out of the room and out the front door. There are ten bikers standing in front of the clubhouse. I haven't seen the old ladies this morning, but I'm sure they are around somewhere. Maybe I should ask, on the other hand, we have different things to handle right now.

Dion leans in next to my ear and he murmurs, “You’re on the back of my bike.”

“Perfect,” I tell him, my belly flutters as if a flock of butterflies is having a private celebration at the thought of being pressed close against him.

I know how much it means to him, and to me. Even if I’ve been on the back of his bike before, it’s different now that he’s claimed me as his. Dion straddles his bike and I get on behind him. My arms wrap around his strong waist and I press my front to his back.

Placing my head against the back of his shoulder, I tell him, “No place I’d rather be than right here with you.”

His hand goes to my thigh and he gives me a squeeze, letting his palm slide up and down my leg. Our moment is broken when Spence orders everyone to get in line as he rides off. Dion takes his place right next to Spence and the others form a line behind us.

Anxiety flares as soon as we hit the road. This is it. Confrontation. How much does my father know? Will we be able to help him? So much is up in the wind and we could be walking straight into a trap. Hell, it’s why I stayed away from the clubhouse in the first place.

I risk a glance over my shoulder at the bikers following behind us. This MC is different. They’ve handled loads of cases in the past. From what I’ve been told Spence’s family has been doing it for decades. If anyone is able to handle this, it would be these guys, right?

Except...nothing in life is ever simple or goes according to plan. I'm a ball of nerves when half of the group falls back and only Spence, Dion, Grayer, and Hawks park in front of my father's clubhouse.

I barely get a glimpse of the rest of the group as they jump off their bikes and scatter in different directions. They have their own orders from what I've heard to cover different angles in case things go to shit. Did I mention I'm a ball of nerves? I have a bad feeling in the pit of my stomach.

The door of the clubhouse swings open and my father barges through, his VP, Ridge, right behind him, followed by a handful of others.

"Taite," my father croaks and I close the distance between us to let him scoop me into his arms. "Fuck. You shouldn't have come, kiddo."

He still keeps me plastered to his side when he hisses to Dion, "You have to get her out of here. I'll wire ten grand to your account if you put her on the back of your bike right now and ride off to an unknown destination."

"Dad." I fist the front of his shirt. "We're here for you."

He glances down at me, eyes filled with sadness and fear. "Too late, sweetheart. It's all gone to shit. Please, go with Dion. He's a good man, he'll keep you safe."

"Well, well, well. If it isn't the long-lost princess," Ridge says from behind my father, his voice tainted with disrespect. "You wouldn't happen to know where my son is now would ya?"

Rodrigo is currently rotting his sleezy corpse off, I mentally answer. Except, it's not something I can say out loud with eight members of my father's MC standing across four Broken Deeds MC members. Even if I know there are other men in place; right here, right now, we're still outnumbered.

"Why don't you guys head inside," my father snaps.

Ridge's arm swings forward and he has a gun aimed at my father's head before I can so much as blink. "I don't think so, Mercer. This bitch needs to give me some answers. You too for that matter. It's no fucking coincidence that you sent my son and Brock to pick something up last night and while they didn't return she suddenly shows up alive and well? Not buying it. She's going to tell me right now where Rodrigo and Brock are or I'm gonna take matters into my own hands."

"Calm down," Spence rumbles.

Gunfire splices the air around me and there's a warm spray of something hitting my face. Life itself freezes in place as I share one final look into my father's warm eyes as they slowly turn lifeless. I'm unable to scream, unable to move, unable to process what just happened until I'm roughly yanked away as my father's body crumbles to the ground.

More gunfire erupts around us. Movement of bodies, screams, utter turmoil assaults my senses.

"Taite," Dion snaps, and with it rips me from my mental prison.

I reach for the gun strapped to my back and instantly swing my arm forward to fire at the men I've known all my life, but who are now clearly my enemy. Dion grunts beside

me and I catch movement from beside the clubhouse. More gunfire, bodies jerking, and then there's nothing but silence.

CHAPTER NINE

– DION –

I scan my surroundings and take in the bodies scattered over the ground. The only ones standing are wearing a Broken Deeds cut. I whip my head in the direction of Taite and quickly check for any injuries.

“You okay?” I question.

Her eyes are wide with shock, but she surprises the hell out of me when she snaps, “Help him.”

I follow the direction she’s pointing in and see Scout clawing at his chest as his knees buckle. My training kicks in and I rush toward him. Hawks reaches our brother at the same time I do and he’s holding my medical bag, already sliding it open for me, and throwing gloves in my direction.

Scout’s black clothes are drenched and I inwardly curse when I see the damage as I start to rip away the fabric. His bulletproof vest might have stopped two bullets, but there’s another one that hit a spot left unprotected.

Deep down I know it’s useless, and I can feel his life slipping away right under my fucking fingers, but I keep trying to find the artery the bullet clearly hit. A string of curses rips from me the moment I realize my efforts have failed. Pulling my bloody, gloved hands back, I check what I already know deep down.

“Fuck,” Hawks croaks and adds over his shoulder to Spence, “We lost Scout.”

“Change gloves, VP,” Spence orders. “Roux is bleeding out all over the place.”

I snap the gloves from my hands and accept the new ones Hawks is holding out as I get to my feet. There’s no time to think or so much as have a sliver of grief or sadness. I jog in the direction Spence is telling me Roux is and to my surprise I see Taite pressing a cloth to Roux’s thigh.

“Did you do this?” I ask her as I assess the makeshift tourniquet.

“Yes.” Her eyes find mine and she whispers under her breath, “Blood was pulsing out.”

I give her a slight nod and press my hand against hers. “I’m gonna take over and I need you to switch to my other side. Hold his attention, okay?”

She moves to my other shoulder and I hear her voice when she starts talking to Roux. Movement catches my eye and I notice the EMTs getting to the scene. Thank fuck Spence always makes sure we have at least two ambulances standing by when we head into a confrontation that can go either way. This particular one going bad real fucking fast.

A few minutes later we have Roux loaded into the ambulance and I’m removing once again my bloody gloves as I glance around me. Spence is talking to Remmer. He works for the government and is an in-between guy who cleans up scenes for us and handles the local authorities.

We have the man on speed dial for situations like the one we’re in now. Being undercover is messy, and when bodies drop like flies there is a lot to handle. Not only by the

local authorities, or for Remmer, but our job needs to continue without cuffs being slapped around our wrists.

Especially when I don't see Ridge's body among the dead ones littering the floor. I do notice my strong woman standing over her father's body. Her father's death started the shootout and yet she didn't turn into a sobbing mess. She pushed through it and handled herself like the strong person she is.

I'm pretty damn sure Roux wouldn't have made it if it wasn't for her. The bullet hit an artery and he would have bled out if she didn't apply the tourniquet. No fucking hesitation: she did what needed to be done. My feet move automatically and I scoop her into my arms.

She sags against me. "Why?" she cries out. "This is what I wanted to prevent. It shouldn't have happened. He didn't have to die. Why, Dion? Why?"

"I know, darlin'," I murmur. "I fucking know."

There's nothing I can say that will ease the loss of her father, or the situation he was caught up in. I have a feeling his death was inevitable. They wanted him gone months ago and had set things in motion, using his daughter as a pawn.

"Ridge is in the wind," Spence grumbles as he steps closer.

Taite goes rigid in my arms.

"We don't know where he might be going?" I question while Taite stays silent.

Spence rubs the back of his neck. "My guess would be the cartel. It's safe to say he doesn't have any reason to stick

around with the club ripped to shreds. We have detained seven members, the rest are dead. He doesn't have any backup. I sent Remi over to his house so we will know if he shows up there. We have a prospect, Teddy, still keeping watch over the cartel's home base and another one is keeping an eye on the other property they own. Ridge will show up soon enough. I made sure everyone is aware of what he's wanted for, so if they can't apprehend or things turn tricky? There's an aim to kill order."

The information Spence gives me flows freely, even if I'm holding Taite. He's updating me as if she wasn't standing here and I greatly appreciate it. The show of trust in my old lady, knowing she can handle every damn detail he's throwing out.

"What's going to happen now?" Taite questions.

"We're going to take 'em all down," Spence growls with a load of venom in his voice. "First, we're going to pay our respects to those we loved, while keeping an eye open to make sure those fucks don't slip through our fingers or take us by surprise again." His voice goes soft when he adds, "I'm sorry for your loss, Taite. It shouldn't have gone down like that."

She doesn't say anything but does offer a slight nod of recognition for his words.

"Take her back to the clubhouse and oversee the information flow," Spence orders. "I want to know where Ridge will pop up, and he fucking will show his damn face. I want everyone in church, full table, as soon as we're done handling the blowback of this clusterfuck. Understood?"

“Yeah, Prez,” I grunt and lead Taite toward my bike.

Her eyes are empty when I place a helmet on her head and fix the strap under her chin. She doesn't say one single thing as I straddle my bike and she slides back on. Her arms wrap around me and her head is placed against the back of my shoulder.

Defeat is radiating from her and leaks into my body, tugging at my heartstrings, from what this strong woman has suffered in these past few weeks. I'd want nothing more than to promise her things will get better. Unfortunately, life can kick you in the kneecaps at any given moment.

The ride to the clubhouse doesn't calm my emotions. If anything, I'm now more aware of how easily Taite could have been ripped out of my life. Hell, the fact her father received a bullet to the head right in front of us is proof of how fucked-up everything is.

Lynn and Penny are standing in front of the clubhouse when I park my bike and are rushing toward us. Both of them are flanking my old lady as they guide her inside. They don't even give me a spare glance and it's something I respect.

This is not about me; they are showing my old lady support. Spence must have reached out to his old lady, it's the only explanation why they would know Taite needs some girl time. Even if I want to be the one to hold her and be there for her.

My phone rings and I pull it from my pocket, Teddy's name flashes across the screen as I grunt, “What's up?”

Teddy doesn't say anything, all I hear is rustling and incoherent grunts—as if he's fighting someone—and then the line goes dead. I try to call him back, but he doesn't pick up. Not. Fucking. Good. Teddy is the prospect who's keeping an eye on the cartel's house.

I shoot a text to Fawkes and order him to check on Teddy. I jog into the main room of the clubhouse and my gaze instantly connects with Taite. She's sitting on the couch, Lynn and Penny on each side. Their heads turn my way too, eyes assessing me as I stride in the direction of church.

“I need to handle something,” I simply clarify and all three nod and instantly dismiss me.

Closing the door behind me, I thumb the screen of my phone and call Spence. He picks up on the third ring and I explain the weird call I just received. Spence is on his way to the clubhouse and instead of heading out with a team to check on Teddy, we decide to wait for Fawkes to get back with us with details and form said team first.

I fire off a text to Mikael, Leo, and Grayer to head to church. Hawks and Grayer are with Spence and will be here any minute. Prez told me Remi is at the hospital to keep an eye on Roux and update us as soon as he's out of surgery. The door opens and a few of my brothers stroll inside. Spence and the others join us a handful of minutes later.

“He doesn't have a microchip yet,” I state the obvious.

Teddy is still a prospect. Only full members receive a microchip, and the old ladies at the request of the one who claimed them.

“I checked the camera feed,” Spence grunts. “Brock is still tied to the chair in the middle of the cell where we left him. No one fucking knows his whereabouts or the fact that we have him. The only thing I can think of is that Teddy has been made, but the fucker wouldn’t compromise his position, nor is he wearing his prospect cut.”

Spence rubs two fingers against his jaw. “Ridge could have headed to Eloy’s house and stumbled on him watching the place.”

“We’re heading over there?” I state the obvious.

“Yes.” Spence meets my gaze. “We should hear from Fawkes any minute now. We have no clue what we’re walking in on.” He checks his watch. “It’s been twenty minutes since the call from Teddy. I’m contacting Fawkes.”

He pulls his phone and jabs the screen. Same as Teddy; he’s not answering his phone.

“Fuck,” I grunt and reach for Roux’s laptop.

Logging into the system I check Fawkes’s microchip.

Turning the screen, I show it to Spence. “At least his heart is still beating, but the fucker is inside Eloy Mireya’s house.”

Muttered curses flow through the room.

Spence gets to his feet. “We’re heading out and taking two cars. No bikes. I don’t want these fuckers knowing we’re coming for them.”

The door to church opens and Deeds, Spence’s father, steps inside. “A car just dumped a body on our property.”

We all rush out and check the cameras first.

“Everyone stay here,” Spence snaps.

I hold a hand out to stop him.

Shrugging me off Spence grunts, “I’m still wearing Kevlar. Keep everyone here while I check outside.”

Lynn steps out of the kitchen and her old man is already giving her a shake of his head. Her eyes meet mine and I repeat the same movement as Deeds. She huffs out a breath and steps back into the kitchen. I’m sure Penny and my woman are in there too.

Thank fuck Penny loves to cook and bake. At least they didn’t see what just happened, although nothing seems to ever slip by Lynn. My attention slides to the security feed and I watch my prez brace himself on his knees as he checks out the body.

Spence snags something from the body. I notice how his shoulders slump as he takes his phone and jabs the screen before tucking it back. He drags his feet while he wanders back to the clubhouse.

The door opens and Spence points at Leo and Grayer. “Head out and stand by Teddy’s body. Remmer will be here to collect the body and make the arrangements.”

Spence hands me the note and I take it from him to read it.

This is a one and done warning. You fucked with the MC I needed so you’re now working for me. If not, all of you

will end up like your buddy, and I'll start with the other one I have locked up in my basement. Two of you will meet me at the address below at noon. Bring Brock and we'll swap minions.

“Motherfucker,” I grumble and rub a hand over my face.

“Everyone else, church. Now,” Spence snaps and stomps in that direction.

Taite jogs out of the kitchen and heads straight to me. “What’s wrong?”

There’s no sense in denying or holding back information. Taite is the kind of woman who can handle herself flawlessly. Not to mention, keeping details can be blinding in these situations and I’d rather have her brilliant mind throw up suggestions if she has them.

“Teddy, one of our prospects, was keeping an eye on Eloy’s home. He called me about half an hour ago. Didn’t say shit, heard rustling and then the call ended. I couldn’t get ahold of him so I sent Fawkes to check on him while I gathered some of the brothers in church to wait for Spence.” I throw a thumb over my shoulder in the direction of the feed of the camera out front. “A body was just dumped with a note. Eloy killed Teddy and Fawkes’s microchip shows he’s being held inside the fucker’s house.”

She releases a deep sigh. “What did the note say?”

“Basically, a threat how they lost one MC because of us and we now work for him. He wants a meeting at noon, one

where we trade Brock for Fawkes.”

Taite steps closer and places her palm against my chest as she lowers her voice. “You can’t trust anything Eloy says. It’s exactly how this thing with my father’s MC started.”

“How?” Spence asks, suddenly standing beside us.

My old lady’s head turns to my prez. “From what I overheard, one of their girls got into a fight with one of theirs. Both girls ended up dead. I have no clue how or why, just that the club had a deal on the table, one my father didn’t want. Clearly, the club was divided.”

“Probably a setup as well,” I grit.

Spence bobs his head. “Agreed. Though, they’re shit out of luck if they think it’s going to go down the same road as the other MC.” He winces. “Sorry, Taite.”

Taite swallows hard and gives him a slight inclination of her head. I wrap my arm around her waist and pull her against my body. She sinks against me and I bury my face into her hair to breathe her in. It’s a mutual moment of comfort.

I lift my head and tell my prez, “You should bring Roux up to speed as soon as his head is cleared from the anesthesia. I’m sure he’d want something to do and can make his fingers dance over his keyboard to see if there’s any trace that this cartel pulled the same shit with other MCs.”

“Right.” Spence palms his phone. “Gonna have someone drop a laptop off at the hospital. I want you in church when you’re ready.”

He stalks off while my attention slides to the woman still snuggled against my chest.

“You okay?” I rumble.

“No,” she grumbles with a load of emotion in just those two letters.

I hug her tighter and rub my jaw against the top of her head and murmur, “Hang in there, darlin’. Even life will get tired from kicking you in the balls.”

She snorts and it’s the reaction I was aiming for.

Lifting her head, she connects her gorgeous eyes with mine. “You’d better head into church. Let me know if I can help in any way.”

“Stay with the other old ladies and wait for me,” I muse. “I’m pretty sure Spence will agree to the meet at noon and trade, but that’s as far as it’ll go. We will take them out except going in guns blazing won’t be a good thing.”

She winces. “A vivid reminder of what happened earlier today.”

Fuck. She’s right. Instead of giving her words of comfort, I lean in and take her mouth. Her eyes fall shut and she sinks into the kiss. Our tongues brush against one another and the sensual touch flares heat and longing to fully claim her as mine in every way.

Taite’s arm circles my neck and she presses herself against me. My hard length is cradled between our bodies and I take it as a good thing that she’s not shying away from me. Everyone reacts differently to traumatic events and this strong woman I’m holding in my arms is a fucking mountain that resisted a truckload of damage Mother Nature threw at her.

I tear my mouth from hers. Both of us are fighting for our breath. From the reaction of both our bodies, I'd say we're both balancing on the edge of lust and desire on a whole new level.

"I'll be waiting for you to come back in one piece," she says with a determined voice and fucking grinds her lower body against my hard-on when she adds, "Especially this part."

I can only stare as she spins around and struts off in the direction of the kitchen, disappearing out of sight without so much as a glance over her shoulder.

Fuck. I adjust myself and close my eyes for a few heartbeats to regain some focus. Because right now all I want to do is run into the kitchen, throw my old lady over my shoulder, and bury my cock balls deep, and keep pounding until the both of us light up like fucking fireworks.

Soon.

Very. Fucking. Soon.

First, though? There's business to be handled; retaliation to plan, a brother to save, and a cartel to rip to shreds.

CHAPTER TEN

Two weeks later

– TAITE –

“I love waking up to find you in the kitchen, breakfast done for everyone,” Penny says as she strolls into the kitchen.

Penny releases a deep sigh and sinks into one of the chairs. I grab the plate filled with pancakes and place it in front of her.

She jerks her chin in the direction of the food. “Did you make this for Dion?”

I place a knife and fork beside her plate. “Like you said, I made enough for everyone so I’ll fix him another plate. I’m pretty sure he’s still sleeping.”

Penny snatches the fork and practically attacks her pancakes before I have a chance to place the syrup and fresh fruit on the table. A lot has happened in these past two weeks. The funerals, along with everything that happened have brought everyone closer. I can’t imagine where I would be if it wasn’t for these people, this club, my old man.

Deep down I know I would be in the ground along with my father and the rest of the men of his MC. These past few days I’ve gained partial clarity about what went on inside my father’s club. Though, some parts will always remain unexplainable.

For one the nagging question if my father knew what they did to me. If he was in on the deal that involved me

marrying Eloy's son. The fact remains that my father reached out to a retired detective for help, who in return brought it to Broken Deeds MC's attention. My father was also the one who reported me missing, who gave Dion the dog tags to hold onto them only to return them if he could place them in my hands.

It's complicated and every detail of everything is dragging me down. Add seeing my father killed right in front of me, his funeral, other people of this MC who were there to help me, got hurt, were killed...I felt like I was drowning while being rooted to the ground on a bright and sunny day.

Then there are mornings like this, where I get up early and get my hands busy. People walk in, compliment me, enjoy the simplicity of the food, and bring a small smile to my face. I feel useful like I belong.

"How are you feeling today?" I ask and shoot her a glance over my shoulder as I fix Dion a plate.

She rubs her tummy and I smile due to the whole pregnancy glow she's sporting.

"Hungry at the moment, so I feel more than awesome with these in front of me." She grins and shovels another forkful of pancake into her mouth.

"That's good to hear," Spence rumbles as he steps into the kitchen.

I grab a mug and fill it with coffee.

"Thanks, T," Spence mumbles as I place it on the table in front of him.

"You're welcome, Prez."

Spence grins, as if he knows I called him Prez because he called me T, but doesn't let his eyes stray away from his old lady. Ever since Dion started calling me T, everyone else switched from Taite to T.

“VP awake yet?” Spence questions without looking up.

I shove my thumb over my shoulder. “I was just about to bring him breakfast.”

“The fucker deserves his beauty sleep. Last night was bad.” Spence turns to face me. “The cartel found the safe house we put the women in.”

Dion gave me a hint of information yesterday, right before he left, and when he slipped between the covers a few hours ago. Spence received a call and they all got on their bikes and left the clubhouse.

All Dion said when he gave me a kiss was that the women working for my father's old club were at risk. Then, when he got home, he told me they were all dead.

I feel myself deflate as I lean back against the counter. “He mentioned it was bad.”

“We suspect one bitch had the hots for Eloy and managed to get a hold of a cell phone to ask if he could send someone to pick her up. Well, the fucker sent a whole team to paint the fucking house red by the time we got there,” Spence growls.

Penny places a hand on Spence's thigh and he instantly calms. Their connection radiates love. The weeks I've been here showed me as much. At first sight, some might think Penny is a wallflower, but from what I've seen and heard the

woman has planted some strong roots and blooms beautifully. She's exactly what Spence needs, and the perfect president's old lady this club requires.

“I can't believe people are completely selfish, risking the life of others for their own benefit.” The whole thing leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

Lives were lost for one girl with a desire that was a failure from the start. Men like Eloy will never take a woman that they've put to work as a girlfriend or wife. It showed all too clearly with how Eloy treated his son Brock.

Dion told me when they traded Fawkes for Brock, Eloy only looked at his son once. When he was pulled out of the van and Dion said the fucker had a look of surprise on his damn face as if he didn't think Brock was still alive.

That right there shows how much Eloy cares about blood and family. All Eloy had eyes for was Spence and the demands he relayed to him. I have no clue what was said, but I do know Broken Deeds MC needed time to get things set.

They didn't want a repeat of what happened at my father's clubhouse. With everything happening at once they had to do some serious damage control and plan an attack to wipe out the cartel and make sure innocent people stay alive.

This makes last night hit harder than ever because some of those innocent people in question were the women the cartel trades in and put to work in the whorehouses that were owned by my father's MC.

“Most people don't possess the strength to stand up for others and would rather use them as a pedestal to get to where

they want to be in life,” Spence grimly states.

“Yeah,” I croak and turn to face the plate with Dion’s breakfast to quickly wipe the tears from my cheeks.

The reminder of how I reacted when everything started with this cartel, what I went through and endured...these last few weeks—and especially my father’s death—has hit me hard with the thoughts of “what if.” What if I reacted differently? What if I told my father the first time I was attacked? What if my father told me the club needed me to marry Brock?

“Hey,” Spence rumbles as he places his hand on my elbow to make me face him. “I can tell your mind is throwing all kinds of shit up inside your head, but that won’t change the stuff that’s in the past. I can only tell you that if that woman for instance had a fragment of your loyalty many people would still be alive this morning. Think about that, okay? You already made a difference, and everyone here knows it.”

I can only bob my head and let his words seep into my brain. Deep down I know he’s right. Yet, there’s still a lot to process and everything feels raw. Especially with what happened last night and seeing the toll it takes on all of these men.

“Go bring your old man some breakfast. Fuck knows we all need a good start to the day.” He sighs and regains his seat next to Penny.

I grab a mug for Dion and fill it with coffee before I grab his plate and ask Spence, “What time does he need to be in church?”

“Two hours from now. I’m waiting for the final approval from the government to end this shit,” Spence informs me.

I give him an appreciative nod, relishing the honest and open information he shares with me. “There are more pancakes on the stove if she’s still hungry.”

Spence rises from his seat. “My woman doesn’t need to be hungry to eat once she starts. Thank fuck she’s eating which means the nausea is at bay so I’ll get her some more.”

Penny grins at me and it puts a smile on my face. I might not have any family left, but through Dion, I’ve gained a completely new one. Strolling out of the kitchen, I head straight for Dion’s room and open the door with my elbow. I manage to softly close the door behind me and place the mug and plate on the bedside table.

Dion’s still sleeping on his back and I take a moment to stare at him. His face is relaxed and the rugged handsomeness of his neatly trimmed beard, muscled shoulders, strong arms, and abs that are partly covered by the sheet.

We’ve grown close over the past weeks. Intimate moments, deep conversations, everything has a growing foundation of our relationship. Our kisses have turned frantic and more demanding with each passing day.

Two weeks ago, I was ready to try and have sex with him, knowing it would be different with Dion, and I was more than ready to surpass my trauma. Except, when they returned with Fawkes—who had been tortured to near death—the moment wasn’t right.

Seeing Dion lying naked in bed...and I know he's naked because we ditched clothes last week when we sleep; another move forward in our relationship. To be ourselves, comfortably, with one another.

I reach out and let my fingertips glide over my man's strong chest. Longing spreads my veins and I lick my lips as the urge rises inside me to kiss every inch of his skin. There's a flicker of doubt holding me back. Will I be able to actually have him inside me and not think about those men raping me? Shit. I'm thinking about it now.

"Always go for what you want, T," Dion rumbles with his eyes closed. "Life's too short to put shit off or try later. Later might never fucking come."

He's right. Why overthink when deep down I know what I want? Pushing everything to the back of my mind I strip away my clothes until I'm fully naked. The rustling of clothes caused Dion's eyes to land on mine.

Desire, lust, and adoration warm his light blue eyes, and it's all aimed at me. He reaches for the coffee and brings the mug to his lips, taking a few sips as if he needs to break the moment between us.

There's a growing bulge tenting the sheets and it's obvious the move to sip coffee did nothing to calm the desire to have me. The feeling is mutual and it gives me the strength to place one knee on the bed and swing my other leg over so I'm straddling him.

He places the mug back on the bedside table and lets his hands find my waist. I lean forward to kiss him, tasting fresh coffee on his tongue as he deepens the kiss. Desire heats

my veins and the sound of a moan rumbling through his chest makes me grind my pussy against him. There's only a thin sheet separating our naked bodies.

“You gonna give me my first breakfast in bed, darlin’?” he rumbles against my lips. “Straddle my face and let me eat you out. I’m dying to taste you.”

My breath hitches. I’m definitely not a virgin, but sitting on a man’s face? Nope. Never done that. My heart skips a beat with the knowledge that I would be in full control. Hell, I could smother him if I put all my weight on his face.

He gives my hips an encouraging squeeze. Unnecessary, though. I made up my mind and easily crawl up his body and grab the headboard to balance myself. Staring down in Dion’s eyes causes my heart to bounce around inside my chest.

Holy shit. The look he gives me is pure heat. If there was any doubt about how he felt about me? It’s completely burned to the ground within this moment. This man makes me feel as if I’m the only woman in this world.

He’s seeing beyond the scars littering my skin, honors those who are etched into my brain, and respects the edges of limitations of our intimacy. Although, right now, he’s obliterating my limitations one lick at a time.

I’m completely enthralled by the sight before me. Our eyes stay locked while his tongue is teasing my swollen flesh. He alternates by flicking my clit and making me gasp due to the shot of pure pleasure shooting through me.

My knuckles are white from gripping the headboard. I shamelessly grind down on his face, seeking pleasure as he somehow inserts a finger deep inside me. A moan rumbles from him, vibrating against my pussy and it's a guarantee of bliss hitting me hard and fast.

“Dioooooonn,” I scream and throw my head back to surrender to the intense sensation of pleasure he gives me.

I'm gasping for my next breath and for once my body isn't fighting the darkness that comes with closing my eyes. There are only the tingles of rapture flowing through me in soft waves. My chest is heaving as I blink and slowly glance down.

Dion is still licking me, eyes closed as if he too is caught in the moment with me. My whole body shudders and it's then I realize I succeeded in shutting the door of the past behind me. Right here in this bed, I've overcome the final step of my trauma by being intimate with the man who opened up my future.

He's the one who deserves the credit for spinning my life around to deviate from vengeance and focus on getting justice while working on a whole new bright and shiny future. Okay, he's partly selfish; wanting to share said bright and shiny future along with me.

I awkwardly move back to straddle his belly while Dion's upper body rises along with me. His beard is glistening and he licks his lips while I can feel my cheeks heat. His face is covered with my wetness, and he brushes his fingers along my wet and swollen pussy.

He doesn't seem to mind I'm all over him, or so much as wipe it away. No. He likes it. If the orgasm he gave me with his mouth wasn't indication enough, licking his lips gave another hint, but the way the man savors me when he brings his fingers to his mouth to get another taste? There's no shred of embarrassment, uncomfortableness, or any other negative feeling, or memory, tainting this moment we share together.

"No better way to start my day," Dion rumbles and closes the distance between our lips to give me a kiss.

There's no time to think when his tongue dives into my mouth and brushes against mine. I can clearly taste myself, but it only heightens the pleasure that's still simmering inside me. A jolt of lust hits me low in my belly when Dion's groan rumbles through me.

What I'm experiencing with my old man feels as if you're throwing back the blinds to open the window and let the fresh air inside so you can breathe in a new day. I feel the sunshine hitting my face, the warmth seeping in, and it's all because of this strong man underneath me.

He brushes his nose against mine. "Won't mind to have you for breakfast every day." Turning his head, he jerks his chin in the direction of the plate with pancakes. "You made those for me?"

I feel the heat of his hard length brushing my ass cheeks and I wonder why he's switching from eating me to pancakes. The heat is still in his eyes when his gaze lands on my hard nipples. My chest warms with realization. He's giving a spin on taking it slow and offers me a chance to save the next step for another time.

That's not going to happen, though. The blinds are thrown back and the windows are wide open to let all the negative out. Only fresh air to breathe in from here on out. Reaching back, I palm his hard length, making him hiss. The corner of my mouth twitches. I definitely have his attention back in this bed between us.

Screw the pancakes.

Dion catches on when I slowly stroke him, and to make sure he knows there's no going back now I add, "Like this is all for me."

"It is," he croaks. "All yours."

If there could be any more heat in his eyes he would be throwing flames right at me. I feel empowered on top of him. There's a desperate need crackling between us. Rising myself on my knees, I place him at my entrance and let my gaze collide with his.

"My test results were all clear and I have an implant to prevent pregnancy. The antibiotics are out of my system, so they won't mess with my implant. I'm fine with using a condom, but you'd better put one on this very second."

He swallows hard. "I'm clean and good with fucking ba—"

I don't let him finish the word "bare" and simply lower myself on his dick. It's a good thing I'm drenched, allowing my pussy to accommodate his thick girth and length. I place my hands on his chest to balance and feel his warmth.

"Fuck, you feel good," Dion grits through clenched teeth. "Motherfucker. Don't move, darlin'."

His hands grip my hips and there's a rush of satisfaction, knowing the power I hold over this strong man. I feel the intense connection between us. There's not only lust, desire, and pleasure. Adoration is lodged deep enough to develop into love as time passes.

Except, right now, time isn't what I'm giving him. I'm taking my pleasure because the fullness of him inside me is overwhelming and I need to move. Rising slowly, I let myself drop down and fall into a rhythm where pleasure is building.

My breathing is choppy, my legs are burning due to the crazy workout, and I set my nails into Dion's shoulders from the intensity of riding his dick. His grunts, my moans, the sound of our bodies connecting, it's an overload that sets off my orgasm.

White hot bliss almost blinds my senses as pleasure overtakes me. I'm faintly aware Dion grips me hard to pull me up and down his dick as his hips rise off the bed a few more time before he erupts inside me.

"Mine!" Dion roars. "All. Fucking. Mine," he groans in a lower awestruck voice.

I fall forward, completely spent, and feel strong arms wrap around my body, keeping me safe and treasured.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

– DION –

Top of the fucking world. That might come close to describing how I'm feeling. I'm wearing a smile that's hurting my cheeks and I'm damn well whistling while taking a shower. Life is far from perfect, but when is it ever? Though, within this moment I'd say it comes pretty damn close.

Such a damn high to be buried inside her sweet body. I had no expectations, but then she surprises the fuck out of me when she stripped naked beside the bed. Tasting her sweet pussy got me rock hard, and I still wouldn't have minded just giving her all the pleasure. Hell, I almost emptied my balls when she screamed my name in ecstasy as she rode my face.

I gave her an out, switching topics to allow her to pace ourselves and take every step as slow as she wanted to. I close my eyes and put my head under the spray of water as I remind myself how it felt when she wrapped her tiny fingers around my thick girth. Fuck.

Like I said, top of the fucking world, claiming my old lady's pussy and branding her inside out with my cum. I've never fucked bare, and I can wholeheartedly say I'm glad to have saved this experience for my old lady.

I hear a murmur of voices through the door and I kill the shower and step out to grab a towel and quickly rub myself dry. Throwing the towel over the rack, I grab my clothes and put them on before I step into the bedroom. There's not a soul in sight.

I take my cut from the chair and put it on. Adding a gun to my belt, I grab my keys and phone and stalk out of the room. Taite and Penny are on the couch, all smiles and rattling while their attention is set on a large black bag my old lady is holding.

Spence wanders out of church and snorts as he comes to a stop beside me. “Congrats on fully claiming your old lady.”

My head whips his way and I glare at my prez. How the fuck does he know, or get the idea Taite and I had sex? Unless Taite told Penny, who in return spilled it to Spence. I bounce my gaze back to the two old ladies and then narrow my eyes at Spence.

He chuckles and smacks my back. “It’s the bag. Well, and the part where you let the whole damn clubhouse shake on its foundation when you roared out ‘mine.’ I swear to fuck my mother could fucking hear it all the way in Ryckerdan.”

I should have a hint of regret, except, I couldn’t care less. It felt amazing in the moment and I wouldn’t change a single thing, not even the volume of my voice when I came harder than ever. So, I focus on something else instead.

“The bag? What the fuck?” I mutter. “What does a bag have to do with the fact that we had sex?”

“My mom.” Spence shrugs as if that explains it all.

Hell, it actually does ’cause it’s not hard to guess. “Please don’t tell me your mother left her a present and made Penny give it to her.”

“Bingo.” Spence chuckles. “Except, she didn’t leave her a present. A box was delivered a week after they got on a plane to return to Ryckerdan. Penny called her to tell her that something was delivered. My ma explained it was for Taite and that Penny should give it to her when she knew Taite and you sealed the deal. Not her exact words. I believe she said, give her the bag after you know she got bagged.” The fucker winces. “I should say I’m sorry. For my ma, and for the fact my woman shares every damn detail. I would have been completely fine with not knowing this women shit. But, man? Keep it down next time with the roaring or have some fun at your cabin. No, better fuck in one of the soundproof interrogation rooms, otherwise you’ll scare the ever-loving-shit out of the wildlife.”

Now it’s my turn to chuckle. Yeah, I know I roared my claim when I came harder than ever inside my woman. And the gift Lynn had ready for her? Even if it’s completely insane, it’s somehow a twisted warm and fuzzy bonding moment. Kinda hard not to take it that way when the two old ladies are wearing huge smiles and are still admiring the...what the fuck?

“Is that a huge damn knife imprint in the leather of the bag?” My head tips back and laughter rips from my throat.

Seeing what kind of bag it really is? I didn’t even have to ask who it was from; it’s self-explainable. There’s no one else who comes up with this shit. I mean, Lynn carries a damn hammer inside her purse, has gifted other women jewelry with hidden weapons, and is as unique as the goodness she fucking spreads in this world.

I stalk to the couch and lean in to take my woman's lips in a quick kiss. "Nice bag, darlin'."

She grins up at me. "Kinda ruins the surprise of me actually having a knife in there, but I absolutely love it."

I'm about to say something else, but Spence suddenly snaps, "Church. Right fucking now. Let's move."

I brush my lips against hers one more time and jog after a few of my brothers who are entering church. Roux slams the door behind him. He's still moving a bit stiffly due to recovering from the bullet he took a few weeks ago. At least he's on the road back to full health and well enough to sit behind his laptop to assist in this case.

"Brock texted me. They are all heading out. His father made him stay behind. Now, this could go either way," Spence starts.

I hold up my hand to ask the question that's pretty much on all of the men's minds sitting at the table, "Why the hell would Brock text you?"

A sneaky grin slides across Spence's face. "Before we traded the fucker off for Fawkes, I made sure to offer him a deal."

"Which was?" I wonder.

"I told him I had enough connections to give him a clean slate. Probably a few months detention in some low-key prison that will feel like a five-star hotel if he gave up his father."

"Do you really think the fucker suddenly decided to take you up on your offer?" Roux grunts. "Especially when

he's been back with his father for the past two weeks? No one breathing down his neck, no torture, no more prospecting. Kinda hard to believe he texts you out of the blue to offer you his father on a silver platter."

"Yeah," Fawkes agrees. "Sounds more like a damn trap if you ask me."

"I don't care. We'll be prepared either way." Spence takes his phone and slides it to Roux. "Brock put a tracker on Eloy's car for me. Link it to your device so you can track it for us when we hit the road." Spence directs his attention toward the rest of us. "I haven't shared these details with you guys yet because I wasn't sure Brock would go for it. He didn't reach out, didn't put the tracker in place, until about twenty minutes ago. I have no clue what happened to change his mind. Sure, maybe he spilled the information to his father and the fucker came up with a plan." Spence shrugs. "Fact is, this could be our chance to go in guns blazing, even if it's a trap."

I nod while I think over the information he just gave us. "Divide into three teams. One goes for the car, which could be a trap. Another team hits the house, and the other stays here in case they think to plan an attack on the clubhouse." I pin my gaze on my prez. "I won't leave my old lady unprotected. While I damn well know she can handle herself, there's no way I would risk having anyone near her that can possibly take or hurt her again."

"Understood. Definitely something we can work with," Spence quickly agrees. "Besides, Roux and Fawkes will be staying at the clubhouse anyway. We'll add two more brothers,

just to be sure. You know both old ladies are able to handle themselves in case they do show up here.”

“Fine,” I rumble. “What’s the plan you have in mind?”

“Brock texted their destination. He’s still at the house, but most of Eloy’s men will be in three vehicles riding in a caravan.” Spence rises from his seat and activates the option to show the map on the laptop behind him on the white wall. “They will be arriving, and going through, this tunnel in about fifty minutes. It will take us twenty minutes to get there so enough time to set things up.”

“Awesome,” Grayer quips. “We could block one side and once they enter the tunnel we can seal it up. If, and that’s still an if, it’s not a trap.”

“Maybe the fucker set everyone up,” Remi offers. “Give his father and the rest to Spence to deal with while making a run for it himself.”

Spence chuckles. “Brock can run, though hiding isn’t going to do him any good. I might have given the fucker a tracker when I was torturing him. I also made sure there wasn’t a way out of this other than death. I’m pretty sure the fucker knows it too. I mean, the history with his father, the lack of a high function, and the way he’s been treated doesn’t leave him with many options.”

“Hence me mentioning he could make a run for it.” Remi chuckles. “What did you do to remind him of his pending death? Duct tape his mouth shut to enhance his other senses and leave him with a bucket of rotting pig’s feet and blood?”

“There’s nothing more motivating than the smell of death hanging in the air.” Spence’s voice is devilish. “I bet the fucker can still smell it, even after two weeks. The mind is such a beautiful thing, memories are locked in there forever.”

“That’s why the fucker doesn’t deserve a fucking deal,” I growl. “He’s one of the fuckers who hurt my old lady.”

The room falls silent as I stare at my prez and long-time friend. I don’t know what the fuck his reasoning is, but I hate the fact that Brock might get away with what he did.

“Yo, Fawkes.” Grayer’s voice doesn’t break my stare down with Spence. His next words do grab our attention. “Please tell me Eloy wasn’t as resourceful as Prez here to shove something up your ass that tracks us.”

Grayer’s chuckle mixes with some of the other brothers. Spence and I don’t think it’s funny. Not. At. Fucking. All.

“Everyone, gear up,” Spence snaps. “I’ve already put some shit in motion and I want all of you out front and on your bikes within ten fucking minutes. Roux, Spence, you two stay put. The rest of you? Get the hell out of here and shut the door behind you.”

Chairs scrape over the floor along with the sound of footsteps, and finally, the door slams shut.

Spence’s head whips Roux’s way. “I want you to put Fawkes in the special room and scan his private space along with his shit. Now.”

Roux bobs his head and moves out of the room.

“Do you think it’s a possibility?” I throw out the doubt that’s triggered for both of us.

Spence shrugs. “Don’t know. While I’m sure Eloy isn’t the type to put a chip in someone, I also won’t simply assume he wouldn’t. The fucker knows where we’re located. Hell, he delivered Scout to our fucking doorstep. Though, he could have put a tab on Fawkes’s phone, a tiny mic hidden somewhere on his stuff. As I said, I don’t want to take any chances. And why the fuck didn’t we think of this when he picked him up?”

“Because most criminals don’t do the shit we do,” I offer.

Spence stalks to the door and bellows, “Roux, update. Now.”

“Gimme a sec,” he bellows back from the hallway.

I glance over my shoulder and enjoy the small glimpse I’m getting from Penny and Taite chatting on the couch. The two enjoy each other’s company, and it warms my heart to know Taite has found her place here with me.

Roux slowly makes his way toward us and holds something between his thumb and finger. “A bug. I isolated it when I removed the device from his phone. Thank fuck Fawkes left it in his room and not had it on him in church.”

“Fawkes hates phones, anything electronic for that matter. He never takes the thing into church and only has it on him if he’s going out. He does it as a necessity so we can reach him,” Spence tells Roux.

I bob my head, aware of the information prez just shared. It's not common knowledge, though.

"Want me to—" I start, but Spence cuts me off.

"No, we'll both handle it. We're losing our window of opportunity when it comes to nailing Eloy." He steps around Roux and jogs in the direction of the room Roux put Fawkes in.

I'm right behind Spence when he opens the door and growls, "Your phone was bugged, asshole."

Fawkes's eyes widen. "The fuck?"

"Yeah, that's pretty much our reaction as well." I flick the lock and turn back to face Fawkes.

"I swear I had no clue. They beat the shit out of me, it's not like I kept track of my stuff. Everything was in my pockets when you guys dragged me back to the clubhouse." Fawkes shakes his head. "You gotta believe me, I didn't fucking know."

"We don't have time for this shit," Spence snarls, and I feel a bit shitty we're doing it this way, but we have to be sure. "Tell me, Fawkes. Did they offer you something?"

His eyes bounce around and the seconds ticking by where he doesn't answer is all-fucking-telling.

"They did," I state. "Tell us—"

"They tried, okay?" Fawkes sinks into a chair and grabs his head. "They tortured me and tried to get answers, but I didn't tell 'em shit or agree to work for them. I'd never...I'd rather die." His head whips up. "You two know about my

background. How my father was a rat, causing them to come after me and my mother. Fuck. Never. You hear me?”

His voice is a mere whisper, but his words are loud and clear. Spence and I do know how his father cared more about saving his own life than protecting his family. They didn't even lay a finger on him, offered him ten grand and he gave up the location of his wife and kid. Prime witnesses of the assassination of a lawyer by some mafia fucker.

Fawkes was ten years old at the time. He barely survived and that's the reason he went into the army at a very young age, law enforcement after that, and ultimately catching the attention of Broken Deeds MC. He's loyal, we know it. Hell, it's radiating from his eyes.

I check my watch. “We need to go.”

Spence points at Fawkes. “Is he coming, staying, or keeping watch? Those wounds they inflicted on him could be done to cover his ass 'cause he's working for them.”

Fawkes jumps to his feet, eyes spitting fire when he snarls at me, “Did he say that shit to your woman? Did she have to explain what they did, every carve of their knife, boot to the gut, water flowing over your face while they had it covered with plastic? No, wait. They did other shit, didn't they? Do you think she'd rat on you? Cause I sure as fuck won't and if anyone who is not Broken Deeds would come through the door? I'd kill first, nudge the body later to see if there's an answer as to why the fuck that person would show up. That's my state of mind right now.” Fawkes's head turns in the direction of Spence. “Besides wanting to punch Prez here in the fucking dick for doubting me.”

“Well,” Spence quips. “I guess he’s staying, huh?”

“Yeah.” I punch Fawkes in the shoulder. “Don’t bring my old lady into a discussion again or you’ll be the one being punched in the balls.”

He winces. “Sorry, VP.”

“Just stay here and keep your eyes open,” I order.

“Yo, Prez.” Fawkes points at a device sitting on the desk. “I have a device that scrambles frequencies. You know how I am when it comes to technical shit. My phone was right next to it ever since I got back.”

I know he speaks the truth. The guy hasn’t left the clubhouse and is still recovering from some injuries he sustained when he was captured and tortured by Eloy.

Spence lifts his chin and turns on his heel. We leave the room and I only have time to shoot my old lady a wink before we’re out the door, heading for our bikes. I grab my bulletproof vest and strap it on. One team of brothers is riding off, heading for Eloy’s house.

I resist the desire to shoot a glance at the clubhouse as I put in my earpiece to stay in contact with everyone. The urge to stay and keep my woman safe is tightening my chest. Knowing she can handle herself, and has Penny, along with a few brothers at her back is what forces me to straddle my bike. Spence hits the throttle and I follow.

Time to end the final pieces of this fucked-up case I got handed months ago. I never thought it would lead me to my old lady. The good and the bad always mix and I’m more

than ready to force a balance; put the bad shit behind us to pave a path to a future.

Hopefully with all of us still breathing. That sure as fuck will be a good thing.

CHAPTER TWELVE

– DION –

“Truck is in place and ready to block the exit once they enter the tunnel.” Mikael’s voice comes through my earpiece loud and clear.

“Brock’s tracker indicates he’s still at his father’s house. Tracker on Eloy’s car shows he’s still on the move and heading in your direction,” Roux updates all of us.

Roux is sitting in church behind his computer to oversee this operation. A few of us have a bodycam so he also has a visual. He always makes sure there’s backup on standby, as well as ambulances. Whatever we need, guidance through traffic in pursuit of a suspect; he’ll make it happen.

The voice filling my ear next makes my heart leap in my chest. “All clear at the clubhouse. Roux checked through a traffic cam, three cars back-to-back, Eloy’s car is in the middle.”

“Nice to hear you’ve joined the team,” Spence rumbles.

“Sitting on my thumb isn’t an option, Prez,” Taite throws back with a load of sass in her voice, but it switches to clipped and direct when she adds, “Penny wasn’t feeling well. I told her to lie down and take a nap. I’ll check on her in a bit.”

“Appreciate it,” Spence grunts.

“Now we wait,” I rumble and park the bike near the entrance of the tunnel.

We're hiding behind a stroke of trees and bushes. From this location, we can see them coming while we stay unnoticed. Once they've disappeared into the tunnel we can head in while the other side is blocked.

The comforting rush of adrenaline filters through my veins. It's something I'm all too familiar with and I welcome it. I double-check my weapons to kill time. We all stay silent until Roux gives us the final warning that the cars are approaching.

There's no other traffic and it's why Mikael instantly fires back, "Truck is in place, exit is blocked."

"Showtime," Spence muses as we have a visual of the three cars. "Roux, keep an eye on any incoming traffic. We don't want stray bullets flying in case innocents approach the tunnel."

"On it, Prez," Roux grunts.

I block everything out and once the three cars dive into the tunnel, that's when we start our bikes and follow behind them. Darkness surrounds us and we keep our distance, wanting to confront them when they reach the end of the tunnel and realize the exit is blocked.

The screech of tires lets us know they've been confronted with the truck blocking them. Voices instantly flow through the air and the cars, along with the light of the tunnel come into view. I can clearly see Mikael pulling a gun while at the same time, two other brothers back him up.

Car doors fly open, and men pour out, one of them Eloy as gunfire erupts. I'm slowing my bike when there's a

sudden explosion. Did someone hit a gas tank? There's no time to think when there's a secondary explosion. It's so damn destructive that I'm pretty sure they either had dynamite, chemicals, fireworks, what-the-fuck-ever in their car that set it off.

The tunnel is collapsing and from the corner of my eye I see Spence turning his bike, as are the others around me. I manage to do the same. All of us rip it open to get ahead of it as the tunnel slowly collapses behind us.

We screech to a halt when we get out. I hit the kickstand and jump off, gun drawn to face the entrance. It's useless, though. There's no way anyone is still alive if they were following us.

"Mikael. Update on what's happening on your side," Spence bellows. "Answer me, dammit."

I whip my head around to make sure all the brothers that were behind me got out safe. Thank fuck we're whole on this side.

There's static until finally Mikael croaks, "Whoever thought doing this in a tunnel was a good idea needs to be fucked up their ass with a steel rod."

Spence winces. "Anyone hurt?"

"None of our brothers on this side. Those cartel fuckers? They didn't stand a fucking chance. It's on them, though. Who the hell knew those idiots had explosives or what the fuck was that?"

"You got me," I mutter. "Must have hit a gas tank that set off whatever they were transporting in the back of that car."

“Roux, get a team here. Search and rescue. We need teams to get those out who are still breathing and lock their asses up. Also, make sure the authorities are aware of this road blockage. Dammit,” Spence grumbles. “I don’t even wanna think about the fucking paperwork it’ll cost me. Why did I think a tunnel would be a good option to lock them in safely?”

I wince at Mikael’s steel rod statement and mutter, “No one expected them to have anything in their car that would set off an explosion. I mean, shit like hitting a gas tank that’s followed by an explosion only happens in the fucking movies.”

Spence rubs a hand over his face. “At this point, I’m kinda thinking it’s our luck when it comes to craziness like this shit hitting us hard and fast.”

“Trespasser club grounds,” Roux snaps. “Three, maybe four.”

“I’m heading to Penny’s room,” Taite states.

My eyes connect with Spence and without a word, we’re both straddling our bikes. Two of our brothers stay behind to keep an eye on the tunnel and wait for backup to take over as six of us head back to the clubhouse.

“Talk to me, Roux,” I grunt. “How many, and what are they doing?”

“Can’t see, they—” Roux’s voice goes dead.

I give my prez a quick glance before focusing on the road ahead of me. “Can you hear me?”

Spence keeps his gaze forward. We’re still five minutes out, even if we’re riding full speed.

“I hear you,” Spence states. “The only explanation for Roux to be cut off from us is that they’ve cut the power.”

I grit my teeth. Anger and fear are hitting me hard. The thought of my vow of protecting Taite is at risk of being broken. I don’t care if it’s out of my hands or not; the results will be the fucking same.

The silence is killing me. Darkness surrounds the clubhouse when we arrive and it’s the same on the inside. I hit the kickstand and jump off, my brothers are right behind me as I palm my gun.

“Power is definitely cut,” Spence whispers and signals to Leo.

Leo, along with two others, jog off to go around back. The door is open and I move without a sound plastering myself against the wall next to it. I wait till my brothers are shoulder to shoulder before risking a quick glance inside the clubhouse.

My eyes are adjusted to the darkness and I can make out the couch, bar, and the door to church sitting wide open.

“Do as I say or I’m going to put a bullet between your eyes, asshole,” a voice snarls.

I step inside, knowing my brothers will follow me. We’ve been living in this clubhouse for a long time and I know every damn inch of it. Add the fact that my brothers and I have been through a load of missions, operations, and life-or-death situations, there’s no discussion or plan needed as we move through the room.

My feet freeze in place when I hear a few grunts and a loud clank of something hitting the floor, and my woman casually says, “No one is going to do what you say, Brock. You lost that right when your life collided with mine.”

I risk a glance over my shoulder at Spence. He gives me a signal to stay in place. It’s fucking hard to do, but the tone of my woman’s voice made me freeze and it’s also the reason why I wait.

Taite’s voice once again flows through the air. “You barging in here with some of your father’s men proves you can’t do shit by yourself. Even when you forced yourself on me. Pathetic, really. Well, it’s none of your concern anymore, Brock. All the others are already banished from this world, and you’ll follow soon.”

There’s a grunt and I hear Roux say, “Nice one, T.”

I lean forward and see my old lady grin when she says, “Thanks.”

She’s holding a gun and has it aimed at Brock.

“I’m nauseous and really have to pee,” Penny grumbles. “Can you please shoot him and get this over with? I mean, you weren’t this chatty when you killed those other fuckers he came with.”

Spence chuckles behind me and steps around to enter the room. “Are you cranky because they disrupted your beauty sleep, gorgeous?”

Tension slides off Penny’s face when she sees her old man. I glance at Taite and her attention diverts from Brock for

a fragment of a second, enough for the idiot to think he has a shot at grabbing the gun.

It's like another impossible scene from a movie, but in this case, he's setting himself up for failure. Gunfire instantly erupts. Brock's body jerks from the bullets Taite puts in him, the ones from my gun hit him full force, as well as Spence's.

"Total overkill," Penny sighs and places her fingers against her lips and closes her eyes.

Spence quickly puts his gun away and scoops her into his arms. He rushes out of the room and I'm pretty sure he's carrying his woman off to the bathroom for something that starts with a P. Puke or pee, whatever comes first I guess.

Right now, I don't care. To be honest? I don't give a shit about anything other than my own old lady. Stepping over the dead body on the ground, I reach out and cup her face. Our gaze collides and there's only relief staring back at me.

"You're safe," she murmurs. "It's over. They're all dead, right?"

There's a brief moment my mind jumps to the tunnel. I have no fucking clue if Eloy survived, but the fucker sure isn't going anywhere anytime soon. If they manage to save him, his ass is going to jail.

I don't want to lie to her so I simply go with the words that do ring true, "It's over, darlin'."

She sags into my arms and I find myself scooping her up. Church is a fucking mess with a dead body and I don't want her to be reminded of the fucker and what he did to her, even if he's not breathing anymore.

The lights come on when I take a seat on the couch.

“Backup generator,” Grayer states. “Finally have it running.”

“I flipped the switch. Taite said it would be better to keep the lights off,” Fawkes says as he plunks into the chair across from us.

Taite takes her head out of the crook of my neck. “It gives us the advantage, knowing this place better than they do. And thanks again for having my back, Fawkes.”

He doesn’t lift his head to face her, but instead drags his hand up in the air and grunts, “Don’t mention it.”

“What happened?” I wonder, not liking the sound of it.

“Nothing,” Fawkes rumbles.

At the same time, Taite says, “He saved my life when one of Brock’s men was about to put a bullet in my chest.”

I tighten my hold on her and mutter a curse.

“Fawkes acted way before the asshole could pull the trigger.” Taite might try to soothe me, but knowing she came close to losing her life doesn’t calm me the fuck down.

“You fired your gun at the same time, T,” Fawkes explains. “You basically saved yourself.”

“Thanks, brother,” I tell him with a load of gratitude.

I don’t care about the why or how. What’s important is the fact that we’re sitting here, alive and breathing, and the fact that my brother had my woman’s back when I wasn’t there for her.

“Goes without saying,” Fawkes rumbles the thoughts that just slipped through my mind as well.

Except, it doesn't go without saying because just before we left we confronted the man about a bug found in his phone. Motherfucker. This brotherhood is a solid one, and has been from the start, but in moments like these? It's nice to be confronted about some things that will never change.

Like loyalty, friendship, and fucking love in any way or form. I'm man enough to admit that my feelings for the woman I'm holding have shifted. The connection we shared when we met, the foundation we made over the past few weeks, everything heads in the direction of the word that's blinking in bright neon colors. Love.

I give my old lady a gentle squeeze and bury my nose into her hair to breathe her in. Admitting my feelings to myself allows for a surge of contentment in my veins. Knowing the case is closed—except for the load of paperwork—and those who hurt her are all dealt with.

Spence stalks back into the room with his phone in hand.

Reluctantly I let Taite out of my embrace and she gets to her feet to step in Spence's direction. “How is she doing?”

“Resting. She wanted to check on you, but I told her that wasn't going to happen. She's still a little lightheaded.”

“Is it okay if I go and check on her?” Taite questions.

Pride hits me hard at the concern in her voice.

Spence gives her a gentle smile. “I'd appreciate it if you do. Not only because Penny would love your company,

but you can also keep an eye on her for me.”

Taite shoots him a wink. “You got it, Prez. I’ll head into the kitchen first and will grab her some ginger ale and make some toast.”

Spence reaches out and places his hand on her shoulder. “Thanks, T.”

She inclines her head and meets my eyes for a heartbeat or two before she strolls in the direction of the kitchen. I’m watching her disappear out of sight when I feel the couch dip beside me.

“I’m real fucking happy you claimed that one.” Spence’s voice doesn’t consist of happiness, more along the lines of tired and annoyed.

I drag my eyes from the empty hallway and jerk my chin in the direction of the phone in his hands. “Any updates?”

“The team that went to Eloy’s house said they found a bloody tracker. Brock must have removed it and spilled everything to his father.”

“Doesn’t matter.” I lean back. “The fucker might have thought to outsmart us and yet he’s the one face down looking like a strainer with all those bullet holes. We closed the case, Prez. It’s a win no matter how you look at it.”

Spence shoves his phone back into his pocket. “We were damn lucky to get out of that tunnel. Could have been lying under there along with those fuckers.”

“‘Could have’ is like a fart stinking up the room,” Fawkes mutters. “Can’t control or contain it. An unwanted opinion, and sure as shit doesn’t make a damn difference. Like

VP said, doesn't matter, we closed the damn case, so leave it in the past. We're all sitting here chatting, huge fucking smile on our faces and all. Happy as shit."

"Yeah, man, you sound really fucking happy," Spence fires back.

Fawkes raises his head to stare at his prez. "I'm fucking ecstatic."

Laughter rips from me and Spence joins in. Soon enough Fawkes chuckles and is shaking his head. Spence's phone starts to ring and he takes it from his pocket to answer. He puts it against his ear and instantly stalks into the hallway for some privacy.

Fawkes's gaze follows Spence. "That's not good."

"Probably the government contact. Taking out a tunnel is bound to make some waves and one hell of a paycheck to pick up," I mutter.

Fawkes's attention slides to me. "When they dragged me to the basement they thought I was unconscious. I wasn't and noticed someone stashing money into a wall in Eloy's house. You should probably remind Prez again so the government can take credit for busting the cartel and confiscating shit."

Remind Spence? If he told prez, I would surely know since crucial details are always shared. Not to mention, it was my damn case from the start.

I get to my feet but don't take a step forward because I need to know, "I didn't know about the money. Why didn't you say anything about this before?"

Fawkes shrugs. “I thought I already did or at least...I thought I told Prez. Fuck. I blocked out most of what happened with all the blows to the head and torture I had to endure. Besides, I wasn’t exactly on the case, more like recovering. Hell, I didn’t feel like talking at all and was sure you guys would get to the house. Common knowledge I guess, the warehouses, them being cartel...everything revolves around money.” He rubs a hand over his face. “This case has been all kinds of fucked-up. We need a vacation. All of us. Hit pause and simply do nothing else but breathe for a few weeks before we take on another undercover case.”

“I guess,” I grumble and head in the direction Spence disappeared in.

I find him in his office and quickly remind him of what Fawkes mentioned. Judging from Spence’s reaction it must have slipped his mind to tell me because he does seem to know the details when he instantly starts to debrief the person he’s talking to on the phone.

Making my way down the hall, I come to a stop in front of the room Penny is in and the door softly opens. Taite steps out and her eyes collide with mine when she softly closes it.

“Hey, you,” she whispers.

I reach out and cup the back of her neck to bring her close and place my forehead against hers. “We’re moving forward from here on out ’cause our future is wide fucking open.”

She buries her tiny fists into my cut and takes a choppy breath. “I like the sound of that. Especially since I like you...a

lot. Like...more than a lot.”

I draw her closer and bring my lips a breath away from hers when I tell her, “I’m way past liking you more than a lot, darlin’. It’s safe to say that I’ve fallen and am in love with you.”

Her lips collide with mine hard and fast. Pulling back, she fiercely tells me, “I tumbled right along with you, Dion.”

Our mouths connect and the rumble of the words, “I love you,” spilling from her I can feel against my lips, in my chest, and deep in my soul.

We’re moving forward, one kiss at a time, love building strong, for whatever future lies ahead of us.

EPILOGUE

Four years later

– TAITE –

I tighten my arms around Dion's waist and place my chin on his shoulder. Being on the back of his bike always gives me a sense of serenity. Complete surrender as I let Dion lead and have nothing to focus on except the feel of his strong body in front of me, and hanging on, of course.

We're heading for the cabin to spend a few days together. Penny and I closed a case earlier this week while Spence and Dion managed to arrest a suspect in a murder case last night. We all could use a break before diving into a new case.

A few years ago, Dion and I decided to give my cabin to Spence and Penny. Dion's cabin's the same as mine, except the location of his is closer to the lake which grants him a stunning view. Keeping both cabins is a bit overkill and why not share such an amazing escape with friends?

Lynn and Deeds are in town and are watching the kids, both Spence and Penny's, and Saul, our two-year-old son. Saul might be an only child, but it makes my heart happy that he has a huge brotherhood as a family. Loads of uncles, aunties, grandparents, and other children to play, and watch over him.

We all take care of one another, if it's personal or work, there's always someone around to lean on. We balance our time between the club, our house near the clubhouse, and the

cabin. Although Dion and I always like to head for the cabin as much as possible. Saul also loves it here.

This weekend it's only me and Dion. The past few weeks have been hectic with work, and our time together scarce. Life puts pressure on all of us between raising Saul, solving cases, club business, and personal issues. Relationships are a give and take, sacrifices, hard work, understanding, and most of all? A load of love and patience.

It's the reason why I'm letting Dion ride the bike this time. I have my own and could be riding side by side, but like I said; being on the back of his bike always gives me a sense of serenity. And this is our weekend off. Hitting pause on life to just focus on one another and nothing else.

Saul looked forward to spending time with Granny, as he calls Lynn, and going to the zoo tomorrow morning with the rest of the kids. This allows all of us to enjoy fun times. I feel a smile tugging my lips and I tighten my arms around Dion.

He places his hand on my thigh for a quick squeeze, allowing my heart to flutter. I love the little show of affection. Dion's hand goes into the air and I raise mine as well. Spence rides on as Dion slows the bike and gets ready to take the turn to head for our cabin.

We'll probably meet up tomorrow morning for breakfast, but for now we each head for our own personal space. Dion parks the bike in front of the cabin and holds his hand out for me to take. I accept his help and gracefully dismount.

Dion grabs our backpacks from the saddlebags and I'm already grabbing the keys to open the door. I barely manage to get a few steps inside before I hear the door fall shut and feel Dion's strong arm wrap around my waist.

I gasp when he easily throws my body over his shoulder, using the puff of air the next moment to squeal. The rumble of his laugh ignites a flock of butterflies to cause havoc inside my belly. The careless feeling to leave everything behind to focus solely on the one you love are moments to be treasured.

After being together for over four years we still have the spark in our connection as if we collided yesterday. Within a few strides, we're in the bedroom where he slowly lets me glide down his body. He cups my face with his strong hands and stares down at me with raw intensity.

His eyes stay locked on mine as he brushes his lips against mine. There's nothing holding us back anymore. No nightmares, no trauma, no nothing. The past is way behind us while we stay in the now and plan our future from one day to the next.

The way our lives were thrown together did leave me with unanswered questions a few years ago. A huge part of it concerned my father and the depths in which he was involved. I guess some questions will always stay and while our minds need closure, life simply shuts one door to open another that needs your focus.

I've come to terms with not knowing everything, yet it soothes some of the unknown to be sure of the fact that my father did reach out for help to search for me. He spent time

with Dion and made sure he had his help to track me down and that right there means the world to me.

I could drown in Dion's gaze, feel the warmth and love he surrounds me with each and every day. No matter where we came from, what we've been through, it's brought us to where we are now; raising a family, still deeply in love, and loving life. Not just life, but also our bodies.

A moan escapes me when he deepens the kiss. His tongue swirls around mine, every lick I feel low in my body as my pussy softens for him. I let my hands slide over the leather of his cut, gripping it to hold me steady for a moment, and then I'm tugging to get it off.

He nips my bottom lip and pulls back. "Clothes. Off. I want you naked and on the bed, T."

I slowly slide the zipper of my jacket down and shrug it off. It lands on the floor when I grab the hem of my shirt. Teasingly I step around the bed to create some distance between us while getting rid of each piece of fabric. Dion's eyes stay on mine as he too gets naked.

Over the years we've gotten to know every inch of each other's bodies. What we like, what we love, what we crave. This is the reason why my hands go to my breasts. I pluck my nipples and watch how Dion's dick twitches.

He mutters a curse and palms his impressive hard-on. Giving himself a rough squeeze he slowly starts to stroke his dick and lets his tongue slide over his bottom lip. His full attention is engulfing me with the boost of self-confidence to let one hand sneak down to my drenched pussy.

I've learned that there's nothing that turns Dion on more than me taking the lead. All I have to do is take the first step and it's as if he's a stallion hearing the starting sound that sets the determined to win the race.

The fire in his eyes, the wildness in his body, the passion for the complete experience; it's everything flooding my senses into sexual overdrive. My breasts rise and fall, my heart slams against my chest, and tingles start to settle low in my belly, spreading throughout my body.

"Dion," I breathe his name in a soft whisper.

"Taite," he groans, not moving a single muscle.

I let him know, "I want to feel you deep inside me."

"You will," he vows, and starts to stroke himself again. "Not yet though. Get on the bed, darlin'. Ass cheeks to the mattress, elbows too so you can stare down at your pussy. Spread your legs to make a special place for me."

I swear my pussy clenches so hard, it's mimicking a dam to prevent the rush of wetness from leaking out. This man. He can drench panties with a few words...hell, with one look my way.

"Darlin', if you're not on the bed within the next few seconds I will throw you on it and your sweet ass will have my handprint, and you still be in the position I want you in. I'm not going to be challenged by you to rush fucking you. We have tonight, tomorrow, and the day after that all to ourselves." He takes a step forward, his dick swinging and already leaking precum.

I want to walk to him, sink to my knees and lick the crown and fully take him into my mouth. Next time. I'd love nothing more than to suck him off, and to feel his handprint on my ass, but pleasing him by following his request will grant me all of that and more.

This is why I jump onto the bed, settle in the middle, spread my legs, and perch myself on my elbows to stare down my body. Dion doesn't disappoint. He's between my legs the next second and easily flips me over.

I suck in a breath and have no time to so much as yelp when his hand lands on my ass. He spanks me two more times on each cheek and just as easily flips me over to position my body the way I presented myself for him a mere few heartbeats ago.

There are no words forming inside my brain due to his mouth latching onto my pussy. I can't keep myself up on my elbows and I let my head fall back as a loud moan slips from my lips. Blindly I reach for him and let my fingers slide through his hair to bring him closer.

I can feel myself slipping into the kind of bliss only one person on this very planet can throw me into. It's liberating to fully trust a person with intimacy based on the love between us, and the joy it brings us.

One large hand covers my mound, his thumb playing with my clit as he thrusts his tongue inside me. Licking, delving, devouring as if he's feeding on his own pleasure. He worships me like a treasure while stealing my very soul like the thief of my damn heart.

There are no options other than follow the wave he lets wash over me as my orgasm hits. White hot bliss flows through me and overtakes everything. I have no control over my body, no thoughts; only pleasure prickling my skin with the awareness of how good I feel at this moment.

My arms flop down the length of my body, completely spent. I feel Dion crawl up my body, hovering over me as I blink and open my eyes. His fingers are slowly sliding in and out of my slick pussy.

“I’ll never grow tired of your taste, of watching you come undone for me. Fucking beautiful,” he huskily rumbles.

I can feel the pleasure inside me prolong, built up, whatever it is; it’s still at the surface wanting to ride another wave.

“You gonna grace me with another orgasm, darlin’?” His voice is filled with enough need for the both of us. “Fuck my fingers and come all over them.”

I do as he says and move on his fingers, feeling him curl them deep inside me. I reach out to grab his shoulders, clinging to him as I take what I need. It doesn’t take long to throw myself into bliss for a second time.

There’s a fraction where my pleasure breaks before it intensifies as Dion buries himself to the hilt inside me with one hard thrust. My nails dig into his skin, holding on as he starts to fuck me. Rough and demanding like there’s a timer set for an ultimate finish.

All I can do is hold on and let him take me for a ride. Wild and raw with a desperation to chase the reward we get

through the brambles of freely giving ourselves to one another. Sex is mere fucking, but when you add feelings there's a blinding connection that heightens the experience.

His mouth covers one of my nipples, biting down to set off another orgasm. It rips through me and at the same time I feel him thicken inside me. He slams into me a few more times and buries himself deep to erupt inside me.

A growl rumbles through his chest, my name on his lips while his face washes with pleasure. It's a sight to behold and it tightens my chest to know this man is mine. Each of us gives and takes, content in our lives we share.

Never in a million years would I have thought I'd have a chance at life...at a man who would treat me like his very own queen. A family of my own, a beautiful son, friends, and a brotherhood made of people who cherish loyalty, devotion, dedication, and friendship the way my father once raised me.

Once I thought death was near until I met Dion who gave me a reason to live. No regrets whatsoever, and it's why my love for him is unconditional and ever-growing. Exactly what he gives me in return.

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