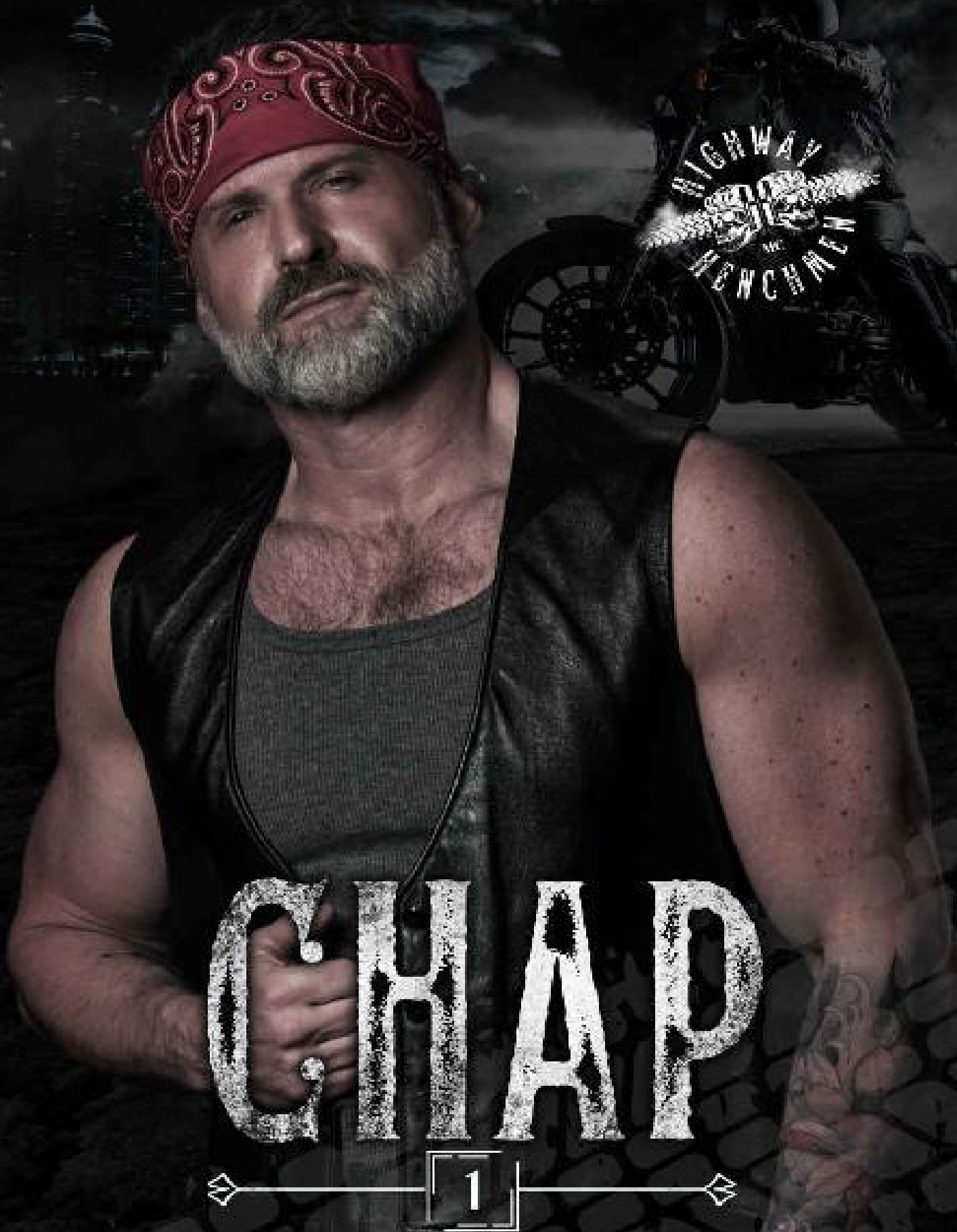


# T.L. DRAKE



# CHAP

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HIGHWAY HENCHMEN MC SERIES

HIGHWAY  
HENCHMEN

BOOK 1: CHAP

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**\*\*Warning:** This book contains sexually explicit scenes, violence and adult language that may be offensive to some readers. It is intended for adults 18 and over.



**NEVER DEPEND ON ANYONE TOO  
MUCH. EVEN YOUR OWN SHADOW  
LEAVES YOU IN THE DARKEST  
MOMENTS.**

# CHARTER MEMBERS:

- President – Aero
- Vice Prez – Wolf
- Sgt At Arms – Blaze
- Secretary – Lennox
- Treasurer – Chap
- Road Captain – Keno
- Prospects – Tuck, Snoopy, Sparky & Patriot
- Member – Smitty

\*\*\*

- Sweet butts – Ruby, Jess, Trixie, & Candy

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# CHAPTER ONE

## CHAP

*My finger traces over the neatly printed script. The sheet of paper holding more names than usual. How many is this now? Forty? Sixty? Too many to count. The name Pvt. Owen Grady, one of countless I've had the displeasure of reading today. How can a just and loving God let honorable men suffer in such a violent and cruel way? To allow families to be ripped apart; husbands taken from wives, fathers from sons and daughters, and sons from mothers and fathers. I've questioned my faith over a hundred times since the start of this damn war a year ago. Too many men ripped from this earth far too soon; this one only nineteen years old. A child. Someone's son. Not even a man. I didn't know him personally, but he was still a brother, and it doesn't make it any easier to bear the loss.*

*"Chap?"*

*Letting out a deep breath, I drop the paper onto my desk and make the sign of the cross. I know why Rourke is here. I can tell by the tone of his voice. More wounded have arrived; more dead. I'm expected to bury my emotions and make my rounds to pray over the men whose lives will forever be changed due to their injuries; or those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. How can I offer hope and peace when I don't feel either of those things myself anymore.*

*Why God? Help me understand.*

*Looking up, I meet Rourke's dark blank eyes. His faith died a long time ago. But something in his expression has my stomach tightening into a knot. My legs feel numb as I push myself up from my desk, my throat suddenly dry. Without a word, he turns and walks out the door. Another sign that something is wrong. I follow, passing room after room of wounded soldiers, those who have lost limbs, some burned and bloody. The knot in my stomach grows tighter and tighter the*

*closer we get to the end of the hall. To the area where men have lost more than a leg. The room where I'll give my fallen brothers their final blessing.*

*Rourke stops in front of the door, his shoulders tense. "Chap..." The haunted tone of his voice makes my heart slam against my chest. He refuses to look at me, and that sinking feeling of dread moves further up my spine. "It's Night Train." He mumbles.*

*And there it is. The name of my little brother's platoon. The icy cold hand of death wraps around my throat, cutting off my air and making my vision grow dark. No! God wouldn't do that to me. Not to my family. My heart pounds as I shove past Rourke. Throwing the door open I step into the room, the scent of blood and death hitting my nose and making me want to vomit. Before me there are at least a dozen bodies. Stretched out on tables, half covered with blood-stained sheets. I know every one of them; but the one lying not six feet from me I'd know anywhere. Ten years younger than me, I've watched him grow from an infant in my mother's arms to the thirty-two-year-old soldier lying lifeless before me.*

*"No," I whisper.*

*Rourke grips my shoulder, his fingers digging into my flesh. "I'm sorry, brother."*

*I shove his hand off, stumbling as I make my way closer to Simon. I slam into the table, catching myself on the edge as I stare down at the face so similar to my own. My own flesh and blood. His body is covered in shrapnel and holes, his skin deathly pale. My hand shakes as I reach out and touch his, needing to make sure that what I'm seeing is real.*

*"No," I whisper again. I blink, trying to clear my blurry vision. This can't be real. God would not take my brother from me. I'm a faithful servant, leading his men to follow him. How...why would he turn his back on me this way? Why would he forsake me?*

*And that's when it hit me. He hasn't forsaken me or turned his back. He hasn't protected me or anyone. He hasn't heard the millions of prayers I've prayed over my forty-two years on this earth, because he isn't there. I've been praying for nothing. There is no God, there can't be. I've been a fool. Duped into believing in a higher power.*

*Anger surges through me as I stare down at my brother. He never believed in my God, always telling me I was a fucking idiot to think there was an almighty being who would save our souls and collect them to live eternally in Heaven. He was right, I see it now. I clench my teeth as I grip his cold hand in mine, rage like I've never felt racing through me.*

*I see it now.*

*Simon was right.*

*I was a fucking idiot and look what my faith brought me. Lifting my head, I stare at the ceiling, hot tears streaming down my face. "You did this." I growl. I hear Rourke shift behind me. "You fucking did this!"*

*"Chap?" Rourke says.*

*My body vibrates as my faith implodes. An idiot, a fool. Not anymore. Slamming my hand down onto the table, I roar up at the ceiling. To the God I no longer believe in. The God who no longer exists.*

*"Fuck you!"*

*"I suggest you keep your fucking hands to yourself unless you want to lose them."*

I blink several times, the mug of beer sitting before me coming back into focus. It's been ten years since that night, and the details are just as vivid as they were the day it happened. I can still see him lying there. I can still smell the stench of death. Still feel the anger of having misplaced my trust and faith. I haven't prayed once since that night. Not even when I returned from that god forsaken war to find my wife had left me, taking my nine-year-old son and leaving behind divorce papers. I have no idea where they went and still, I

didn't pray. There's no one to pray to. I learned that lesson the moment I lost Simon.

"Come on sweetheart, those tits are just begging to have my dick between them."

I glance over my shoulder, noticing the place is empty except for a busty blonde in a black tank top and ripped jeans and two drunks sitting at one of the tables. She shoves the guy's hand away as he reaches for her waist. He's not wrong, her tits are fucking amazing. Baby girl must be rocking some triple D's.

She places her hand on her hip and grins down at the sloppy fucker. "Honey, the only way you'll ever get laid is if you crawl up a chicken's ass and wait."

I can't help but chuckle. Both the blonde and the fat piece of shit glance in my direction. Blonde smirks, but the dickhead, with what appears to be spaghetti sauce on his shirt, scowls. His buddy, dickhead number two, glares at me before turning back to his friend. "I think the bitch needs to learn some manners Clay, maybe a nice handprint on that fine ass of hers will teach her a lesson."

My eyes instinctively go to her ass. Along with a set of spectacular tits, she's rocking a pretty fine ass too. I scan her from head to toe, taking her in. She's older, I'd guess, mid to late forties. Physically fit, with toned arms and legs. Long straight blonde hair falls to the middle of her back. Sharp cheekbones and thin lips with a few tattoos on her arms and shoulders. The woman has a bit of an edge to her and it's clear she's used to handling these types of men. Still, she looks like an angel, although one that tends to break the rules and push some boundaries. My interest has definitely been piqued.

"I think you're right Brent," Clay slurs. His hand darts out and grabs the blonde's wrist. She gasps and jerks her arm, but the piece of shit has a firm grip. I don't even realize I'm standing until my legs start to move. Passing the pool table I grab a stick, my eyes never leaving the man who's touching my Angel.

“I told you to get your hands off me before I make you,” she snaps.

Brent stands, leans across the table and grabs her by the front of her shirt. His fingers dipping into the neckline and no doubt brushing against her tits.

The moment he touches her I’m like a fucking bull. I flip the pool stick around so the thicker, heavier end is pointing outward, and I swing hard as I rush up behind him, cracking him across the back of the skull. He falls onto the table next to him then drops to the floor like a sack of flour.

“I did ask nicely,” my Angel says. Fast as lightning, she grips a stunned Clay by the back of the head and slams him face first onto the table. He roars as blood sprays from his nose, but he lets her go, falling from his chair onto his ass. Holding his hands to his face, he curses the woman who just kicked his ass as I stand there staring in awe at the badass beauty who may not have needed my help after all. And my dick is getting fucking hard. The woman is even hotter up close. Her hazel eyes sparkle with mischief as she smirks down at Clay. “Next time listen when a woman tells you to fuck off, asshole, you’ll listen.”

“You fucking bitch,” Clay shouts.

Reaching down, I grab him by his shirt and yank him back to his feet. Putting him nose to nose with me. “One more word and I’ll remove your tongue with a pair of pliers you piece of shit.”

Clay sputters, blood still oozing from his nose. His wide eyes bounce between me and blondie. Giving him a hard shove, he falls back into his chair, only to scramble to his feet and bolt out the front door, leaving his so-called friend behind.

“I owe you a beer.”

Her sexy, raspy voice has my balls tightening. She slides her hands into the back pockets of her jeans making her tits jut out towards me, and it takes everything I have not to stare down at them and drool. She’s fucking hot, and that wild hell-

cat display has me so hard it's boarder line painful. It's been a long time since I've had a good fuck, and this woman is checking all the boxes that says she'd be fucking dynamite in bed.

"My name's Eden." She lifts her chin in my direction.

The urge to pull her in and claim her mouth shoots straight to my cock. Goddamn, the woman is perfection at every angle. "Chap," I grunt.

She cocks a brow. "Chap? Is that your real name?"

Staring down at her, I breathe in her musky perfume. "It's the only name I answer to."

"Right." She glances down at the man out cold at our feet. "Well, Chap, you owe me a pool cue."

"I thought you owed me a beer?"

She spins around and marches behind the bar, and I watch her ass every step of the way. Grabbing a mug, she starts filling it from the tap. "The pool cue costs more than the drink, just sayin'." She sets the mug in front of me, and I grin as I wrap my hand around it. "You're not from around here."

"What gave that away?" I ask, lifting the mug and taking a swig.

Eden crosses her arms over her chest as she leans her hip against the bar. "I've lived here all my life; I own this bar and I know pretty much everyone in this town." She tilts her head as she looks me over. "Since I don't know you, that means you're new."

I can't help but watch her lips as she talks. I'd like to see them wrapped around my cock. "Maybe I'm just passing through." I mumble.

"Nah." She shoves off the bar and grabs a few glasses. "You and your club bought the old lodge out on Route Ten."

"Word gets around fast."

Eden laughs. “Welcome to Clear Spring, Maryland. Small town living at its finest.”

“Jesus Christ Eden. Again?”

I turn towards the door, to find the local Sheriff as he moves towards the guy who’s just starting to wake up. He’s going to have one hell of a headache later.

“These assholes never learn to keep their hands to themselves.” Eden says. She grabs a rag and starts wiping down the bar.

The Sheriff bends down and helps a moaning Brent to his feet. “Yeah, well, Judge Cline is going to get tired of the self-defense claim. Eventually he’s going to start handing out a sentence. Now how is that going to look? The Sheriff’s own sister arrested for assault.”

And there’s her flaw. My Angel is the local cops sibling. Police and bikers do not mix. Looks like my blonde-haired beauty just became off limits.

“It’s not my fault the drunk bastard fell, and hit his head,” Eden smirks as she tosses the rag into the bar top.

“I didn’t fall,” Brent groans. “Someone hit me.”

“That’s not what I saw,” I say, lifting my beer and downing half of it.

The Sheriff’s eyes narrow into slits as he stares at me. “And what exactly did you see?”

I take another swig, letting the asshole wait. His sister just told him the bastard got handsy and he hasn’t even asked if she’s okay. Fucking prick. “This sorry shit and his friend touched the lady after she already told them to fuck off.”

The Sheriff looks at Brent, then his sister. “That so?”

Eden rolls her eyes. “Yeah well, comes with the territory right, Tyler?”

I glance down at the badge on Tyler’s uniform, the name Sinclair printed in capital letters. Tyler and Eden Sinclair;

sounds very white picket fence to me, although the vibe I'm getting from these two isn't one of a close happy family. There's some animosity there, brewing beneath the surface.

"And you are?" Sheriff Tyler Sinclair asks.

I study the man, wondering if he's always been a prick. Or if it started once he put the uniform on. Lifting the mug, I chug the rest of my beer before sliding the glass back towards Eden and reaching for my wallet. "This should cover my tab," I place a hundred-dollar bill in front of her. "And a new pool cue." The corner of her lip twitches with a hint of a smile, and I turn and walk towards the front door.

"See you around, Chap."

Her voice sends another jolt to my dick, and I curse the bastard for reacting to her this way, but I don't look back.



# CHAPTER TWO

## EDEN

I stare at his retreating back as the door shuts, my body itching to chase after him. I've never felt so alive. So drawn to a man, especially one I don't know. He's a contradiction on all sides. He looks like he should be in a suit and tie, not a biker's vest and black boots. He's clean cut, with a sophisticated look; but the way he laid out the asshole, Brent, gives him an edge that has my lady bits tingling. I've always had a thing for bikers. Bonus...the man is rockin' salt and pepper hair. Older men can be extremely sexy, and Chap is positively sex on two legs. I had to fight the urge to run my fingers through his beard. I'd really like to know what it would feel like between my thighs. Even his voice sounded proper, yet hauntingly dangerous. I need to see him again.

“Seriously, Eden.”

I drag my eyes away from the door, only to find my judgmental brother scowling at me. He's never approved of any man I've dated. Or the fact that I run a bar. He picks at the way I dress, my tattoos, even my house. But the one thing that bothers me more than any of that is the way he looks at my eleven-year-old daughter, Larisa. Don't get me wrong, he loves his niece, but sometimes I catch him watching her like he resents her. Like it's her fault Jimmy, her sorry excuse of a father and my brother's ex-best friend, isn't around. The bastard skipped town the minute he found out I was pregnant. What Tyler seems to forget is that Jimmy was a part of a biker club and when they rolled out of town, so did he. The asshole put his club above his own child. Good fucking riddance. My daughter doesn't need a man like Jimmy in her life anyway. What my dear brother refused to believe was that the piece of shit liked to put his hands on me. And I don't mean a playful pat on the bottom or a gentle rub on the back. He was a heavy

drinker, beer mostly, but when he switched to liquor, he turned into a mean son of a bitch. I showed up at my Tyler's more than once with a black eye, busted lip or handprints around my throat, only to have him tell me I was a liar who just wanted to cause a rift between him and his precious best friend. Jimmy always made it seem like I cheated on him, and it was the other guy who worked me over. Of course, Tyler believed him. After all, I was only his sister. Dicks before chicks was their bro code, I just didn't think it applied to family.

Grabbing a clean rag, I run it under cold water and make my way around the bar. "Here." I shove the wet rag towards Brent the asshole. Cursing under his breath, he snatches the rag and places it on the back of his head. "Your friend hauled ass out of here about twenty minutes ago." Leaning closer, I lower my voice. "I think you should do the same, and don't bother coming back."

Brent's head whips around, his face turning red. "Who the hell do you think you—"

"The owner of this fucking bar." I snap.

He shoves to his feet, and Tyler places a hand on his shoulder. "Then I want to sue. You or that...that," he points towards the front door. "Biker, hit me over the head."

I shrug, folding my arms over my chest. "Okay, then I'd like to press charges for sexual harassment."

Brent's eyes practically bulged out of their sockets. "That's bullshit. No one touched you."

A slow smile spreads across my face. "If that's true, then you won't mind if the Sheriff here takes a look at the security footage, right?" I point to a camera in the corner of the room. From the angle, it would have picked up the moment he grabbed my shirt. I can guarantee it will look like he was grabbing my tits. "It also records sound. So, you and your friend's sexist remarks will be clearly heard."

He clenches his jaw, his nostrils flaring. He knows I've got him. Check fucking mate, asshole.

Tossing the rag on the table, he spins and storms out the front door, leaving me grinning and my annoying brother shaking his head. “Those cameras haven’t worked in months, Eden.”

Tipping my head in the direction Brent just went, I grin. “He doesn’t know that.”

“You know, you wouldn’t have to put up with guys like that if you had a respectable, normal job.”

And there it is. The judgment. I’ve heard this song and dance a million times before. Rolling my eyes, I turn and make my way back behind the bar. “You mean, if I had a boring job where I sat behind a desk all day dressed like a librarian.”

“A librarian makes good money. And I’ll bet they don’t have to fight off drunk idiots or mop up their blood at the end of the night.” His eyes rake over me. “Honestly sis, what do you expect when you dress like that?”

I slam my hand down on the counter, my heart racing. “It wouldn’t matter if I was in a string bikini, no man has the right to touch any woman without her permission.” I motion to my outfit. “I’m in a tank top and jeans. The same shit most girls wear on a daily basis. How is this inappropriate?”

He scowls down at me. “Your tits are practically falling out of that top.” I open my mouth to argue but he cuts me off. “Pair that with working in a bar, alone, screams I’m easy.”

My mouth drops open. “Are you fucking serious?”

“And that,” he points a finger at me. “That mouth and that attitude don’t help. Men react to the energy women put out into the world. This whole,” he waves his hand in my direction. “I’m a bad bitch attracts the worse kind of men.”

“That is the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard. No wonder you’re still single.”

He clenches his jaw. I know I’ve hit below the belt. Tyler hasn’t had many girlfriends. At least that I know of. And the

few I have met, didn't last very long. "I'm single because I choose to be," he growls.

"And I'm a bar owner because *I* choose to be."

He shakes his head. "Larisa doesn't have a chance."

My heart kicks at the sound of my daughter's name. He's played this card on me before too. Clenching my hands into fists, I grit my teeth. "I bust my ass for my daughter. Leave her out of this."

We stare at each other, my heart pounding. I know my daughter doesn't live a lavish lifestyle, but she has a roof over her head, food in her belly, and she's healthy and happy. She does great in school, has amazing friends, and never complains that she doesn't have the latest iPhone or designer sneakers. My little girl is perfect, and I resent that my own brother uses her against me every chance he gets.

His chest expands as he sucks in a deep breath, before turning away. I watch, my entire body shaking with hurt and anger as he pushes open the front door.

"Stay away from those bikers." He glances over his shoulder, his eyes drilling into mine. "We both know your track record with them. At your age, you don't need to make another mistake."

\*\*\*

"Hey mom."

I smile as I lean down and press a kiss to Larisa's forehead; the smell of her apple shampoo greeting me. I grab the edge of the blanket and pull it up under her chin. Her pale skin glows in the dim light from the hall, making her blonde hair shine. My little girl looks just like me, and I thank God every day that I don't have to look into Jimmy's bright blue eyes.

"Hey baby."

Larisa yawns. “How was work?”

I shrug my shoulder. “Same ole same ole. Boring as usual.”

“Are we still going shopping after school tomorrow?”

We’re going grocery shopping, yet my daughter still finds that exciting and considers it mother-daughter quality time. Seriously? What eleven-year-old gets excited about picking out vegetables and meat?

“Not if you don’t get back to sleep. I don’t need you passing out in the Brussel sprouts again.”

Larisa laughs. “I didn’t pass out; I was leaning further back into the case to get the fresher ones. You know they put the newest stuff in the back, so you have to take the old crap first.”

“Uh huh. You were snoring.”

“I was not,” she giggles.

“Okay, maybe you weren’t. But you still need to get back to sleep.”

She nods through another yawn, then rolls onto her side. “Love you, mom.”

“Love to too, baby.”

I press another kiss to her head then quietly exit the room. Making my way back into the kitchen, I find my mother shutting off the lamp next to the couch. “Thanks again for watching her.”

“Eden, I’ve been watching my granddaughter for eleven years. You don’t need to keep thanking me every time.”

Turning on the sink, I start washing the two glasses that still have the residue of milk in them. My mother is big on drinking warm milk before bed and she’s gotten my daughter turned on to it as well. She swears it helps you sleep better. “I just know it can be a hassle. I don’t want to be a burden.”

“Ah!” my mother sighs. She moves to stand beside me, leaning her hip against the counter. “Another run in with

Tyler?”

I bite down on my lip. I hate saying anything about my brother to her. I don't like dragging her into the middle of our sibling rivalry. A mother should never have to choose sides.

“What did he say this time?”

“Same thing he always says,” I sigh. “Sometimes, I wonder how you could have birthed two people as different as we are.”

“Your brother is more like your father was. Thought he knew what was best for everyone, was stubborn as a mule and said the most hurtful things before thinking about what came out of his mouth.”

Rinsing the last glass, I place it in the strainer and grab the towel. “I remember how daddy was. Tyler is worse, mom.” I dry my hands and toss the towel onto the counter. “He still resents me for getting pregnant by Jimmy. And he can't stand to look at Larisa half the time.”

“Sweetheart, he'll come around—”

“It's been almost twelve years, mom. How long does he need to come around?”

My mother presses a hand to her throat, her eyes shimmering with tears. “I'm sorry, Eden. I'll talk to him again.”

Shaking my head, I reach over and take her hand in mine. “No, mom. It won't do any good. And I don't want you in the middle of this. Tyler is who he is, and I am who I am. Neither of us is going to change.”

I just wish my little brother could accept that.

# CHAPTER THREE

## CHAP

Securing my bandana over my nose and mouth, I stomp through the large common area of the old lodge that is now our new clubhouse. It's also our new home until other arrangements can be made. We're starting over from scratch but fuck it, it's better than the shit we had to deal with over the past year. Our former club president, Buzz, may the piece of shit burn in hell, took the club in a direction that Aero, our new Prez, refused to head down. A handful of us agreed and backed him one hundred percent. We may be assholes but selling and abusing woman and children is not our thing. Aero's father, Vinnie, and the club's VP, Wolf's father, Deisel, didn't start this MC just to have its name dragged through the mud. The only good thing that came out of Buzz's sick business plan was the money he squirreled away and hid from the rest of us. As the club's new Treasurer, after going through the books, I found he had been pocketing most of the cash earned from the sale of those poor women. We used the money to buy this place; at least we were able to put it to good use. The motherfucker owed us this much. The building is in desperate need of repair, but we've never been afraid of getting our hands dirty.

Grabbing four large bags of trash, I carry them out the back door and toss them into the dumpster. The sound of hammering, electric saws and loud music echo back from the trees surrounding the property. There's roughly eight acres, backed against the woods. Far enough away from anyone else that our lifestyle won't bleed over onto our neighbors. We can party and have loud music without disrupting anyone else. There's not that many of us left after the shit with Buzz went down, only twenty or so members remain. Aero wants to build us back up and he's already started recruiting. Our first one being Smitty. The old seventy-three-year-old man came to us.

He had been a member of a club in Nevada, but patched out when half the club went to prison in a drug sting. The gritty old bastard is still in good shape and still rides every chance he gets. Aero offered to patch him in instead of making him prospect. At his age it's a matter of respect. Plus, he knows the area and has contacts that can help us get materials and labor to get the place up and running.

“Heads up!”

I glance up just in time to see Wolf tossing down a stack of roof tiles. Thank fuck for him and Lennox. Wolf used to install roofs for a living, and Lennox worked with his old man as an electrician for several years, but the crazy fuck liked sticking knives into places he shouldn't and getting an electrical charged high. Between the two of them, we're up and running with power and a new cover over our heads.

Plumbing passed inspection, thank fuck. Now we're focusing on framing out several rooms, so we have a place to bunk. I'm already getting tired of sleeping on a damn cot in the main area. Waking up every morning to a bunch of gassy men who rub and scratch at their dicks is not how I prefer to start my day. I'd much rather wake up balls deep in a tight pussy, but that's not happening as long as I have to share a room with these assholes.

Akuma, Wolf's canine companion, pants up at me from where he's lying at the base of his master's ladder. His name is Japanese for Devil, which suits the furry bastard. He's a timber wolf who Wolf found injured in the woods as a pup. He nursed him back to health and the two have been inseparable ever since. The fluffy shit has a hell of an attitude towards most people other than my six-foot five VP. Then again, so does the man.

“You need a hand carrying these to storage?” I ask, motioning to the box of tiles.

Wolf steps off the ladder, his yellow contacts matching Akuma's. These two are soulmates if ever there was such a thing. “I'm good, brother.” Wolf grumbles as he reaches down



and scratches behind Akuma's ear. I glance over my shoulder at the sound of a loud diesel engine. Blaze's black F-250 comes flying down the lane. "Jesus Christ," Wolf growls. "Our new Sergeant at Arms is gonna fuck up the appliances driving like that."

He's hauling a washer and dryer, something we desperately need. Most of us have been wearing the same clothes every day and the smell is starting to permanently burn itself into our new clubhouse. He's also got an upright freezer so we can start stocking up on meats. It takes a lot of food to feed this many guys.

Blaze skids to a stop, throwing the truck into park and climbing out like he doesn't have a care in the world. "What up, Fuckers?" he grins.

"You shouldn't drive like a goddamn lunatic when you're hauling shit like this." Wolf snaps.

Blaze motions to the back. "Lennox made sure it was okay."

Taking another look into the bed of the truck, I jump. "Fuck dude. You need to cut that shit out."

Lennox has mysteriously appeared between the washer and dryer. I swear to God the bastard wasn't there before. The man is a fucking ghost sometimes. Somehow, he just appears out of thin air. I admit, it comes in handy when we need to go unnoticed; but for the most part it's just creepy.

"And why the hell are you riding back here anyway? It's getting to fucking cold for this shit." I grunt. It's the middle of November, and I doubt we even got out of the low fifties today.

Our club Secretary jumps over the side, landing right in front of me. His long hair covers most of his face. "You know I like the cold," his unnaturally deep voice rumbles.

I swear to God the man is an enigma. He's barely six feet tall and he's lucky if he's a buck eighty. He's not jacked like Aero, Wolf or Blaze, but he's deadly with a blade. Lennox

likes to play with knives, and he's really fucking good with them. I mean *really* fucking good. I've never seen the man miss a target. Not even once.

He pulls a pack of smokes from his back pocket and places one in his mouth. With the flick of a lighter, he inhales a lung full. That's one habit I never cared to start.

"Your ass gets sick; you're sleeping in the storage building alone. With no fucking heat." I warn.

Lennox smirks. "Don't threaten me with a good time."

"Your freaky ass would like to live out there alone," Wolf chuckles.

Lennox cocks a brow. "You're calling me freaky? The man with yellow contacts to match his mutt."

"Akuma is my spirt animal. Not a mutt." Wolf glares down at him. He takes offense when anyone insults his pet.

"So, some news," Blaze says, leaning his arm on Lennox's shoulder. "I got the job at the Vape shop."

"Great. Now your ass will be fucking high twenty-four seven." Lennox grins, blowing smoke into his face.

He breathes it in like he's desperate for a hit. "You say that like it's a bad thing."

Wolf shakes his head. He didn't get the nickname Blaze for no reason. The man would be high twenty-four seven if he could. He's still young, only thirty-two to my fifty-four years. I remember those days. Back when I still believed in a higher power. Back when I was still stupid. Keno, our Road Captain, calls him my son. He says we're a lot alike, but personally I think it's the beards. That, and I tend to be the disciplinarian whenever the young shits get out of line.

"Who the hell is that?" Wolf asks.

We all watch as a small cherry red Volkswagen Beetle comes flying up the lane. Blaze grins so wide it makes *my* face hurt. "Pussy," he says proudly.

The sound of blaring music hits us a good thirty seconds before the little car comes to a sudden stop, a dust cloud kicking up behind it. Both doors swing open and as the dust settles two women emerge from the little car.

“Hey Blaze, we made it.” The petite driver coos as she runs over and tucks herself into Blaze’s side.

Her hair is as red as her car and so are her lips. She’s in a pair of tight jeans with several rips in the thighs and a hot pink sweater that stops just under her tits. Personally, I never understood sweaters like that. It has long sleeves but doesn’t cover your stomach? It’s an attention seeker top, nothing more. The other is a busty brunette. The same shade of red on her lips and dark black eyeliner around her big green eyes. Neither of them looks older than twenty-five. Too young for my taste.

Blaze throws his arm over the girl’s shoulder as she grins up at him like he just hung the stars. “And tonight, we make it together.” His voice rumbles into her ear, though he does nothing to make it quiet. The girl giggles. Blaze smirks and motions to her bare stomach, which has a small red gem dangling from her belly button. “Guys, meet Ruby.”

“And these are my friends, Trixie and Jess.” Ruby says.

Glancing back to the car I notice that another brunette has emerged from inside. A low growl vibrates from Wolf as he moves closer to the two women, seeming to take an interest in the newly emerged one. Akuma follows, both looking like they’re stalking their prey.

“Um, hi. I’m Jess.” The poor girl looks like she’s about to piss herself.

Wolf moves to stand right in front of her, her head tilting back to stare up at the six-five beast. Leaning down he breathes in her scent. I swear the man is part animal. I half expect him to start humping her leg. With nothing but a grunt, he bends down, wraps his arms around Jess’s ass and hauls her up into his chest. “I’m taking this one.”

Jess squeals, then giggles as Wolf stomps off towards the shed.

“Not sure she’s gonna be so happy once he gets her in there and she finds out there’s no bed,” Blaze chuckles.

“He’ll just have to get creative,” Lennox says. He grins at Trixie. “Creativity is my specialty.”

Blaze cracks Ruby on the ass. “Let’s take a ride, sweetheart. I need to check the shocks on this baby.”

“Are you talking about your truck or me?” Ruby asks.

He reaches over and yanks the driver’s door open. “Both.” Offering her his hand, he helps her up into the truck.

“Brother, we need to get the stuff out of the back first.” I point to the bed of the truck where the appliances still sit.

Blaze climbs in the driver’s seat and slams the door. “They’ll be fine, I’ll be back in an hour.” He glances down at Ruby, whose head has disappeared into his lap. “Fuck! Make that two.” The engine roars and he takes off, cruising towards the back of the lot.

“Well.”

I turn back to Trixie, whose lust filled gaze is ping ponging between me and Lennox.

“Ever been to Paris?” she asks. “I hear the Eiffel Tower is impressive.” She steps closer to me, biting down on her red lips. It doesn’t take a genius to know she isn’t talking about the actual monument. “I’ve always wanted to experience it.”

The loud rumble of another engine draws my attention away from the skimpily dressed woman. An old gray, jacked-up Chevy Silverado pulls in beside the red Beetle. The moment I see her blonde hair my dick perks up. Funny how a threesome with a girl half my age didn’t do anything for me, but the moment Eden is within spitting distance, he’s throbbing for attention.

“Sorry sweetheart,” I say moving around her towards my fallen angel. “Something just popped up.”

# CHAPTER FOUR

## EDEN

I watch him through the windshield as he approaches. Moving with so much confidence and swagger, my body all but weeps. My God, I want to feel him on top of me. Pinned beneath him as he works me over like a rag doll. Jesus, it's been too long. It's the only explanation as to why I haven't been able to stop thinking about him since the other night. Why my panties are currently getting soaked just watching him walk towards me. I've said it before, the man is sex on two legs.

I throw open the door and climb down just as he makes it to the driver's side. "Hey Chap."

"Eden."

That's it. Just my name from his lips and I'm both annoyed that's all I got and turned on because...well...my name from his lips.

"I um, come baring gifts." I motion to the front seat of the truck. Chap leans around the door to peek inside. "I thought you might need some supplies to help fight off the cold weather coming in." No sooner than I say it, a gust of cold air hits me and I wrap my arms around myself and shiver. I've brought over a case of Jack and Jim, along with several other brands of liquor. In the back of the truck, I have a keg of Budweiser. "It's my way of saying thanks."

He meets my eyes and I have to fight the urge to throw myself at his feet and beg him to slip me some dick. Jesus, Eden. Why not bend over and wave your bare ass in the air in invitation.

"You didn't have to do that." He says.

"But we're really glad you did."

I glance over Chaps shoulder as two men approach. One is tall, muscular and has long dirty blonde hair, the other is African American and just as built. Both are drool-worthy in their own right.

“Eden, this is our club’s Prez, Aero.” Chap nods to the guy with long hair. He lights the cigarette that’s dangling from his lips and tilts his head in greeting. “And this is Keno, our Road Captain.”

Keno extends his hand and when I offer mine in return, he lifts it to his lips and kisses it. “She brings us beer and looks like fine wine; I could get use to this.”

I’m about to tell him that he’s a smooth talker when an arm wraps around me and a hand lands on my hip. The moment he touches me I’m left speechless. My heart rate skyrockets, and I’m frozen in place as the warmth from Chap’s body seeps into my side.

“Eden had a little trouble a few nights ago in her bar. I just made sure the playing field was even.” Chap explains, his voice dropping lower.

The hint of a smirk curls the corner of Keno’s lips. He releases my hand, but I dare not move. I don’t want Chap to let go.

“You own a bar?” Aero asks, pulling in a drag from his cigarette.

“I do. It’s called Double Down. Some folks call it Double D.”

Aero blows a stream of smoke in my direction, his eyes dropping to my chest. “I think you’re selling yourself short there, sweetheart.”

Chap’s fingers tighten on my waist, and I bite my lip to keep from laughing out loud. These guys are a trip, and it’s obvious they want to bust Chap’s balls. I can’t say I mind one bit.

“So, Eden,” Aero smirks at Chap. “We need a liquor supplier. Would you be interested?”

For the second time in less than five minutes, I left speechless. “Oh, um. I...”

Chap’s hand slips from my waist. “You should know that Eden’s brother is the local Sheriff.”

The smile on Keno’s face disappears. Aero stares at me, taking another drag from his cigarette. I’m sure I’m about to get kicked off the property. A club like this isn’t going to want any ties to local law enforcement. And when it comes to my brother, I can’t say I blame them. Tyler would be all up in their business if he knew I was their liquor supplier. I swallow past the lump that’s suddenly appeared in my throat and tuck my hands into my back pockets. The tension in the air has become thick as pea soup.

“Does your brother also work at your bar?” Aero asks.

My brows draw together. “What? No, he’s...no.”

Aero flicks his cigarette into the yard and blows out a long stream of white smoke. “Then I don’t see the problem.”

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I follow Chap and Wolf out to Wolf’s truck. This is the second delivery of liquor in the two weeks since I’ve been their official supplier. It wasn’t really that big of a deal, I simply had to apply for a permit to make it all legal. At least Tyler can’t fine me or put me out of business. Which is exactly what he would do if he found out I was illegally distributing liquor without a license. Still, I’d rather he didn’t know. As soon as he does, the club will be on his radar, and I’ll never hear the end of it.

Pulling my jacket tighter around me, I blow out a puff of air. “That’s the last of it.”



Wolf climbs in the truck and starts the engine as Chap joins me by the back door to Double D. “Thanks babe. This should hold us over for a while.”

I grin at the term babe. Over the last two weeks he’s started calling me babe or sweetheart. But my personal favorite is when he looks at me like I’m a dream and silently calls me his Angel. What I wouldn’t give to have him call me that while I was wrapped up in his arms in the middle of the night.

“No problem,” I sigh. “Oh, tell Aero I’ve been working on the details of the fundraiser. I should have some concrete plans next week. I think as long as half the proceeds go to a local charity, people will be more likely to come out and support the cause.”

I came up with the idea of having a fundraiser to help raise money for the clubhouse. They’ve got the place pretty much up and running with about twenty rooms for bunking in, but they’ve run out of money for furniture, supplies and their monthly bills. I could almost guarantee that no one would show up if the fundraiser was strictly for the club. I mean, they’re new to the area and no one quite knows what to make of them. And Tyler certainly hasn’t helped. He’s gotten half the town already convinced their trouble.

“I’ll let him know.” Chap grins. “Thanks again for taking the reins on this. It helps having someone local handling all the details.”

“I’m more than happy to help, Chap. You know that.”

He moves in closer, his hazel eyes looking deep into my soul. He lifts his hand and touches my cheek, sending a surge of electricity shooting down my spine. “You’re something special, Eden Sinclair.”

I swallow hard. “I...I’m just...”

“My Angel,” he whispers so softly I barely hear.

The sound of a horn makes me jump, and Chap drops his hand, blinking a few times. The tense moment being broken by Wolf’s impatience.

“I’ll be in touch,” he says, leaning in and offering a boring peck on the cheek before quickly hurrying to the passenger side of the truck. Not a moment later, I’m left standing in the cold wondering if I’m alone in what I feel, or if Chap is just immune to feeling anything at all.

“You really should be a little more concerned with who you’re seen in public with.”

I roll my eyes as I turn back to the door of Double D and find Tyler standing just inside. Round...whatever number this is, is about to get started. And I really don’t have the energy for it this time. “What are you doing here now, Tyler?”

“Christ, Eden. Am I not allowed to stop in and check on my sister?”

I push past him as I make my way back inside. “You used to only show up here every other week. Now you’re here every other day.”

“And?” Tyler grumbles. “With the company you’re choosing to keep these days, I feel like I need to check up on you more often. God forbid I come in here one night and find you being passed around like a common...”

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence!” I snap, spinning around to glare at him. Is he fucking kidding me? Anger pumps through me, racing through my veins like heroine. “Is that what you think of me?”

“It’s what half the town probably thinks, Eden.” Tyler shouts. “Different bikers are seen coming and going all hours of the day and night, what do you expect people to think?”

“I expect them to mind their own fucking business. And I don’t give a fuck what they think. I never have. Because no one in this town is perfect.”

“First of all,” Tyler says following behind me as I turn and make my way to the storage room. “You are my business. Second, that’s part of your problem, maybe you should care more about what people think, then you won’t have such a bad reputation.”

“Fuck you,” I grunt, lifting a case of wine and sliding it onto a shelf.

“And third,” he continues like he didn’t hear me. “You are right, no one is perfect but damn it, Eden, we try to be decent, respectable people. You seriously think that’s what everyone is going to see when they look at the company you’re keeping?”

“Respectable?” I turn to face him, my pulse thundering in my chest. I know my face and neck are red, they always are when I get this worked up and I can feel the heat. “You think you’re respectable? Just because you wear that fucking badge.”

He clenches his jaw, making the muscle tick.

“Do you know how many people lost respect for you when you blamed me for making Jimmy leave town. God forbid you see *him* as the asshole who abandoned his child. So, why should I respect you when you turn your nose up at every little thing I do. And why would I ever give one flying fuck what you think or feel about me when you so clearly disapprove of your own niece.”

Tyler grits his teeth. “She—”

“Is a fucking child who didn’t ask to be born.” I scream. “She has done nothing to you or anyone else and yet you still look at her like she’s shit on the bottom of your shoe.” A tear rolls down my cheek, and I swipe it away, angry with myself for showing how much he gets to me. I never cry, unless I’m really angry, and right now I could breathe fire I’m so pissed off. “Larisa doesn’t deserve your hatred.”

“Mom?”

I spin around at the sound of my daughter’s voice. My mother is standing in the doorway, her arm wrapped around Larisa’s shoulders whose eyes are shimmering with unshed tears.

“What the hell are you doing back here?” Tyler snaps.

“Tyler!” I warn, moving to Larisa’s side. This isn’t the first time she’s heard my brother and I arguing, and I hate that she knows she’s the topic of conversation. It breaks my heart to see her hurting. Despite the way Tyler treats her, she still loves her uncle. My girl doesn’t have a hateful bone in her body.

“This is a private conversation,” Tyler says. Larisa flinches at his harsh tone.

My mother’s eyes narrow as she glares at her son. “Then maybe you shouldn’t be screaming loud enough for the entire bar to hear.”

“Fuck,” I mumble. That’s just what I need. My customers overhearing my family drama and spreading it around town like wildfire.

“Why the hell is she here anyway?” Tyler grunts, waving a hand in his niece’s direction.

“Grammie and I had dinner across the street at Lu Lu’s.” Larisa’s voice comes out quiet and unsure. “We stopped in to bring her dinner.” It’s then I notice the white plastic bag of food she’s clutching in her hand.

She hands me the bag and I lean down and kiss her forehead. “Thank you, baby.”

“She shouldn’t be in a bar,” Tyler grumbles.

“We came in through the back, and we are leaving the same way,” My mother sighs.

“I think that’s an excellent idea. Please take Tyler with you.” I turn to face him. “And the next time you want to *check* on me, do it at home. You’re no longer welcome in my bar.”

His head jerks back. “Are you fucking kidding me?”

“Language!” Mom hisses.

Folding my arms over my chest, I stare my brother down. “Not one bit. Now get out.”

He’s fuming, and no doubt has plenty more to say. As much as he hates me, he tends to listen to our mother. Thankfully he

turns and storms out without so much as a grunt or eyeroll. I sigh, letting my body relax. It's always draining when I go a few rounds with him.

"I'll talk to him," mom says.

"And what would be any different this time?" I ask, turning to face them. I place the bag of food on a nearby shelf and pull my little girl into a hug. Her arms wrap around me, squeezing. "I love you, monkey."

"I love you too, mom."

Pressing a kiss to her forehead, the three of us walk to the back of the bar. I watch as they pull away, wondering how different her life would have been if she had a father that stuck around. A father who cared if she was alive or dead. Someone who made her feel loved and protected.

Someone who made me feel like I wasn't such a failure as a mother.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CHAP

Warm air greets me when I walk into Double D. My eyes immediately go to the bar where I know my favorite blonde will be. The moment I spot her it feels like I take an arrow to the chest. No matter how many times I see her, her beauty leaves me speechless. Every time she smiles at me, it feels like time stops. The woman has gotten under my skin, and I can't explain why or how. All I know is, I can't stop thinking about her. She's the first thing I think of when I wake up and the last thought in my head before I fall asleep. I'm addicted to her, and I haven't even had the pleasure of bending her over that bar and sliding my cock inside her. Just the thought has my dick waking up.

“Yo!”

I turn my attention towards the familiar voice and find Keno, Blaze and Aero tucked into the corner. Several empty bottles of beer cover the table. Double D has become the club's second home. Eden isn't complaining about the money we're bringing in, so it works in all our favor.

“Surprise, surprise seeing you here,” Blaze grins.

I make my way over to the table, pulling out an empty chair and flopping down into it. “What the fuck is that supposed to mean?” I ask.

Blaze cocks his head, his lip curling into a smile. “Don't fucking bullshit us. You've been coming here almost every night over the past two weeks.” He lifts his beer to his lips and takes a swig. “We just have one question.”

“I can only imagine.” I mumble.

Aero sits forward, his big arms resting on top of the table. His face is blank, showing no emotion at all. I hate it when he

gets all serious and I can't read him. He's either pissed and ready to take someone's head off, or he's about to say something that will leave everyone in stitches. It's a 50/50 chance with him.

"Did you fuck her yet?" His voice rumbles in a low flat tone.

"Jesus Christ," I growl.

Keno smiles, waiting for me to answer. I swear, sometimes these guys are like middle school boys. They'd get excited over a flash of side boob if they saw one.

"Well?" Blaze whispers. He looks like he's about to bounce out of his seat in anticipation. He's the worst of them. Giddy like a schoolboy about to watch his first porno.

"What are you, five?" I snicker.

He bolts forward, his eyes going wide as he places his hands on the table. "So, that's a yes?"

"I didn't say that."

Keno shakes his head, pulling his beer closer. "Man, what the hell are you waiting for? Her to stretch out naked on the bar and spread her legs for you?"

I glance over my shoulder, making eye contact with Eden. She gives me a shy smile before placing a beer in front of an older man who's in serious need of a belt. The image of Eden naked on the bar, her pussy on display, has me so hard I have to shift in my seat to make room in my pants. Pointless effort, I'm sporting a raging hard-on.

"Brother," Aero says, gaining my attention. "She gives you serious fuck me eyes every time she's around. Are you gonna make a move? Or keep jerking off every night?"

"Fuck you," I snicker.

"You know," Blaze sighs. "You haven't dicked Ruby or any of the other sweet butts either. You have to have some serious

blue balls, brother. Your dick is gonna fall off if you don't get it wet soon."

Blaze snorts out a laugh. Aero grins, picks up his pack of smokes from the table and pulls one out. "Afraid those young girls might give you a heart attack, old man?"

"Shit," I laugh. "Those girls aren't old enough to have the kind of experience I prefer."

"All the more reason for you to hit that," Keno whispers, pointing at Eden.

I glance over again, watching as she serves two guys in black jackets and baseball caps. Something about them doesn't feel right, but I can't explain what. I've never seen them before and they're not doing anything other than drinking their beer and talking. Still, there's something. They have to be the owners of that beat-up green truck parked in the back corner of the lot. I noticed it the minute I pulled in and just like its owners, there was something about it that felt off.

"Hey shitheads," Aero says pushing up from the table. "I have to get up at the ass crack of dawn. If you're riding with me hurry the fuck up."

Keno and Blaze down their beers as they stand. "Hey, Chap." Blaze says, placing his empty bottle on the table. "Either shit or get off the pot. I have a feeling someone else might want to take a shot."

I follow his gaze. The two men in ball caps are blatantly checking out my Angel. I knew there was something about them I didn't like. It's the fact they can't keep their eyes off her tits. Or that they're obviously talking smack about her, and it's no doubt X-rated.

"Hey?" Aero says. "You good?"

"Yeah." I mumble.

He nods, takes one last look at the two assholes at the bar, then makes his way to the exit, Blaze and Keno following. I push back from the table and claim a seat at the opposite end



of the bar. The minute I sit down, Eden is in front of me, sliding a cold beer in my direction.

“I was wondering if you were going to say hi.” She grins.

I grab the beer and take a swig. “Does it make your night for me to say hi?” I give her a wink, and she smirks.

“Getting a little full of yourself aren’t ya, Chaplin.”

The way she says my full name, like she’s teasing, has my balls tingling. Fuck! This woman checks every single one of my fantasy boxes. Everyone except the no ties to law enforcement. But the more time I spend around her, the more I’m tempted to say, fuck it and take my shot.

Her hand is resting close to mine and without thinking, my finger stretches out and starts caressing hers. That small bit of contact jump starts my libido. I’m hard, horny and desperate to taste her. Judging by the way her breathing has increased and the goosebumps on her arm, I’d say the feeling is mutual. It’s the green light I need to make a move.

“I’m thinking *you’d* like to be full of me.” My voice drops lower, and I notice the way she shivers. “That can be arranged, Angel.”

The look on her face is priceless. At first, I think I’ve gone too far, then her features shift. She bites down on her lip, fighting to hide the smile that’s threatening to escape. Fighting and losing. Knowing she’s down for what I’ve just suggested has me ready to jump over this goddamn bar and stake my claim.

Movement at the other end draws my attention. The two assholes are watching us, the look in their eyes tells me they’re undressing Eden and imagining something that will never fucking happen. Not as long as I’m here. I glare at them, silently daring them to say something so I can lay their asses out like I did the last bastards the first night I met Eden.

“You need me to start clearing people out for you?” I ask.

She glances at her watch. “Nah, they still have twenty minutes. But I’m not serving anymore.” She grabs an empty bottle and tosses it into the trash. “Let me start closing out tabs. It’s just those two and Mr. Burns.”

She flashes me a quick smile then rushes off to the computer and starts pressing on the screen. She grabs two slips of paper and makes her way to the end of the bar. I’m perched and ready in case the two fuckers decide to pull something. No sooner than she slides the bill in front of them, one of them hands her his credit card. I can’t hear what he says, but Eden shakes her head and says something back. She doesn’t wait for a response before moving on to who I assume is Mr. Burns, who happens to be three seats down from me.

“You need me to call your ride?” Eden asks him. She places his bill in front of him and turns back to the computer to swipe dickwad number one’s card.

“I’ve already called her, sweetheart.” Mr. Burns says, as he digs his wallet out of his back pocket. He searches through it, pulls out some cash and sets it on the bar. “You’re always looking out for me, pretty lady.”

Eden smiles. “Well, that’s because you’re my best customer.” She quickly hands dickwad his card and receipt, not even waiting for a response before leaving them to finish their drinks. “Besides, you’re good for my ego.”

“Honey,” Mr. Burns clears his throat. “If I was younger, I’d be sniffing around like all these other gentlemen.”

Eden laughs, and I can’t help but grin. The man has to be in his eighties. I lift my beer to my lips and toss back the last of it.

“How’s that beautiful daughter of yours?”

I almost choke. I wipe some of the liquid from my mouth with the back of my hand, staring at Eden and praying I heard wrong. She’s gone stiff. Her eyes dart over to me before quickly returning to the old man.

“She’s...she’s good.” Eden says, collecting his money and turning back to the computer. The cash drawer opens, and she stuffs the money in and pulls out his change. “Growing like a weed.”

I sit, dumbfounded as I listen to the conversation. The two dickwads have left, and Mr. Burns is finally off his stool and pulling on his coat. “How old is she in now?” he asks.

Eden refuses to look in my direction. “Elven.” She mumbles as she hands the cash to Mr. Burns.

“Keep it,” he says brushing it off. “Christmas is just around the corner, get something sweet for that girl of yours.”

“Thank you,” Eden grins.

She follows him to the front door, chatting and laughing. I’m so stuck on the fact that my Angel has a kid, and I didn’t know it. I’ve been coming in here for almost three weeks. Why the hell didn’t she tell me she had a daughter?

Memories slam into me. Images of my son, only two years younger than her daughter. The two of us playing football in the yard. Sitting together at the dining room table, helping him with his homework. Then, like always, anger sets in. Anger over everything else I missed. Over not teaching him how to shave or drive a car. I didn’t get to hear about his first date, his first kiss or his first fight. I didn’t get to watch him walk across the stage and accept his high school diploma. My ex-wife stole all of that from me.

“Chap?”

I snap out of my thoughts to find Eden standing right in front of me. Her blonde hair glowing like a halo. Two minutes ago, I was ready to ignore that one, single box. But now...it’s not a single box anymore.

And this new box? Is the only box that counts.

# CHAPTER SIX

## EDEN

I haven't seen Chap in over a week. When there's a pickup of supplies, it's either Wolf or Lennox who show up, and neither of them seem like the talking type. We finally had a breakthrough, then it was like he shut down and couldn't get out of the bar fast enough. Should I have mentioned my daughter before that night? Maybe, but we were nothing more than friends, if you even want to call it that, and I've found that most guys tend to tuck and run the minute a kid is mentioned. I didn't peg Chap as one of those men, but then again, I hardly know him. And *that's* the reason I never mentioned Larisa before. Until I know a relationship is going somewhere, I don't tell all the details of my life, especially my daughter. I guess it's my way of protecting her, and myself.

Sighing, I bend down and grab the package of screws I need to hang shelves in Larisa's bedroom. She's won yet another award for her drawings and it's high time we started to display them. The girl has amazing artistic ability. All you need to do is walk into my house to see how proud I am of her. Her drawings are framed and displayed in every single room.

"Hey Chap, we need one and three-eighth inch."

My heart jumps into my throat at the sound of Aero's voice and Chap's name. He's here. He's here and I'm not sure I want to see him. My pulse races as I drop the package of screws and rush to the opposite end of the aisle. I need to find Larisa. She loves coming with me to the hardware store because she always finds crafts to work on. I can't image Chap's reaction if he were to actually see her.

I cut the corner to close and my shin slams into the bottom shelf, slicing my leg on the sharp metal. "Fuck!" I hiss, dropping to my knee and grabbing the throbbing leg just below where it's starting to bleed.

“Eden?”

My head jerks up, and my eyes lock with the handsome prick I was so desperate to get away from. He squats down in front of me, wrapping his hand around the back of my leg as he examines the bloody cut.

“What the hell where you trying to do?” he asks.

“Oh damn.” The store clerk appears from the next aisle. “I’ll go get the first aid kit.”

“I’m fine, it’s just a cut.” I mumble. But the guy has already rushed off.

Chap pulls a bandana from his back pocket and starts wiping the trail of blood. Grabbing my purse, which fell on the ground, I pull my leg from his hand. “It honestly looks worse than it is.”

“You should at least get a bandage on it,” he says.

“Mom?”

My breath catches in my throat as I glance behind Chap to see my daughter approaching. Like slow motion, his head turns. His eyes widen as he takes in the mini version of me. His mouth opens and closes, but he says nothing. God damn it! This is exactly what I was hoping to avoid.

I quickly scramble to my feet. “It’s nothing sweetheart. I just cut my leg on the shelf that’s all.” The moment I’m up I hurry to my daughter’s side. “Did you find something?” I ask, nodding to the package in her hands.

“Yeah,” she grins. “It’s a paintable 3-D puzzle of the Statue of Liberty.”

“New York again?” I groan.

Larisa shrugs. “You said one day we can go see it, until then I can make a model of it and keep it in my room.”

“You’ve never been to New York?”

My daughter and I both look at the man who's finally found his voice. He's clutching the bandana in his hand, his eyes locked on Larisa with a look of both terror and awe. There's something there that I never noticed before, and whatever it is, it's the reason he walked out of the bar that night. It's the reason he hasn't come back to see me in over a week, and it's the reason he looks like he's struggling right now with whether to turn and bolt again or drop to his knees and worship the child before him.

Larisa shakes her head. "No. But mom promised we'd go as soon as we had the money to make the trip."

My daughter has never been shy. I watch as Chap's features soften. The tension in his shoulders completely melts away and he steps forward with a hint of a smile playing at his lips. It's like seeing him transform right before my eyes.

"Then I'm sure your mom will be taking you soon. I know she wouldn't break a promise."

My heart cracks.

"Do you know my mom?" Larisa asks.

He finally looks at me and the longing I see in his hazel orbs almost brings me to my knees. The pain swimming in them feels like a knife to my own heart. How did I not see this before? The man is clearly in mourning, and every instinct tells me he's mourning the loss of a child. Everything makes sense now. I blink several times in an attempt to get my emotions under control. I want to reach out and hug him. I want to ask him to share his story with me. But now is not the time or place.

"I do." Chap says smiling down at Larisa. "She's a good friend of mine."

Once again, my heart does a little flutter.

"How come I've never met you before then?"

"Larisa!" I gasp, horrified by her bluntness.

Chap chuckles. “Because your mom is very careful about who she introduces to you. As she should be.” He looks at me and my breath catches in my throat. “But I’d like to think I’ve earned the pleasure of taking the two prettiest girls in town to dinner tonight.”

Larisa bounces on her toes. “Can we mom? Please?” Dinner’s out are a rarity for us.

Chap cocks a brow, the look on his face tells me he knows I won’t say no.

“Here’s the first aid kit.” The clerk says interrupting our conversation. Before he can open it, a large hand yanks the kit from him.

“We got it.” Aero growls. The color drains from the poor guys face and he turns and rushes away. Aero hands the kit to Chap. “Fix up your girl while I go pay for our shit.” He looks down at my daughter, who stares up at him without a hint of fear. He holds his hand out and Larisa simply places the puzzle in it.

“Your hair is longer than mine.” She says. “I hope you don’t pull it up in a man bun. My mom and I make fun of guys who do that.”

“Larisa!” Good lord, I must have said her name a dozen times in the last two minutes. She really doesn’t have a filter.

Chap snickers and I swear I see a hint of a smile on Aero’s face, but it’s gone just as quickly. He leans down and gets close to her face. “People know better than to pick on me.”

I’m sure most people would cower in fear at the threat in Aero’s tone. But my daughter isn’t like most people.

“Okay Rapunzel,” she huffs. “Let’s go pay. I’m hungry.”

She grabs his hand and starts dragging him to the counter. He stumbles, his forehead wrinkled in confusion as he’s led around by the petite young girl. Chap busts out laughing, and I can’t help but join him. Who would have thought a man like

Aero would meet his match in a skinny little eleven-year-old girl.

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Larisa smacks Aero's hand as he reaches over and snags a few of her fries. "Oh, come on," he frowns. "You can't possibly eat all that."

"Oh, but she can," I laugh. "My daughter can put away some serious food."

"Where the hell does she put it?" he asks, sizing her up. "She's like sixty pounds soaking wet."

"She's a growing girl." Chap says, sliding his plate of fries in front of Larisa and giving her a wink. After he cleaned up my cut and bandaged it for me, the four of us made our way down to The Family Dinner. Larisa and Aero have been teasing each other nonstop, and Chap has been watching her like she's the most precious thing he's ever seen. I'm glad he seems to have come to terms with the fact I have a kid, but there's still something there that I know we're going to have to talk about sooner or later.

"Eden?"

I turn towards the sound of my name to find two of Larisa's classmates and their mother sitting down at a table across from us. "Hey Kim. How are you?"

"Did you hear?" she asks.

My brows scrunch together. "Hear what?"

"Briana Thomas is missing."

"What?" I gasp. Larisa and Aero stop bickering and turn their attention to our conversation.

Kim nods. "She went out riding her bike after school and never came home. She knows not to leave the cul-de-sac



where she lives, but they found her bike several blocks away. She's been missing for four hours now and none of her friends have seen her."

"Oh my God," I mumble.

"Have they called the police?" Chap asks.

Kim nods. "Of course. They're all out looking but she should have been home before it got dark out. These kids know to be home for dinner and before it gets dark."

My pulse races as I glance over at Aero. "It's freezing outside."

"Mom?" Larisa's voice cracks. "What's going on? Where's Bree?"

"This is the second little girl to go missing this week." Kim says, keeping her voice low. "There was a twelve-year-old from Millerville last Tuesday."

Aero clenches his hands into fists as he looks at Chap. Something deadly passing between them. I'm about to ask Kim what I can do to help, when the bell above the door chimes and two men walk inside. The moment I see him I wish I could curl up and disappear. No such luck, because Tyler immediately zeroes in on me. The muscles in his jaw flex as he takes in who I'm sitting with.

"Great," I groan, bracing for impact as he and his deputy head right for our table.

"Eden," Tyler's voice has an edge of annoyance to it. "Did I not make myself clear a few weeks ago?"

Chap shifts in his seat. "Clear about what exactly, Sheriff?" he asks.

Tyler's eyes narrow as he stares down at me. Any other time I'd give him the fight he's looking for, but right now there's more important things to worry about.

"Have you found Briana Thomas?" I ask.

Tyler goes completely still. His eyes dart from me to Chap and Aero, then over to Kim. “Not yet.” He grunts.

“How can we help?” Aero asks.

Tyler’s head whips in Aero’s direction. “We’re handling it.” He snaps.

“Tyler!” I hiss. “We all want to help find the poor girl. Get your head out of your ass.”

My brother’s face turns almost purple as he leans towards us, lowering his voice so Kim and the people at her table can’t hear him. “Maybe you should worry about your own kid, and the type of people you’re exposing her too.”

My mouth drops open. My brother has always been a dick but this...this is straight up uncalled for. My face heats with anger and I move to climb out of the booth and lay into him, but Chap’s hand lands on my arm and holds me in place. I watch as Tyler and his lacky turn and walk away, leaving me fuming.

“Hey,” the deep tone of Chap’s voice in my ear instantly calms the raging storm inside of me. I turn to look at him, ready to apologize for my brother’s rude behavior, but the minute I’m facing him his lips land on mine. It’s enough to steal my breath and have my head spinning.

“Well, that’s one way to get your woman under control.” Aero chuckles. He covers Larisa’s ears as he leans forward. “But next time, I recommend spreading her thighs and giving her a little tongue action.”

“God yes!” Kim gasps.

Chap’s arm slips around my shoulders and he pulls me into his side. I bury my face in his neck, breathing in his scent of leather and spice. “I’ll take that into consideration,” he laughs.

Dear God, I really hope he does.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## CHAP

The moment I enter Double D I spot her. No matter where in a room she is, I find her immediately. It's like I'm drawn to her. I feel her the minute we're in the same space. I can't explain it, and frankly I don't want to. All I know is that I've never felt anything like it. Not even with Patty, my ex-wife. If I'm honest, it scares me a little. I swore I'd never let anyone mean anything to me ever again, but over the past week Eden and Larisa have completely broken down my walls. That little girl already has me wrapped around her finger. Hell, she has the entire club wrapped around her finger. She isn't afraid of anyone. There was a bit of hesitation when she met Lennox, I can't say I blame her, the guy is strange as fuck. But within hours she was following him around begging to braid his hair. She turned the tables on the poor bastard. He seemed more freaked out by her than she was of him, and he kept trying to duck out of the room to avoid the tiny spitfire and her pink hair ribbons. Aero wasn't so lucky. She managed to place a few clips in his hair, and I just so happened to have my phone out to capture the big man with two pigtails on top of his head. Yeah, that image will come back to haunt him. I plan to use it whenever I need a favor.

"It's that time, Mr. Burns." Eden tells the older gentleman sitting in his usual spot at the bar.

"You know, if I were a younger man—"

"I would have already said yes." She grins.

This is their weekly routine. The harmless old man flirts and Eden plays along. If it was anyone other than Mr. Burns, I would have fed them their teeth by now. But I like the old man and have often sat and chatted with him about both our times served in the military. He's harmless, and Eden thinks the world of him.

He stands and slips on his coat as I take the seat next to him. “Well, this man right here is a lucky bastard.”

Eden’s cheeks flush a soft shade of red and I grin as she ducks her head and follows Mr. Burns to the door. “You stay warm out there. It’s only in the twenties tonight.”

“Bah, I like the cold.” He grumbles.

I shake my head at the stubborn old bat. Eden holds the door for him and waits until he climbs into a cab, then locks up behind him. After switching off the open sign, she makes her way back behind the bar. My eyes never leave her ass the entire time.

“You know, you don’t have to come here every night. I’ve been closing up this bar and getting home all on my own for years now.”

I place my forearms on the bar and lean forward, making sure I still have a good view of her ass. “Yeah, well, I don’t like you here alone.”

“Chap? Why can’t you just say you want to fuck me, and then do it?”

My head snaps up. Holy shit did she really just say that? My Angel just gave me the green light, and my dick couldn’t be any happier. Not wasting another second, I plant my hands on the bar and practically catapult myself over it. Before she can turn around, I’m on her. My chest slams against her back, pressing her into the counter. She gasps as my hand wraps around her throat and gently squeezes. The feel of my cock against her ass is like hell fire, I’ve been fucking dying for this.

“Is this what you want?” I growl against her ear, my fingers tightening over the pulse in her neck. Her hand flies up and wraps around my wrist, silently encouraging me to squeeze a little harder. Hell yeah, she’s into this. I lick the lobe of her ear, then suck it into my mouth and bite down. “Tell me you want me to fuck you.”

With strength I wasn't expecting, Eden shoves away from the counter, spins around and plants her hands on my chest, slamming me into the bar. My eyes widen at the sudden movement, but before I can react, she's working my belt open.

"I'd rather show you," she breathes.

In seconds she has my belt undone and my jeans open. Like an idiot, I'm standing there in shock, but the moment she tugs them down my thighs I snap out of it. My hands go to the button on her jeans, and I frantically pop it open. I need them off...now. But my angel has other plans. I'm left reaching for her as she drops to her knees in front of me. God damn, this is every man's fantasy right here. My thighs tighten as she wraps her hand around my cock and it's all I can do not to end this the second her lips wrap around my shaft.

"Fuck!" I hiss through gritted teeth. My hand knots in her hair, guiding her head back and forth as she works my cock like a pro. It's fucking mind blowing. Watching her suck my dick is the sexiest thing I've ever seen. This image will forever be burned into my brain, but still, I need more. I need to be inside of her.

"Eden," I groan, my voice deep and gritty. She doesn't falter. She never slows her pace. She hums as she takes me down her throat and I swear to all things holy; my eyes roll into the back of my head. "Eden, goddamn baby. I need to fuck you, now."

When she still doesn't move, I finally regain my composure. Clenching my jaw, I shove my hands under her armpits and haul her to her feet. Her pupils are dilated, her neck red and splotchy and I've never wanted anyone more than this woman in my life. Gripping her waist, I lift her up onto the bar and tear her jeans and thong off as fast as I can. I'm borderline desperate at this point. When she spreads her legs, my mouth starts to water at the site of her bare pussy, and I have no problem returning the favor. The moment my tongue touches her, she cries out. She plants one hand on the bar and the other dives into my hair, fisting and pulling. I growl when

the taste and scent of her hit me. The woman is perfection all over, and I'm already addicted. Shoving two fingers inside her, she clenches around them, and I start working both them and my tongue at an unforgiving pace.

“Oh my God, fuck! Chap,” she moans.

Within seconds, I feel the first flutters of her orgasm, then she explodes. Crying out, her thighs tighten around my head, her inner walls around my fingers and still, I work her hard and fast until she's whimpering and panting for breath. Then I stand, fist my cock and start rubbing the head of it over her clit.

She grips the front of my shirt and stares up at me. Her eyes are dark, heated and full of so much promise. But it's her words that break the last of my patience. “Fuck me, Chap. Please.”

That's what I wanted to hear. Thrusting my hips forward, I slide in balls deep and it's like a nuclear bomb detonating inside of me. Eden's mouth drops open, her fingers tightening in my shirt. I wasn't ready for the feeling of being inside of her. It's like a lock clicking into place. It feels right, like home, and suddenly I have the urge to claim not only her body, but her heart, mind and soul.

Grabbing her hips, I pull her forward, until she's at the edge of the bar and give in to my animal instincts. I pound into her, feeling like I can't get deep enough. With every thrust, her body jerks. Her tits bounce and I reach out and yank down her tank top, along with her bra. Leaning over, I take one round nipple into my mouth. Sucking and biting down while my hips piston into her over and over again.

“Goddamn, baby,” I growl against her breast.

Her legs lock around my waist, her heels pressing into my ass. My Angel wants more, and I'm happy to give it. Stepping back, my cock slips free. Eden starts to protest, but I pull her off the bar, spin her around and shove her face first into the bar. “You like my cock, Angel?”

“Yes,” she moans. “Fuck yes.”

Pushing her legs apart, I line up behind her and thrust in once again. It feels deeper from this angle. She screams, her hands flying out and knocking several glasses off the bar. They hit the ground and shatter, but I could care less. I’ll buy fucking new ones.

“God, Chap, right there, don’t fucking stop.”

I reach up and grab a handful of her hair and yank it back, just enough to lift her head and have her completely at my mercy. “You want to come?” I grunt.

“Yes,” she cries.

My balls slap against her ass as I pound into her. I can feel her pussy clenching and I know she’s close. “Beg me to let you come.” I demand.

“Please, Chap. I need to come, please.” She screams.

Lifting her hips until she’s barely able to stand on her tiptoes, I give her every single inch as hard and deep as I can. Sweat rolls down my temple as I turn into a machine and fuck her with everything I have. “Then come!”

Her nails dig into the bar, scratching into the wood and leaving marks. Her inner walls clamp down hard and I watch as her entire body goes tense. The moment she screams, my own orgasm rips through me like shrapnel. Fast and hard. I squeeze her hips so hard I’m sure to leave bruises.

“Fuck!” I roar, slamming into her as my body goes tight. I release her hair, my hand sliding to her shoulder and pressing her back into the bar as I empty inside of her, my cock twitching violently. I’m panting, grunting and rocking my hips as I ride out my orgasm. “Holy fuck,” I whisper, collapsing over her. My chest heaves and my legs shake and still, I’m not ready to pull out. The thought of leaving her warm heat has my skin itching. Goddamn, what the hell has this woman done to me.

“Chap,” she groans. “I can’t breathe.” She giggles and I moan because it makes her pussy clench around my dick.

“You keep that up and we’re going again.” I growl into her ear.

Snickering, she attempts to push up from the bar, but I press her back down. “We need to get something straight first.” My voice vibrates against her back. “This,” I press into her again, and she gasps. “Is now my pussy.” I thrust again and she bites her lip. “That, is your cock.”

“Damn right it is,” she grins.

My lip curls up into a smirk. “To make it perfectly clear, Angel.” I slide my hand under her head and lift it, so she’s angled enough for me to get to her lips. “You’re fucking mine.”

I lean forward and claim her mouth, our tongues sliding against one another. I don’t know if she quite understands what I mean, but she’s about to find out.

Because Eden Sinclair has just been claimed.



# CHAPTER EIGHT

## EDEN

“Holy shit, woman.” Chap pants against my neck. Our bodies are soaked with sweat despite the frigid temperatures outside. This is the sixth night in a row that we’ve been locked away in my office, spread out on my new sofa and fucking our brains out after closing. Sex with Chap is unreal. The man knows exactly what he’s doing, and I couldn’t be more grateful.

He pushes himself up, slipping out of me despite my protest. “It’s going to come out anyways, babe. It goes soft once I’ve come.”

“I know,” I whine. “But I just love it when you’re inside of me. I never want it to end.”

Grinning, he leans down and presses his lips to mine. “If I could go forever I would. Being inside of you is the best feeling in the world. But I need to recoup for a bit.”

Laughing, I sit up and watch him walk towards my desk. The muscles in his ass flexing with each step. “Have I mentioned you have the cutest butt?”

Chap chuckles. “A few times, yes.”

Grabbing the wipes from the drawer, he wipes down his semi hard cock.

“Your dick is pretty awesome too.”

Chap shakes his head, a smile on his face that’s been a permanent fixture over the past week. I’ll admit, I’m just as guilty. I haven’t been this happy in a long time. Not since Jimmy. And even with him, I never felt *this*. I’ve fallen so hard for Chap in such a short amount of time, I’m afraid it’s going to burn out just as quickly as it started.

“You’ve gone quiet.”

I snap out of my thoughts, mentally shaking my head and trying to tell myself to not think so much about it. To just enjoy today, and whatever time I have with him.

I grab the blanket and pull it over me. “Sorry.”

Chap tosses the wipes into the trash and makes his way back to me. I watch him the entire time. The man really does have the perfect body. He’s built exactly how I like. Not overly big with veins protruding everywhere. I never did find that attractive. There is such a thing as too big. Chap is cut and toned, and absolutely lickable.

“Hey,” his voice rumbles as he sits next to me and brushes my hair from my shoulder. “I think I need to explain something to you.”

My heart sinks. I knew this was coming, I just didn’t think it would be so soon. My eyes sting with the threat of tears and I curse myself for getting emotional, I never cry. And I’m not about to start now.

Shaking my head, I lean over and scoop my t-shirt up off the floor. “It’s fine Chap. No explanation needed.” I frantically work the shirt until it’s right side out again and give him a forced grin. “I’m a big girl. I know this is just sex and I’m okay with that.”

I jump when the shirt is ripped out of my hands and tossed back onto the floor. Chap leans over me, the fire in his eyes blazing brighter. “If this was just sex Eden, I wouldn’t be here every night because I can’t stand the thought of you closing up alone.” His eyebrows are drawn together and the look on his face is like thunder.

“I wouldn’t have taken you and your daughter out to dinner or to get ice cream three nights this week.” His hand slides to the back of my neck and he grips it firmly, making my pulse race. “Do you know what it means to be claimed?”

I nod. “I think so.”

“By a biker, Eden. Being claimed by a biker means something completely different. This isn’t just sex, it means I’m yours and you are mine, Angel. It means you’re my end game, and I’m here for the long haul.”

Internally, I’m screaming. I want to jump up and down and shout to the rooftops. But I keep my cool. Instead, I throw my arms around his neck and lean forward to kiss the ever-loving shit out of him. “So, it means we’re a couple?” I ask.

“It means we’re more than that, baby.”

Smiling, I press my lips to his for another kiss. “Then can I ask you something?”

“Anything.”

Stroking my finger along his jaw, I lean back to see those hazel eyes I’ve come to love so much. “Spend Christmas with me and Larisa?”

Chap nods. “As long as you spend New Years Eve with me and my family.”

His family. Oh, this should be interesting.

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“Yes!” Larisa squeals. She yanks the last of the wrapping paper from the box, revealing the iPhone she’s been asking for, for months. It’s actually her very first phone. I figured she was old enough now and if she’s going to be staying after school to attend her science club meetings, I’d feel much better knowing she has a way of contacting me in case of an emergency. I guess they have to grow up sometime.

She leaps to her feet and throws her arms around my neck. “Thank you, mommy.”

I hug her back, smiling at the word mommy. She started calling me *mom* a few weeks ago and it hasn’t been sitting too

well with me. I hate that my little girl is growing so fast. “You’re welcome baby girl.”

She releases me and drops back to her knees as she tears open the package. I watch, smiling from ear to ear knowing I’ve made her so happy. There’s nothing better than a child’s joy and excitement at Christmas.

“Here.” A cup appears in front of me and when I look up, I find Chap staring at my daughter as if she was his own. His eyes have been glued to her all morning and what I’ve seen in them has been a mix of pure happiness and heavy sorrow.

“Thank you,” I smile, taking the fresh cup of coffee from him.

“Chap, look what mom got me.” Larisa shoves the phone in his face as he sits down next to me.

“Let me see that.” He reaches out and takes the phone from her. With a few taps of his fingers, he enters his name and number into it, then hands it back. “If you ever need anything, you call me, okay?”

Larisa grins. “Okay.” She takes the phone and busies herself with setting up snapchat. Apparently, all her friends are already on there and she can’t wait to start snapping with them.

Shaking my head, I place my mug on the side table and start reaching for some of the discarded wrapping paper. “Before you do that,” Chap says, reaching into his pocket. “I’ve got something for you.”

He pulls out a small black, flat, square box with a red ribbon wrapped around it. I blink several times as I stare at it, then finally meet his eyes. “Chap. You didn’t tell me we were exchanging gifts. I—”

“We’re not. I’m giving you a gift, and you’re accepting it.”

My lips flatten into a thin line. “That’s not fair.”

“Just open it, woman.”

Sighing, I take the box and pull the ribbon off. Lifting the lid, I reveal a small silver cuff bracelet. My insides go to mush as I lift it out of the box and read the inscription.

Property of Chap.

“I love it.” I giggle.

He reaches over and takes it from me, clipping it onto my wrist. “Until I can get your cut made, this will have to do.” Gripping my chin, he pulls me in for a kiss. The moment his lips are on mine, I feel at peace. I don’t know what it is, but everything about being with Chap feels right. Like, this is where I belong. It feels like home.

“Merry Chris...oh.”

Breaking apart, I find my mother and Tyler standing in the doorway to my living room. Mom looks surprised, but still has a shy grin on her face, while Tyler looks like he’s about to explode. His jaw is clenched, his eyes wide and fierce. And if it weren’t for the food dish in his hands they’d probably be balled into fists and shaking.

My mother moves into the room and Chap stands to take the pile of gifts she’s holding. “You must be Chaplin; my daughter has told me all about you.”

“She didn’t mention anything to me.” Tyler sneers.

I take some of the packages from Chap and set them down by the tree. “I didn’t know I was required to inform you about every aspect of my life.” I hiss, walking past my brother.

“Larisa,” my mother says loud, but cheerfully. “Come help me get the table ready for Christmas breakfast.” She gives Tyler and me a stern look that says keep it civil in front of my granddaughter. She’s right, I don’t like arguing in front of her.

Neither of us says anything as they exit the room and head into the kitchen. Personally, I’m all for letting it go. I’m tired of arguing, and I’m in too good of a mood to let him get me down.

“We’ve met, but not officially.” Chap says extending his hand towards my brother. “Chap.”

Tyler’s nostrils flair. “What’s your real name?”

Chap drops his hand, finished with the formalities. “That’s the only name I answer to.”

“And why is that?” Tyler asks. “Is there something you’re trying to hide?”

“Why is it any of your business?” I snap. I place my hand on Chaps bicep, giving it a supportive squeeze.

Tyler looks at me like I’m crazy. “Because you are my sister.”

“Bullshit!” I whisper shout. “Do not stand there and act like you give a fuck about me. You never have before.”

The vein in Tyler’s forehead pulses, just like it always does when he’s super pissed off. “I told you to stay away from these bikers, Eden. Didn’t you learn your lesson the last time?”

You can practically hear the slap from the force of that blow. Chap stiffens, his hands balling into fists. “Watch it.” He growls.

Tyler ignores him. “You really want your daughter around these kinds of people?”

I step in front of Chap, putting myself between the two men. “These kinds of people? You mean the kind that treat me better than my own brother?” Tyler glares at me, but I’m not done. “The kind that have been there for my daughter more than her own father ever has?”

“You don’t even know him!” he shouts.

“You’re the one I don’t know anymore! Honestly, I don’t think I ever truly did.”

A sound from the doorway draws all of our attention. Larisa and my mother are standing there, holding plates and silverware to set the table. Great, the last thing I wanted was to ruin Christmas for my little girl.

Tyler shoves the casserole dish into my hands. “Don’t come crying to me when this one walks out on you too.” He mumbles, then turns and storms out the door.

I clutch the dish, my eyes stinging but I don’t shed one tear. Chap reaches over and takes the food, bending down to press a kiss to my forehead. “Never gonna happen, Angel.” He runs his finger over the bracelet he gave me, and I remember his words.

I’m yours and you are mine, Angel. It means you’re my end game, and I’m here for the long haul.

I can only pray I prove Tyler wrong one day.

# CHAPTER NINE

## CHAP

“But Uncle Len, it’s New Year’s, you need silver clips in your hair and sparkly nail polish.” Larisa giggles as she chases Lennox through the main room of the clubhouse. I have to admit, we’ve done an amazing job fixing the place up. We kept the huge stone fireplace, which is currently heating the entire place. The kitchen and bathrooms are finished, as well as a few of the bedrooms. Don’t get me wrong, the place isn’t the Hilton, but it’s livable. Most of the guys are still sharing rooms or sleeping in the main area, but it’s better than it was.

“I don’t celebrate New Years,” Lennox grunts. He jumps over the back of the couch and manages to slip into one of the rooms before Larisa can tackle him and force the shiny silver decorations into his hair. Once he’s no longer a target, she turns her attention to one of the new prospects, Tuck. He and his friend, Snoopy, decided to prospect in just before Christmas. They’re both eighteen and have no idea what shit they’ve signed up for.

“You!” Larisa smirks. “You need your nails done.”

“Fuck no,” Tuck snaps.

I’m about to fly across the room and lay into the punk when a low growl catches my attention. Akuma has moved to stand beside the small girl, and he doesn’t look too happy with the fact Tuck took on such a sharp tone. It still blows my mind that the fury beast has taken so well to her. He only ever leaves Wolf’s side when Larisa comes around. Right now, he’s showing the new prospect where his loyalties lie.

“Jesus Christ, fine,” Tuck groans.

Larisa giggles as she scratches Akuma behind his ear. You can practically see the smile on the damn dog’s face. Eden’s mother, Rebecca, chuckles as she watches them from her chair



in front of the fire. She looks relaxed and happy considering she's in an MC's clubhouse.

"She looks at ease here," my voice rumbles against Eden's ear.

She sighs as I slip my arms around her waist. After the run in with her brother on Christmas she's been a little off. She likes to pretend that it doesn't bother her, but I can read my Angel like a book. Yeah, she's tough, and will kick Tyler to the curb if push comes to shove, but it still comes at the cost of losing her sibling. Rebecca, on the other hand, has taken to me and my club like fish to water. She's thrilled that Eden and Larisa have someone to watch over them. Especially since another young girl went missing just two towns over the day after Christmas. This one was only seven.

I watch as Smitty, the old man who found us when we first settled here, takes the chair next to Rebecca and starts talking.

"Looks like Smitty has taken an interest in your mom." I grin.

"Oh lord," Eden snickers. "I can see her now. On the back of his bike with a leather cut and boots."

I chuckle at the image. But in all honesty, if it makes them both happy then I'm all for it. However, I'll keep all thoughts of how Tyler will react if something were to happen between the two to myself. The last thing I want to do is bring him up and ruin New Years for all of them.

The sound of the front door slamming shut draws everyone's attention. Aero strides into the room, the expression on his face has my grip on Eden's waist tightening. He beelines for Wolf, talking in hushed voices, and my gut twists into knots. Scanning the room, he finds me next. Instead of waiting for him to get to me, I meet him halfway.

"Meeting room, now." His gaze falls on Eden. "Bring her with you."

I can feel her stiffen in my arms. Over the past week I've been explaining the ins and outs of the club. She knows only

club officers are allowed in the meeting room, unless there is something really important that involves a non-officer. She also knows it's extremely rare for a non-member to be invited, especially a woman. I must admit, I'm curious as well. Nodding to Aero, I slip my hand into Eden's and pull her towards Rebecca.

"What's going on Chap?" Eden whispers.

"I'm not sure, but we'll find out in a few minutes." I scan the room for Larisa, finding her settled in the corner with a rather pissed off prospect as she paints his nails. Akuma standing guard at her side.

"Rebecca?" Eden's mother turns her attention towards us. "We need you to keep an eye on Larisa. Aero needs to talk with Eden and me."

"Of course," Rebecca smiles.

Nodding to Smitty, I silently tell him to watch the girl as well. He nods back, clearly reading what I'm not saying. I catch sight of Kenno and Wolf making their way towards the meeting room and give Eden's hand a squeeze. "We shouldn't be too long."

"Take your time, we're fine," Rebeca says.

With another unspoken look at Smitty, I lead Eden to the meeting room. Somehow Lennox is already inside with Keno and Wolf. I didn't even see the fucker sneak out of his room. Not five seconds behind us, Aero and Blaze enter, closing the door behind them.

"Sit," Aero grumbles.

I grab a chair and place it next to mine at one of the folding tables. Our friend Kellan King, from the Road Demons MC in W. Virginia, is building us a custom table. After we helped his club get rid of our old Prez, Buzz, he offered to build us a new meeting table. Honestly, his club helped us just as much as we helped them, but it's always good to have allies. And who are we to turn down free shit? Especially when we're strapped for cash as it is.

“There’s been another abduction. Or, rather an attempt.”  
Aero growls.

“What?” Eden gasps.

The veins in his forearms bulge as Aero clenches his hands into fists on the table. “Teenager. Seventeen or eighteen.”

“Fuck!” Wolf snarls.

Aero stares at the table in front of him, working his jaw back and forth. “I was at the gas station just outside of town. I was inside paying, and I watched her pull in. No sooner than she stepped out to pump gas this fucking black van pulled up behind her.”

My heart pounds as I listen to Aero telling us that he witnessed firsthand.

“Two guys in fucking masks jumped out and approached her. I hauled ass outside when I saw them. I barely made it off the curb when a bike cut in front of me, and the fucker side kicked me right in the chest.”

“What the fuck!” Blaze shouts, knocking his chair back as he shoots to his feet. Our Sergeant at Arms takes attacks on any member very personally. It’s his job to protect the club.

Aero scowls at him. “I’m fine, brother. But the motherfucker was wearing a cut with no patches.”

“So, either he’s a nomad hired to work for these guys or, they’re a club who doesn’t want their identity known.” Keno says.

“Either way, he’s got shitty aim,” Aero snarls. “He missed my gut, so it didn’t keep me down to long.”

Blaze stands like a statue, listening to the rest of the story. The man is fuming, and no doubt ready to find this guy and rip him to shreds.

Aero pulls a cigarette from his vest pocket and lights up. “I managed to get to my feet and when the pieces of shit in the masks saw me coming, they let the girl go and hauled ass back

to the van. They reversed out of there just as I reached their door.”

“Oh my god,” Eden whispers. “Who was the girl?”

A stream of smoke pours out of Aero’s nostrils. “I don’t know. She freaked out when I started walking up to her and jumped in her car and took off.”

“What the fuck?” Lennox mumbles.

“She was scared,” Eden says. “She probably panicked.”

Eden’s right, but I’m confused as to why Aero wanted her here. We don’t have non-members in meetings, and we especially don’t tell our women any club business. Something isn’t sitting right with me, and I need to know why or how Eden is involved.

“Why did you want Eden here?” I ask.

Aero pulls in another drag then blows it out in a long slow exhale. “After everyone hauled ass out of the parking lot, I noticed one vehicle sitting at the far edge of the lot. The lights were off, but the engine was running.”

An uneasy feeling creeps down my spine. Eden looks confused but doesn’t say anything. The room has gone so quiet you could hear a flea fart.

Aero finishes his cigarette, then stubs it out in the ashtray in front of him. “I’ve seen it before. A beat up, old green pickup.” He leans back in his chair, eyes locked on my girl. “In the parking lot of your bar.”

The color drains from Eden’s face. “What?” she gasps.

My brain flashes back to the night I saw the truck and its two owners at Double D. It was the same night the guys were busting my balls to make a move on Eden. I knew there was something off about it *and* them that night, but I didn’t know what.

“Fuck me,” I groan. “I saw the bastards.”

“You know what they look like?” Wolf asks.

I nod. “I mean, somewhat. They were watching Eden like she was their personal peep show while she worked.”

“Oh my god,” Eden moans, covering her mouth with her hand.

“And you didn’t rip their eyes from their skulls for checking out your woman?” Lennox asks.

Growling, I glare at the freak. “If they had done anything other than look, they wouldn’t have walked out, period.”

“Enough,” Aero snaps. “The point is, they aren’t just passing through. They’ve been here a while and I’m guessing they’re not planning to leave until they’ve gotten their quota.”

“Quota?” Eden asks, her voice cracking.

Everyone glances around, silently communicating. We know exactly what this is, unfortunately, we’ve seen it before. Up close and personal, thanks to Buzz.

Grabbing Eden’s hand, I look my girl right in the eyes. “Human trafficking.”

Her eyes widen as she stares at me.

“We’ve dealt with this before,” Aero says. “And that’s how we know these guys aren’t finished yet. I did a little research before coming back here tonight. Route 70 is a major human trafficking route. Clear Springs is centrally located, and the perfect place to snatch up girls without much resistance or attention. The town is small, isolated and, sorry to say, doesn’t have much of a police presence to deter anyone from committing the simplest of crimes, let alone something on this scale.”

If Eden is offended at the jab towards her brother, she doesn’t show it. In fact, she looks like a deer caught in headlights at the news Aero just dropped.

“I want you to be aware because these guys have already been in your bar once.” Aero says. “And after I stepped in tonight, they know who we are. I was in my cut. If they know you’re with Chap, they could target you in retaliation.”

My blood starts pumping like fire through my system. If Eden could be a target, so could her daughter.

No! Not on my fucking watch!

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Emerging from the meeting room, I keep a firm grip on Eden's hand. She went strangely quiet after Aero told her she could have a target on her back. For the rest of the conversation, she practically zoned out, then she came back like nothing had ever happened. She listened and nodded as Aero instructed her to be vigilant about the people and vehicles that come to her bar. She told him she had a gun and knew how to use it. Strangely that little tidbit of information got my dick a little excited. There's just something about a woman firing a gun and being all *Laura Croft* from *Tomb Raider* that I find super sexy. By the time we walked out of the meeting, she had a strut about her that said she'd kick ass and take names if anyone tried to mess with her or her family. Again, fucking hot!

"I'm going to run to the little girl's room," she says. "I'll be back in a bit."

"I'll be at the bar." I give her a quick kiss, then send her on her way. I slip onto the stool next to Wolf, grab the bottle of Jack that's in front of him and pour myself a shot. "I thought we put this shit behind us," I grunt, tossing back the shot.

Wolf spins his glass in front of him. "Me too. Fuck!"

"Yeah," I mumble.

"Oh, I do love me a silver fox."

I jump when a soft hand travels along my lower back. Turning around on my stool, I come face to face with a woman I've never seen. She's older than the usual sweet butts, but not by much. Mid to late thirties, I'd guess. She has jet black hair and almond shaped brown eyes. Her nose ring catches the light

when she smiles. She'd probably be attractive, if she didn't have a pound of makeup covering her face. Standing behind her is another woman I've never seen and Jess. The young sweet butt who propositioned me and Lennox.

"And you are?" I ask.

The woman smiles. "I'm Candy." She steps closer, running her long dark red fingernail up my thigh. "But you can call me whatever you want handsome."

Wolf cocks a brow, the corner of his lip twitching. Asshole. I brush her hand off my thigh, which doesn't deter the woman one bit. "Candy," I warn. "We're in the middle of a conversation, so I mean this as politely as I can, Fuck off."

She actually pouts, and instead of it looking seductive, it looks ridiculous. "I'd rather fuck you, Daddy."

Wolf chokes on his Jack, spitting it across the damn bar. If I wasn't so annoyed, I'd find this whole thing entertaining. I'm about to tell Candy I'm not available, when Eden slips around her and throws one arm over my shoulder and the other hand goes between my legs and cups my dick.

"I think you need to find yourself another *Daddy* to play with." She gives my cock a firm squeeze, and my balls tighten. "This one is mine."

And once again, my Angel has me harder than granite.

# CHAPTER TEN

## EDEN

I'm not sure who this black-haired Bratz Doll wannabe is, but she's fucking with the wrong man. *My man!* The minute I walked into the main room and saw her touching and leaning into Chap, I was ready to rip each dark strand from her head. I know these types of women. They're pushy and reek of desperation, and they don't care if the man is gay, straight or taken. They see it as a challenge to win him over, and if they can hurt someone in the process, even better. Jimmy didn't like it when I tried to stake my claim, he enjoyed having all the female attention. I had to learn to live with it when I was with him, but I refuse to be that girl anymore.

The goth barbie stares at my hand as it cups Chap's balls. She slowly lifts her eyes to mine and grins. "I'm sorry, and you are?"

"His girlfriend." Wolf smirks.

Her eyes bounce between Chap and me, the smile wavering on her face. "Really?" She settles on Chap and her smile returns full blast. "Gee Daddy, you shouldn't have settled so fast. Something better just came along."

It feels like a bomb detonates inside of me and I start to lunge in her direction, only to have Chap suddenly stand and place himself between the two of us. "Candy, is it?"

The woman beams like she's just won the biggest prize of all. "Because my pussy is as sweet as sugar."

My nails dig into Chap's arm as he holds me in place. Along with her hair, I want to gouge her eyes out. "Something I have no desire to find out." He growls. "You see, Eden isn't my girlfriend, she's my ol'lady."



Wolf coughs, clearly not expecting to hear that claim. All signs of flirting drain from Candy's face and she finally takes a step back from my man. "Ol' lady?" she scoffs. "Then why isn't she wearing a property of cut?"

Chap's shoulders stiffen, and he takes a step towards her. "Are you fucking questioning me?"

Candy's eyes widen. "No, I...it's just an observation, that's all."

"Then takes notes." Chap sneers down at her. "I already have the best. You couldn't even get my dick hard if you were fingering yourself in front of me. I'm not fucking interested in you or any other piece of ass in this place."

Candy and the other two women glare at me and Chap, but he's not finished. He takes another step towards them, causing Candy to stumble into her friends. "Disrespect my woman again, and you'll be left with no cocks to ride. Because your asses will be barred from this club. Got it?"

The three women nod, even though they look like they're ready to slap him across the face. I'm sure they're biting their tongues, but clearly, they aren't stupid. With one last heat filled gaze in my direction, Candy spins around and stomps off with her two friends following behind her. I loosen my grip on Chap's arm, but I would have loved to have gotten one good punch in.

"Ol' lady huh?"

Chap and I both look at Wolf, who's curiously studying us both.

"Does Aero know about this?" he asks.

Chap slips his arm around my waist. "Not yet. I was planning on waiting until her cut came in next week."

Wolf grins. "You never were one for rules, brother."

"It won't make a difference either way. Whether the club approves it or not, she's mine."

Approves it? What the hell does that mean? Wolf holds his hands up, shaking his head. “All you brother. All you. But uh,” he slaps Chap’s shoulder. “I approve.” With a wink at me, he turns and strides across the room.

“What does that mean?” I ask.

The sound of paper horns and my daughter’s voice starting the countdown fills the room. Chap grabs my hand, pulling me closer to the gathering crowd watching the live video of time square. “I’ll tell you later.” He says.

“Seven, six, five...” Larisa yells.

Chap grabs two shot glasses of Jack and hands me one.

“Four, three, two, one. Happy New Year!” Several people yell.

Loud poppers explode around us, showering us in confetti. Chap clinks his shot glass against mine and we both toss them back. The minute I take a breath, his lips are on mine. His tongue slips inside and he claims mine as his own. My knees go weak, like they do every single time he kisses me. The man has so much power over my body.

“I’ve been hard as fuck ever since you walked in and grabbed my dick, sweetheart.” His deep voice growls in my ear. To prove his point, he presses his hardon against me, and I groan. Sweet Jesus, this man is an aphrodisiac. “That was the hottest fucking thing ever. I wanted to bend you over that bar and show everyone just how much I liked it.”

A chill sweeps through me, leaving my panties soaked. Glancing over my shoulder, I do a quick check on my mother and Larisa. Both are busy celebrating and talking with Smitty and a few other members. Turning back to Chap, I slide my hand up behind his neck and lightly scratch. “I can’t think of a better way to bring in the New Year, can you?”

His chest vibrates as he grunts in approval. “No, I fucking can’t.”

Grabbing my arm, he spins us around and takes off towards the back of the club. I chuckle as he throws open the door to one of the bunk rooms and pulls me inside. It's clearly his room, I could smell his cologne the minute I walked in. Before I get the chance to look around, the door is slammed shut and I'm shoved up against it. I gasp as Chap pins me in place, his hand wrapping around my throat.

“Who do you belong to, Angel?”

My eyes flutter as he presses his hard cock against me. “You.” I sigh.

He grabs my hand and places it on the bulge in his jeans. “And who's dick is this?”

My eyes fly open, and I stare into his intense gaze as I answer with conviction. “Mine,” I demand.

“That's right, baby. It's all fucking yours. Now take it.”

Not wasting another minute, my hands frantically work open his jeans. Like maniacs, we strip each other of our clothes and the minute there are no barriers in the way, I shove him down on the bed and straddle him. His hands grip my hips, fingers digging into my flesh as I line myself up and sink down onto his cock with a loud moan.

“Fuck, Chap.”

“You claimed it baby girl. Now mean it.” He grunts.

Challenge accepted. Gripping the headboard, I start riding him hard and fast. His fingers tighten as I rock back and forth, thrusting my hips hard as I slide along his length.

“Fucking hell, Eden.” He growls through gritted teeth. His hand slips between my legs and starts working my clit with his thumb. His touch rockets through me, making my thrusts falter. I close my eyes, focusing on the sensations his thumb is causing and the feel of his cock moving inside of me. I don't think I've ever felt anything like it. Chap is a man of many talents, and knowing exactly how and where to work my body is only one of them.

“Holy shit,” I groan.

“You like, Angel?” He asks.

“Yes.”

This thumb starts moving at a frantic pace, flicking back and forth over my clit. “Are you gonna come on that fucking cock for me?”

“Yes.” I cry out. My inner walls tighten as I build towards my release.

“Hell, yeah you are. I can feel you squeezing my dick, baby.”

I lean forward pressing my forehead against the headboard and rock my hips, hard and fast as he works my clit. Within seconds, I explode. My nails dig into the wood as my entire body quivers.

“Chap, fuck!” I scream; my orgasm rushing through me.

Chap shoves me to the side and rolls on top of me. Gripping my leg, he yanks it up over his hip and drives into me like a man possessed. I claw at his back, gasping and crying out as he thrusts into me over and over again. Then his hips pin me in place, and he practically crawls up my body, his hands fisting in my hair and pulling as his own orgasm takes over.

“Fuck!” he roars against my throat. He groans as he slowly works his hips against mine, pressing into me as deep as he can get. We lay there, sweaty and breathless and completely exhausted. Sex with Chap never disappoints. My body tingles all over. I’ve never been so sexually satisfied in my life.

“If that’s any indication of how this year is going to be, I need to stock up on some vitamins.” He mumbles against my neck. I giggle and he moans. “Stop. You squeeze my dick when you laugh and it’s too sensitive right now.” That only makes me laugh harder. He twists and jerks, making grunting noises but not pulling out. “Eden!”

“I can’t help it.” I laugh.

“Fuck woman.” He sighs, then finally drops onto his side.

I roll to face him, taking in his features and really looking at the man who has captured my heart in such a short amount of time. I want this. I want everything there is to have with him. I want to know him on every level. Running my fingers through the hair on his chest, I get lost in the millions of questions I have running through my head.

“What’s wrong, baby?”

My eyes flick up to his. I shouldn’t be surprised he picked up on my change in mood. Chap reads me so well. “How did you get the name Chap?”

He takes a deep breath, letting it out slowly. “I was a Chaplin in the Army.”

I stop breathing and go perfectly still. Chap was a preacher? I pull away, suddenly very uncomfortable. “You...what?”

“Relax, Eden.” He tightens his grip around me.

“But you, you were a preacher.”

He nods. “I was for a while. But I lost my faith a long time ago.”

I study him, waiting for him to give me more. It all makes sense now. The clean-cut, well-spoken gentleman. I can clearly see him in a black shirt and pants with the little white collar. How can that man and the one I’ve come to know and love be the same person?

He flops onto his back and lets out another heavy sigh. “When all you see is death and suffering, you start to question why a God would allow such misery. My faith was already starting to slip.”

He stares up at the ceiling, his eyes focused but he seems lost in his memories. “I had a little brother. He followed my footsteps and joined the Army. He wasn’t a chaplain like me. He was called to be a soldier. I wasn’t crazy about the idea, but I knew he would be safe. I thought my family and I were untouchable. Protected by my God because I was his servant.”

My fingers press firmly into his chest. My heart aches because I know what's coming.

“The day I had to look at my brother’s body, riddled with shrapnel and lying on a cold metal table, I knew there was no god. I left the Army and my belief behind in that room along with his body.” He sits up so fast I startle. Turning his back on me, he sits on the side of the bed, his head hanging down and his shoulders slumped. “My belief was sealed when I returned home after a year and half to find divorce papers and a letter from my wife saying she didn’t want to be married to me anymore.”

My heart drops into my stomach. He was married before? Then I start to remember the way he acted when he first found out about Larisa. The way he looks at her still, with such longing and sorrow. My pulse races, my vision blurring with tears as I sit up and gently place my hand on his back. My god, tell me I’m wrong. Tell me he hasn’t been suffering for years.

“Chap,” my voice cracks. “Did you...do you have—”

“I haven’t seen my son in ten years.”

A sob catches in my throat and I cover my mouth with my hand as tears track down my cheeks. The agony in his voice is like a knife to my own heart. How could she? How could anyone just run off, taking a child from their father? Especially after knowing he’d already lost his brother.

“My god baby. I’m so sorry.” I whisper.

He sits there, his back to me and not saying a word. It may have been years ago, but the wounds caused by losing his son are still very much unhealed. I move up behind him and wrap my arms around his shoulders and chest, letting my cheek rest against his back. He grabs my wrist and pulls me until I’m sliding onto his lap, looking into the most tormented eyes I’ve ever seen. He reaches up and cups my cheek, his thumb brushing away my tears. I feel his pain as if it were my own, and I wish I could take it from him, even if for only a little while.

“I don’t believe in much anymore,” he croaks, his voice sounding strained. I bite my lip, fighting to hold in my emotions.

“But, I do believe in Angels.”

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## CHAP

I watch Eden, serving drinks and chatting with customers. Some days I can't take my eyes off her. Most days actually. She's by no means a girlie girl, but everything about her screams she's all woman. Her features, her posture and movements. Eden is, in my book, the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. The more I get to know her the more I *know* she is my forever. Opening up to her a few weeks ago came so naturally. I've struggled to tell my story to even my brothers, but with Eden, it felt right. I could see it in her eyes, my pain was her pain. I know exactly how that feels. Because I feel every bit of Eden's emotions as well. She described it as soul mates, and who am I to argue. I told her I didn't believe in much anymore, but maybe, maybe there's some truth to the whole soul mate thing.

"Damn brother," Blaze grins from across the table. "Why don't you smear your cum across her forehead like that fucking monkey on the Lion King to mark your territory."

I cock a brow, fighting the urge to laugh. "How the fuck do you know what happened in a cartoon?"

For a moment he falters, a hint of pink touching his cheeks. "I'm not afraid to admit I watch cartoons."

Lennox chuckles as he tilts his beer to his lips and tosses back the last of the bottle. It's rare to get the guy to come out for a drink. Don't get me wrong, the man loves his alcohol, he just doesn't like people. He'd much rather stay cooped up in the clubhouse, drinking for free and sharpening his knives. Sadly, for him, he and Blaze had a few errands to run, and Lennox had no choice since Blaze was driving. It was either come in and have a drink or walk the fifteen miles back to the clubhouse in single digit temperatures. Plus, when our Sergeant at Arms wants to do something, you tend to do it.



“Somehow I can picture you lying in bed watching Saturday morning cartoons.” I laugh.

Blaze’s eyebrows pull together. “Hey! Scooby Doo is the shit.”

“That’s because you have a kinship with Shaggy.” Lennox smirks.

Blaze pulls a joint from his pocket and sniffs it. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

Shaking my head, I turn my attention back to Eden. Her blonde hair is pulled up into a high ponytail and all I can think of is wrapping it around my fist as she’s on all fours in front of me. The image of her ass jiggling as I ram into her from behind already has my cock itching for attention. God damn, I’ll never get enough of that woman. My addiction for her is stronger than anything I’ve ever felt.

Two days ago, I went to the club to let it be known I had claimed Eden. Typically, it’s put to a vote, but I wasn’t asking. I was telling. Because either way the outcome would be the same. Eden is mine, end of fucking story.

Blinking, I turn back to my table mates when a bottle cap smacks me in the cheek. “If things are about to get X-rated in here, let me get the kid home first before you scar him for life.” Blaze says, motioning to Lennox.

“Fuck you,” Lennox chuckles.

A blast of cold air sweeps into the room when the front door to Double D opens. I notice Blaze’s reaction, it’s subtle but when you know what to look for it’s not hard to miss. I follow his gaze, finding five men, dressed in dark clothes and each one carrying a helmet. They’re all wearing black leather jackets with no identifying patches. My mind goes back to New Years Eve when Aero told us about the guy on a bike who kicked him in the chest when he was attempting to help that teenage girl. My hands clench into fists as I watch them move further into the room, scanning the bar. My gut tells me this is going to be trouble. When they notice us in the corner,

they hardly react, but they do pause briefly. No doubt sizing us up trying to figure out how much of a threat we are. Considering they have five to our three, the odds are in their favor.

Three of them move to the table in the opposite corner while the other two head to the bar. I go tense, ready to rush over in case they decide to start shit with my girl.

“Easy,” Blaze’s voice rumbles.

I clench my jaw, my hardened stare never leaving Eden or the two big men that are now leaning into the bar.

“Hey sweetheart,” the one with red hair pulled back into a ponytail shouts. Eden is at the opposite end waiting on a few older men. She scowls as she glances in their direction. The redhaired fucker slams his hand down onto the bar, making everyone look in their way. “A round of beer for me and my brothers.”

My heart races, sweat beading on my forehead. Suddenly the room is too fucking hot. I study Eden like a hawk as she finishes serving the two guys and makes her way down towards red and his muscular sidekick. She doesn’t look nervous, more irritated than anything. But her eyes quickly cut over to me telling me to be cool.

“What kind of beer can I get you?” she asks, trying to be polite but there’s an edge of annoyance to her tone.

“Five Budweisers.” His eyes rake down her body as he licks his lips, like he’s looking at a juicy steak. “And a shot of your pussy when you get off.”

I’m up and out of my chair before I can even register what I’m doing.

“Fuck,” Blaze groans.

“Not interested,” Eden says.

Red jolts across the bar, grabbing her by the ponytail and yanking it back so hard she cries out. The guy’s face is red, as

he pulls her closer. “You think you’re too fucking good for me?” He sneers. “Noone says no to me.”

Rage pulses through me as my vision zeroes in on the bastard. He touched the wrong fucking woman. Grabbing a chair from one of the tables as I pass, I lift it up and swing. Red sees it coming at the last minute and manages to shield himself with his arm. The guy next to him lets out a scream and I notice a familiar blade sticking out of his left thigh. All hell breaks loose as the other three rush towards me and Blaze joins in with a solid left hook to one of the guys’ jaw. Another scream fills the bar, and I don’t have to look to know there will be another knife imbedded into some other assholes’ body. Lennox just leveled the playing field.

“Mother fucker,” Red roars as he drops his shoulder and drives it into my gut. We fly backwards, crashing into a table and knocking it over, chairs toppling along with us. I grunt when we hit the floor, pain shooting through my shoulder. The guy is a lot bigger than me, but I’m faster. The minute we hit the floor, I wrap my legs around his waist and turn us so I’m not on the bottom, but I’m not fast enough. The crack of his fist against my jaw has me seeing stars. It feels like my goddamn jaw just shattered.

“Chap!” Eden screams.

The sound of scuffling and shouting fills the room, from those of us who are fighting and from the people who were casually having a beer after work. I blink, trying to focus on the man in front of me. I catch his fist pulling back for another blow, but this time I’m ready. With everything I have, I jab hard into his kidney. His back bows and I use the moment to gain the upper hand. Twisting my body, I manage to get on top of him and that’s when I unleash the devil inside of me. I’ve done this before, blacking out when I’ve been pushed too far. It never ends well. The few times it’s happened, I’ve left the poor soul who pissed me off in a bloody mess, barely breathing. I swing, once...twice...three times. Each hit connecting with Red’s temple, nose and jaw. I swing again and

again, then I'm completely lost to the darkness, and I lose track of how many more times I swing.

“Chap!”

Blaze's muffled voice sounds like it's underwater. I hear the sound of a shotgun being cocked, then the sound of Eden's voice comes through loud and clear.

“Back the fuck off or your brains are going to be scattered all over the goddamn floor.”

The room goes quiet, and I freeze in place, my fist raised to deliver another blow. The bloody face of Red comes into focus and my chest heaves as I take in the look on Blaze's face. Confused? Shocked? Proud? The emotions play out, one right after the other. Finally, I glance over my shoulder. Red's friend, the one Lennox got in the thigh with one of his knives, is less than a foot behind me with a gun half raised to my head. Behind him is my Angel. Or should I say, my savior. The wild look in her eyes as she presses the barrel of a Remington 870 shotgun has me alert and back from the darkness. She looks deadly, in control and so fucking strong I'd be grinning from ear to ear if the situation wasn't so serious.

Her hands shake ever so slightly as she presses the gun into the back of the guy's head. “I said drop it, asshole.”

The bastard is smart enough to listen, setting the gun on the ground at his feet. Standing, I snatch it up and move to Eden's side.

“Now, get the fuck out of my bar,” she snaps.

“We're not the ones who started this shit,” Red grunts, sitting up and spitting blood onto the floor in front of him.

“Unfortunately for you, you touched Henchmen property.” Eden sneers, and if I could fucking kiss her right now I would.

“Eden!” Tyler strides into the room with his deputy. His face red and pinched tight. “What the hell are you doing?”

“Protecting myself, my bar and my friends from these assholes.” Eden says, a hint of challenge in her tone.

“By pulling a fucking gun?” Tyler shouts.

“To be fair, Sheriff,” one of the bystanders interrupts. “She only pulled hers when that gentleman there,” he points to the guy who held the gun to my head. “Pulled a gun on that man.” This time he points to me. I tilt my head in his direction, silently thanking him.

Eden finally lowers the shot gun, letting it hang to her side. Tyler glances between me and the man that could have ended my life. “Where’s the gun?”

I step forward, handing it to him. “Right here.”

He glares at me, then motions for his deputy to take the weapon and bag it. I step back to Eden’s side, wrapping my arm around her waist and pulling her against me. I feel her body relax, and she lets out a slow drawn-out breath.

“That piece of shit attacked me,” Red growls. “Jag here was only trying to defend me.”

“And you physically attacked me,” Eden throws back. “The entire bar witnessed it.”

Tyler clenches his jaw as he looks around at the few people who didn’t haul ass out of here the minute a fight broke out. Every one of them is nodding, but it’s the guy who spoke up about Eden defending herself, that says anything. “He could have broken her neck.”

The look Tyler gives the man is concerning. He seems to be more annoyed that everyone is defending his sister and backing her story than the fact these fuckers started shit and could have seriously hurt someone. My suspicions about him are growing stronger and stronger the more I’m around him.

Tyler motions to Red, Jag and me. “You’re all under arrest.”

“What?” Eden shouts.

“Fuck,” Blaze mumbles.

Red and Jag curse and complain; I simply press a quick kiss to Eden's forehead then hold my hands out to be cuffed. I have no issues going to jail for defending my girl, I'd do it over and over again if need be.

"Tyler, this is bull shit!" Eden shouts as Red and Jag toss around obscenities at everyone in the room. I know Tyler is up against a rock and a hard place here, and he has no choice. But as I watch him whispering quietly to one of Red's men, I'm starting to see my Angel's brother for what he really is.

He isn't an Angel like Eden, no, Sheriff Tyler Sinclair is the devil in disguise.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

## EDEN

I pull the sugar cookies, with the red heart design in the middle, out of the oven. Larisa likes buying these for every holiday. Next month, it will be shamrocks. God, it's hard to believe that spring is just around the corner. Since I've started dating Chap, I've lost all concept of time. I find myself living in the moment instead of watching a clock. The past month has been a dream come true. It feels like the family I've always wanted, even if Chap isn't Larisa's biological dad. Not that you would know it, the two of them have been inseparable. They go everywhere together and do everything a true father and daughter would do. I find myself often wondering about his son and my heart breaks for both of them. They both were deprived of a relationship that I have no doubt would have been extremely close and really strong. If his ex-wife was standing in front of me, I'd knock some sense into her. Here I was wishing Larisa's father was in her life, and she tossed aside a man who would do anything for his son. Some women just don't know how lucky they are.

I scoop the last cookie off the baking sheet and place it on wax paper to cool, then shut off the oven. They'll be ready for Larisa when she gets home from school in an hour. With the cookies done, I quickly wash the dishes, then grab the laundry out of the dryer. Mondays are my only day off, which I spend doing chores around the house. I hear the front door open just as I'm closing the dryer.

"Mom?" I call out, picking up the basket of clothes to carry into the living room to fold. It's too early for Larisa or Chap to be home, and mom tends to drop by unannounced all the time. I round the corner, expecting to find her stripping out of her coat and carrying some dish because she made too much food once again. "What did you bring me this..."

I freeze. My heart lodges in my throat as I take in the three men standing in my living room, all dressed in black including the masks covering their faces. My hands shake as I take a step back. The tallest of the three takes a step towards me and I stare into his honey brown eyes as he slowly shakes his head.

“Don’t try me,” his deep voice rumbles.

I don’t even think. I drop the basket and bolt for the back door. I hear cursing and the sound of heavy boots rushing towards me. My chest heaves as I dive for the door, but the minute my hand touches the knob a body slams into me from behind. My face cracks against the door and it feels like my cheek explodes. My hair is yanked back and a scream forms but never makes it out as I hit the ground and all the air is knocked from my lungs. Pain shoots through my shoulder and I close my eyes trying to breathe through it as I attempt to move away from my attacker.

“I told you not to try me,” the guy growls.

Glass shatters in the other room, the sound of furniture being toppled and busted. It sounds like demo day at a construction site. I push myself up onto my hands and knees, but as soon as I start to crawl away, I’m met with a heavy boot pressing down on the middle of my back. I collapse onto my stomach; my chest being pressed into the floor. Tears roll down my cheeks as I struggle to take a breath.

“Hurry the fuck up,” the honey-eyed man shouts, I’m assuming, at the two who are trashing my house.

I whimper when he digs his boot into my back, twisting it like he’s snubbing out a cigarette. My mouth waters, and I swallow trying to fight off the wave of nausea that’s overtaking me. When he lifts his foot, I suck in heaving gulps of air. My eyes dart around, frantically looking for help, but I’m alone. That’s when it hits me; I may very well die today.

The guy squats down, grabs a fist full of my hair and hauls me to my feet. This time I can’t hold the scream in. He drags me to the living room where every picture frame is broken. All



of Larisa's drawings are tossed about. Holes have been punched into the walls and the furniture is busted and ripped. I can hear them destroying the bedrooms down the hall and I pray that my daughter doesn't walk in while they're still here.

"Take whatever you want," I cry, my left arm dangling at my side. I feel like I'm about to pass out, it hurts so bad.

"We don't want your crappy shit, bitch," the guy snaps.

"Then what? I don't—."

"Tell your friends to watch their backs," he yells in my face. "They fucked with the wrong club."

One of the guys steps out of the hallway carrying a picture frame. My stomach twists into a knot when I recognize it as the one from my nightstand. It's a picture of Larisa, smiling at the camera as she poses.

He runs his finger over the image. "Pretty little thing," he says, his voice dripping with lust.

My entire body starts to shake as fear and rage battle inside me. Gritting my teeth, I pull away from the guy holding me and attempt to lunge at the piece of shit whose looking at my eleven-year-old daughter's picture like she's a pin up model. I scream as I dig my nails into his wrist, and he drops the picture.

The last thing I see is a fist flying right at my face, and then everything goes dark.

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"Mommy!"

Larisa's voice sounds muffled, and I can tell she's crying.

"Mom, please wake up." She sniffs.

I can feel her hands on my shoulder, in my hair, on my face. I'm trying to tell her I'm awake, that I'm okay, but I can't

make out any words.

“Mom!”

She shakes me, and I groan. Everything hurts.

I hear her feet as she runs to the kitchen. A few seconds later she’s talking to someone. “Please, my mom is hurt.”

There’s a pause.

“I don’t know. I came home and the place is all messed up.” She’s crying so hard she sounds like she’s hyperventilating. “She’s bleeding really bad. Please, just help me.”

*Please don’t cry baby, I’m right here.*

But the darkness takes me again.

\*\*\*

“Eden? Angel? Open your eyes baby.”

I feel Chap holding my hand. I’m on a stretcher being lifted into the back of an ambulance. Every little bounce is extremely painful.

*Chap, where’s Larisa? Is she okay?*

“I’m here baby. You’re going to okay.” He whispers.

“Are you her husband?” someone asks.

“Yeah,” Chap lies. “I’m riding with her.”

“Larisa?” I finally manage to get my voice to work.

Chap squeezes my hand as he climbs into the ambulance and sits down next to me. “She’s with your mother and Aero. They’ll meet us at the hospital. She’s fine.”

That’s all I needed to hear.

\*\*\*

The constant beep of a machine is driving me crazy. I wish someone would turn it the hell off. I try to open my eyes, but they're so swollen I can hardly see. Shifting my weight, I groan when my head screams in protest. I feel like I've been hit by a car. Then I remember everything. The men, the message I'm supposed to give to Aero and the club...the picture of Larisa.

“Eden, baby?” Chap’s low voice brushes against my hand. I didn’t even realize he was holding it.

“Chap?” I groan.

He brushes my hair off my forehead. “I’m here baby. You’re okay.”

My throat tightens as all my memories come flooding back. Tears fall from the corners of my eyes and I squeeze his hand as hard as I can. “I tried to run...I tried.”

“Shhhh,” Chap soothes. “We can talk about that later. Right now, you need to rest.”

I shake my head, which feels like it’s being squeezed in a press. “Larisa? Where is she? Is she—?”

“She’s fine. She and your mother are staying at the clubhouse. They’re both fine.” Chap says.

“Eden?”

I wince at the sound of my brother’s voice. We haven’t really spoken in the last month. Not since I called him a piece of shit and told him he was no longer welcome in my house. Turning my head slowly, I meet his wide-eyed stare. He’s in his uniform, holding his hat in front of him with both hands. His hair is a mess, and he looks like he’s terrified to be in the same room as me. Jesus, do I look that bad? He opens his mouth, but I shake my head and turn away.

“No,” my voice rasps.

“Eden,” he says moving closer. “You know I have to ask questions.”

“No,” I say, my voice gaining strength.

“We have a better chance of finding these assholes the sooner you tell me—”

“I can’t tell you anything!” I yell.

“Enough!” Chap snaps. “Jesus Christ, Tyler. She just woke the fuck up.”

“I have a job to do,” Tyler says.

“There we three of them,” I sob. Chap and Tyler fall silent. “But I can’t describe either of them. Th...they were wearing masks.”

The muscle in Chap’s jaw ticks as he sits back down beside me.

“I thought it was mom,” I sniff. “She always just walks right in. I tried to run; I did. But one of them chased me. He was so angry.”

“Motherfucker,” Chap mumbles, his hands balling into fists.

“Did they have an accent? Any noticeable tattoos or scars?” Tyler asks.

“No.” I swallow. “Can I have some water, please?”

Chap practically jumps up and rushes over to the counter in the far corner. He grabs a water bottle and opens it, then pours half of it into a foam cup with a lid and straw. He hurries back over and holds the cup in front of me. I reach out to take it, but he pushes the straw towards my lips. Sighing, I take it into my mouth and suck down half of the cup, savoring the cooling relief on my throat.

“Did they say any names?” Tyler asks.

Again, I shake my head. “No. They didn’t say much of anything.”

Tyler's eyebrows draw together. "Why would..." He locks eyes with Chap, and I can see the moment it dawns on him. His hands tighten on the rim of his hat. "You!" he growls. "This has to be because of you and your club. What the hell have you done to put my sister and my family at risk?"

"Tyler," I moan. My head is pounding so hard I feel sick.

"No, Eden," Tyler shouts. "I told you to stay away from that club. I told you something would happen."

"And I told you enough!" Chap roars. I wince at the loud tone. "She is not well enough for your bullshit. So, either get the fuck out, or I'll throw you out."

To tell the truth, I'm down for either of those options. I want Tyler to leave, and I need to talk privately with Chap. Plus, I'm in pain, and I've had enough of this conversation for one night. Grabbing the call button, I press the little bell icon, and wait.

The vein in Tyler's temple pulses. "Who the fuck do you think you are?"

Chap steps in front of the bed, placing himself between me and my brother. "Your future brother-in-law." His tone drops to a low rumble.

Tyler's eyes widen. He looks between me and Chap then me again. "Are you fucking kidding me? Eden, have you lost your damn mind?"

The door opens and a tall blonde nurse strides in. She takes in the two men, before addressing me. "Do you need something Miss. Sinclair?"

Nodding, I motion to Tyler. "I need my brother to leave. And I'd like to talk to my doctor please."

"Eden?" Tyler frowns.

"I'm sorry Sheriff," the nurse says. "But you're going to have to leave for the night."

"I'm not done asking my questions," Tyler snaps.

“Yes, you are.” Chap says, folding his arms over his chest.

Tyler stares at him, fuming. But wisely, he shoves his hat on his head and turns and walks out of my room.

“The doctor will be in shortly,” the nurse smiles. She checks the IV machine, pressing a few buttons. “Do you need anything else?”

“I’m in a lot of pain,” I mumble.

“I’ll get you some meds.” She pats my arm, then leaves Chap and I alone. He returns to my side, reclaiming the chair he was in earlier, as well as my hand.

“So, what’s wrong with me?” I ask.

He takes a deep breath, the lines in his forehead seeming more prominent. “Broken nose, concussion and a dislocated shoulder. There’s a nasty bruise on your back as well.”

I close my eyes, letting my head sink further into the pillow. I must look a sight. Larisa’s frantic voice streaks through my mind and my chest tightens. “Larisa was the one who found me.” My voice comes out in a whisper.

Chap nods. “Yeah.”

A choked sob escapes my throat. “She’s going to be so traumatized.”

He squeezes my hand, leaning forward and planting a kiss on my forehead. “She’s stronger than you think.”

But she shouldn’t have to be. No child should ever have to see their mother like that.

“She’s fine my Angel,” Chap says, pressing another kiss to my forehead. “Worried about you, but perfectly fine and giving Lennox a hard time, the last I heard.”

That makes me smile a little. Glancing at the door, I take a deep breath. “I lied earlier.”

Chap studies me. “Lied about what?”

“I told Tyler they didn’t really say anything. That’s not true.”

His eyes darken. He sits up, his back going perfectly straight. “What did they say?”

The tone of his voice has taken on a dangerous edge, and I know what I’m about to tell him will push him right over it. But what choice do I have?

I swallow hard. “They said... tell my friends to watch their backs, because you fucked with the wrong club.”

For a moment he doesn’t move. He sits perfectly still staring at me without even blinking. Then slowly he nods. I watch as he gets up and pulls his phone from his pocket. Pressing a button, he lifts it to his ear.

“We have a problem.”

Closing my eyes, I get the feeling I just started a war.

And something tells me I won’t be the only casualty.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## EDEN

“I don’t think anyone is going anywhere tonight,” Aero says, stomping his boots on the mat just inside the doors of the clubhouse. He’s covered in snow from his long dirty blonde hair to his black leather boots. The late February storm came barreling into town much earlier than they were predicting.

Aero shakes the snow from his hair. “There’s already a good six inches of snow out there.”

“You would know all about six inches,” Wolf grins.

Aero flips him off as he moves further into the room. The huge stone fireplace is crackling away, with two massive piles of wood stacked on either side. The guys have been busy chopping and stacking all morning, preparing for what the news stations are calling the worst storm Maryland has seen in years. They’re talking feet, not inches of the fluffy white stuff. Larisa is excited, they’ve already cancelled schools. I, on the other hand, am not too happy that I had to close the bar. Especially since it’s been closed for the past two weeks due to my injuries. Being closed means no pay. No pay means bills fall behind and I have to struggle to catch back up. And with the hospital bills looming, closing my doors isn’t a luxury I can afford.

“What’s the word on the generator?” Aero asks.

“Last I heard from Lennox, they got one big enough to keep the well going.” Keno says. “Good thing we have enough wood to heat this place for a few days.”

“As long as we can eat, that’s all I’m worried about,” Wolf mumbles around a mouth full of food. I’ve sat here and watched the man devour two huge turkey, ham, and pepperoni sandwiches and now he’s finishing off a full bag of Doritos.



And we all just had dinner less than an hour ago. As big as the man is, I guess it takes a lot to fill him up.

“That’s all you ever worry about, fucker.” Chap chuckles.

I laugh when Wolf tips the bag back and shakes the last of the crumbs into his mouth, then balls up the bag and launches it at Chap. “Not true, brother. I worry about pu...” His eyes dart over to the door where my daughter has just walked in, followed by Akuma. “Puppies.” He covers just in time.

Keno and Aero snicker. I think it’s pretty cool the guys respect me and Larisa enough to watch what they say in front of her. Don’t get me wrong, the f-bomb gets dropped more than a slippery bar of soap, but whenever they start to talk about inappropriate things, they tend to adjust their words whenever she’s around. I’m pretty sure Chap had something to do with that. The man has taken to my daughter like a fish to water. I can’t help imagining how great of a father he would have been, if his ex-wife didn’t skip out on him.

The back door opens again, and two very snow-covered figures stagger into the room carrying a big box with a picture of an orange and black Generac gas powered generator on it.

Blaze stomps his heavy boots. “Goddamn, this storm ain’t no fu...” He spots Larisa, who just smiles at him. He clears his throat. “No joke. My truck went off the road and got stuck. We had to carry this beast the last mile and a half.”

“No wonder you look like Frosty’s psychotic cousins.” Keno laughs.

“No shit,” Lennox grunts as he emerges from behind Blaze. “My fucking coc...” His eyes land on Larisa and his mouth slams shut. “My uh, *coat* didn’t help very much.” He mumbles.

“I would have loved to have heard the original sentence,” I giggle into Chap’s ear.

He slaps my knee, giving me a stern look. “My cock is the only one you need to worry about, babe.”

I grin as I snatch up the cards from the table and start shuffling them. The lights flicker a few times before shutting off for roughly three seconds then coming back on.

“We need to get this thing up and running before it’s too late.” Aero says.

Chap and Wolf shove their chairs back from the table and join in unpackaging the 5500-watt generator. It’s only going to be used to keep the well and refrigerator going, so at least we’ll have running water and food. Although, as cold as it is, we could always put the food outside and it would stay cold. Thankfully, the stove is gas, so we’ll still be able to have hot meals.

“We need to go back to the truck to get the containers of gas. We got enough to run this baby for three or four days if need be.” Blaze says.

“Keno,” Aero yells over to him. “Grab Patriot and Sparky and make a run back to Blaze’s truck. We need to collect the fuel to keep this generator going.”

Keno nods, then hollers for the two newest prospects. Sparky is in his mid-twenties and likes to fool around under the hood of cars. Patriot is pushing thirty and is the very same man who spoke up last month when those assholes, Red and Jag attacked me in my bar. It was because of him and the other witnesses’ testimony that Chap was released a few hours after his arrest. All charges were dropped. Including the ones against Red and Jag. I’m still unclear on how *they* managed to get off scott-free.

“Take my truck,” I tell Keno, tossing him my keys. “She’s four-wheel drive and can get you through anything.”

“Thanks love,” he winks, then the three men head out into the storm.

“Should only take a few minutes to get this hooked up.” Blaze says slapping the top of the generator.

“Come on sugar,” I place my hand on Larisa’s shoulder and guide her away from the men at work. “You can watch some

T.V. before we lose power and can't anymore."

Larisa runs to the empty couch and plops down on the center of it. Normally, there'd be someone sitting there already, watching a game or some action movie. But tonight everyone is busy getting ready for the storm. I wanted my mother to come with us, but she insisted on staying and taking care of her own place. Tyler assured her he'd stop by every few hours to check on her since he was working. With nothing left to do, my job now is to keep my daughter out of the way while everyone else works.

"Can I watch *Big Bang*?" Larisa asks.

"Sure," I yawn, sitting down beside her. All I've done is sleep; I feel like a horrible mother not being able to tend to my daughter like I normally do. But the doctors say sleep is the best thing for my concussion, and Larisa has been more than understanding. In fact, I think she secretly likes that she's getting the chance to take care of me for a change.

She curls up against me and within minutes my eyes are slipping closed.

I wake up to the sound of voices. The room is dark, except for the flickering glow of the fireplace. I blink, trying to get my eyes to adjust and when I try to move, I notice that Larisa is curled up against me and someone has covered us both with a blanket. I smile because I'm pretty sure I know who that someone is. Scanning the room, I catch sight of Chap talking to Wolf and Aero in the far corner. Whatever they're discussing it looks intense. Glancing around, I notice a few other guys stacking more wood and some covering windows with plastic. Something is off.

As gently as I can, I slide away from Larisa, making sure she's tucked in before heading to join Chap. "What's going on?"

The guys turn to me, and Chap wraps his arm around my shoulder and plants a kiss on my forehead. "The storm has stalled over top of us and is intensifying. It's getting pretty bad

out there. They're forecasting hurricane force winds now. It's been upgraded to a blizzard."

Aero folds his arms across his chest. "There's almost two feet of snow already and now they're saying we could get up to four."

"We lost power almost two hours ago." Wolf says. "They originally predicted it would be over by morning, but now that the storm has stalled, they're expecting it to last until tomorrow night."

"Jesus!" I glance up at Chap. "The bar isn't winterized for something like this."

Chap squeezes my shoulder. "Nothing we can do about it now. If there's any damage your insurance will cover it."

Groaning, I lay my head on Chap's chest. I know he's right, but it won't keep me from worrying.

The sound of glass shattering makes me jump. One of the windows near Larisa has been broken; wind and snow whips through the room like a tornado.

"Mom!" Larisa screams.

The four of us move at the same time. Wolf and Aero rush to the window, yanking down the blinds. Chap scoops Larisa up in the blanket and carries her away from the freezing wind. I follow them to the fireplace where he sets her down and secures the blanket around her.

"It's alright, sweetheart," he says. "It's just the storm."

I sit next to her, wrapping my arms around her, as I watch several of the club's members grab a sheet of plywood and start covering the window. Dear god, I hope Tyler is with our mother and not out on a call. There's no way she could handle a storm like this on her own.

"Get that plastic over here to cover this window once we have the plywood in place," Wolf shouts to Patriot.

Larisa curls further into my side as the sound of drills drown out the wind. I feel sick thinking about Double D and the damage I might find there. True, the insurance will cover it, but there will be days of missed income if it's so bad I can't open.

“Mom?”

I glance down at Larisa. “Yeah baby?”

“Is Grammie going to be okay?”

I pull the blanket tighter, rubbing my hand up and down her back and forcing a smile on my face. “Of course. Uncle Tyler will take good care of her.”

Larisa stares up at me, confusion swimming in her eyes. “But I heard Uncle Tyler talking on the phone just before we left. He told whoever he was talking to that he'd be there just as soon as we left.”

My heart slams against my ribs, a feeling of dread settling in. That son of a bitch! He assured me that he would be at home most of the night, with mom. I should have known he would be selfish. Tyler only ever thinks of himself. I dig into my pocket and pull out my phone, quickly calling to check on her. There's nothing. Glancing at the screen I see that I've lost service.

“Shit,” I mumble. I try to type out a text, but it's undeliverable. Shoving to my feet, I hurry over to the window where the guys are now covering the plywood with plastic.

“Chap?” He turns to face me. “Tyler didn't stay with my mother.”

His eyes widen. “What?”

“Larisa overheard him on the phone with someone. He was planning to ride out the storm with them.”

Overhearing our conversation, Aero moves in to stand beside Chap. “Are you fucking kidding me?”

I shake my head. “I wish I was. But this is classic Tyler.”

“Can you call her?” Aero asks.

“I don’t have any service. Do you?” I ask Chap.

He and Aero both pull out their phones. “No.” Chap frowns.

Aero stares at his screen. “Not even one goddamn bar.”

I press my hand against my stomach, fighting to keep from losing my shit. “She’s almost seventy, Chap. She wouldn’t be able to do this,” I motion to the window. “She doesn’t have a fireplace. If there’s no power, there’s no heat. If the windows break, the house is going to be freezing.”

“Could she go to a neighbor’s house?” Aero asks.

“Her closest neighbors are over half a mile away. In this much snow and wind, you can get lost just a few feet from the house.” My voice cracks. My stomach knots with the thought of her freezing to death in a snowbank. I’m going to fucking kill Tyler!

Chap sucks in a deep breath, seeming to work something out in his head, then nods. “I’ll go get her.”

“What?” I gasp.

“I’ll take your truck and bring her back here. She should have come with us to begin with.”

I grab his arm as he brushes past me. “You can’t go out in this.”

“I can’t let your mother freeze to death either.” He says, cupping my cheek. “I’ll be fine. And I promise I’ll bring her back.”

“We both will.” Aero says. “I’m going with you.”

I bite my lip, losing the battle of holding back my tears. Why have I become so emotional since this man has come into my life? Chap swipes away a stray tear with his thumb and gives me a soft smile. “I told you before, I’d do anything for you and your daughter, and now that includes your mother.”

A sob lodges in my throat as I throw my arms around his waist and bury my face in his chest. "Please be careful."

He wraps his arms around me, holding me just as tight. "God, himself, couldn't keep me from getting back to you."

Coming from a man who has lost his faith, I'll pray for the both of us that that is true.

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## CHAP

“You know, we could be doing this for nothing.” Aero says. “What if her brother is at the house. What if the kid heard wrong?”

Gripping the steering wheel tight, I take it nice and slow as we head towards Rebecca’s house. “Then at least we’ll know. I’m not taking the chance on what if’s. Besides,” I grit my teeth. “I wouldn’t put it past the good Sheriff. The man is so fucking self-centered he probably writes his accomplishments in a journal while he’s taking a shit.”

Aero snorts. “That’s a new one.”

I squint as I come up to the turnoff to Rebecca’s road. “Goddamn, I can’t see shit.”

The roads have hardly been plowed. More than likely, they can’t keep up with the storm. The fluffy white shit is falling faster than they can clear them. And the wind is making everything so much worse. Between the slick roads and the seventy-mile-an-hour winds, I’ve almost gone off the road several times. Fucking Tyler. Someone needs to put a boot up his ass. If he continues to treat his family like this, that someone is going to be me. And I’ll be glad to do it.

I make the turn onto Rebecca’s road and pump on the breaks. “Fucking hell. They haven’t cleared this road at all.”

“Which means if Tyler did go elsewhere, he hasn’t come back to check on his mother.” Aero growls, his tone laced with irritation.

I stare out the front window at the almost three feet of snow. “It’s half a mile to her house. Do we risk taking the truck?”



Aero lets out a slow, drawn-out breath. “If we get stuck, we won’t have a way back and no way to call for help. Cell service is fucked right now.”

I tap my thumbs against the steering wheel, weighing my options. “I say we go nice and slow as far as we can. The minute we start having problems we leave the truck and hike the rest of the way.”

Aero jerks his chin towards the pile of snow in front of us. “Let’s go then.”

Dropping the truck down into four-wheel low, we start making our way down the covered road. I silently praise my girl for driving a lifted truck with big ass tires. We make our way forward, slow but steady. It feels like it takes forever, but I’d rather take the time than put us in a situation where we can’t make it back to the clubhouse.

“Fuck!” I hit the brakes when we come to a snowdrift that’s well over four feet.

“We ain’t getting through that.” Aero says.

Turning on my high beams, I squint into the raging storm. The reflective lights on Rebecca’s mailbox shine back at me from a hundred yards away. “There’s the driveway.”

Aero nods. “Looks like we’re walking from here.”

Pulling my knit cap over my ears, I grab my gloves and put them on. Aero does the same. I turn the cab light on, and leave the truck running, so we can see where we’re going and have lights to follow on the way back. Shoving my door open, I jump down into the thigh-deep snow. It takes us at least twenty minutes to trek up to Rebecca’s front porch. Not a single window is lit, so I know the power is out here too. My legs burn from the cold, wet jeans and my face feels like it’s a block of ice. The temperatures have dropped dangerously low.

I pound on the front door, hoping she can hear me if she’s at the back of the house or upstairs. “Becca! It’s Chap.” I try the doorknob, but it’s locked. I pound several more times. “Becca? Tyler?”

“Jesus Christ, I think my balls have retreated up inside. It’s fucking freezing out here.” Aero says.

“Becca!” I shout, pounding again.

The door swings open and Eden’s mother stands before me with a blanket wrapped around her small body and a flashlight held in one hand.

“Good lord, Chaplin. What are you doing out in this?” She grabs my hand and pulls me inside, followed by Aero then closes the door behind us.

“Fuck, I think its colder in here,” Aero mumbles.

“Where’s Tyler?” I ask.

She doesn’t have to say anything for me to know he isn’t here. Fucking lowlife piece of shit. I’m done trying to be civil for Becca and Eden’s sake. The next time I see the prick, I’m kicking his fucking ass. I don’t care if it lands me in jail, the motherfucker deserves it.

Glancing around I notice a heavy blanket hanging over the kitchen doorway. I brush past her and yank the blanket back, only to be hit with a burst of cold wind. The window above the sink has been shattered by a large tree branch and snow has started piling up in the sink. It looks as if she tried to cover the window with a towel, but with this wind it would be nearly impossible. She was smart enough to hang a blanket over the doorway to keep some of the cold confined to this room.

“Goddamn it.” I curse under my breath. “Aero?”

He steps into the kitchen behind me, followed by Becca. “Do you have any plywood or plastic?” he asks her.

Becca shakes her head. “No plywood, but I do have some boards out in the shed. And there should be some heavy-duty garbage bags out there too.”

“I’ll get the stuff from the shed; you get Becca inside and pack whatever she might need for a few days.” Aero slaps my shoulder and heads towards the back door.

“Here, take this.” Becca says, handing him the flashlight. “I have plenty of nails and a hammer here in the house.”

I watch as my Prez heads back out into the storm, then I guide Becca back into the living room. “We’re taking you back to the clubhouse with us. Eden and Larisa are waiting for us.”

“I’m okay here, Chaplin.” She argues.

“You’ll be better with us. I’m not taking no for an answer. Your daughter will skin me alive if I come back without you.”

Becca grins. “Yeah, she will. Fine. I’ll go pack.”

She places her hand on my cheek, and I flinch. “Damn woman, your hands are freezing.”

It’s then I notice the puff of air coming from my mouth as I speak. Grabbing the battery powered lantern she has sitting on a corner shelf; I hold it up to her face. Her nose and cheeks are red, her lips already a light shade of blue and the poor tiny woman is shivering like a nervous chihuahua. I clench my hand into a fist, wishing Tyler was here right now so I could knock the piss out of him. How the fuck could he leave his poor mother all alone in this kind of weather?

“I’m fine Chaplin,” Becca smiles up at me. “I’m perfectly capable of taking care of myself.”

“You shouldn’t have to,” I snap. Shaking my head, I place my hand on her shoulder. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to be so harsh.”

“I understand. And it’s no wonder my Eden thinks so fondly of you.”

I can’t help but grin. “I think the world of her too. And that means I care about you and her daughter as well.” I jerk my chin towards the stairs. “Go pack a bag. Only clothes for now. We have to walk back to the truck. It’s a few yards down the road.”

Her face falls, a frown pulling at her wrinkled lips. “Chaplin, I can’t walk in that much snow.”

I cup her chin and look her right in the eyes. “You won’t have to.”

With a cautious nod, she disappears up the stairs. I hear Aero stomping back into the house and join him in the kitchen where we quickly nail several boards over the window, then cover it with three layers of plastic trash bags. Once we check the rest of the house, I tell Aero the game plan.

“The snow is too deep for Becca to walk. It will be up to her waist as short as she is.”

Aero nods. “I thought of that too.” He rubs his hands together like he’s ready to jump into a fight. “Bet I can carry her longer than you can.” He grins.

The fucker knows he can. He’s a hell of a lot bigger than me. Shaking my head, I motion for him to follow. We make our way back downstairs where Becca is waiting by the front door. She’s bundled up in a heavy coat, scarf, gloves and hat. Grabbing the blanket she had on when we arrived, I wrap it around her and hand Aero her overnight bag.

“Hang on Becca, we’re going for a little walk.”

She gasps when I scoop her up bridal style. “Chaplin!”

“We got you Ms. B.” Aero says as he opens the front door.

The wind slams into us the moment we step outside and Becca curls into me, burying her face in my chest. Her arms wrap tightly around my neck and despite the layers of clothing, she still shivers. Aero descends the front steps in front of me, making sure I make it down without slipping. The tracks we made on the way in are almost covered already, that’s how hard and fast the snow is falling. I follow behind Aero, stepping in the path he clears ahead of us. It’s slow moving, and I make it only fifteen yards before I have to hand Becca off. It took us twenty minutes to hike to her house, but it takes almost twice as long to make it back to the truck. The conditions have gotten worse and when you’re carrying an extra one hundred and ten pounds, it makes you move even slower. Every fifteen yards or so, we switch off. By the time

we reach the truck my lungs burn, and my feet are so fucking numb I can't feel them.

I yank the passenger door open for Aero to place Becca inside before hurrying over and climbing back behind the wheel. The warm air of the cab feels fucking fantastic and I pat myself on the back for leaving the truck running and the heat cranked.

“Oh...my...lord.” Becca’s teeth chatter. She yanks her gloves off and places her hands in front of the vents. “How did...you manage to...make it here in...this?”

“Your beautiful daughter was smart enough to buy one hell of a truck,” I tell her.

Throwing it in reverse, the tires spin but we don't move. I glance over at Aero. Pressing on the gas again, I get the same results. I switch to drive and give it more gas, the truck rocks but doesn't move an inch.

“Damn it,” I growl.

Aero throws open his door. “I've got it.”

I watch as he climbs out, slams his door shut and makes his way to the front of the truck. I meet his eyes through the windshield, and when he squats down and nods, I throw it back into reverse and stomp on the gas. Aero's face twists, his teeth clenched together as he pushes with all his might. The truck rocks back, the wheels still spinning, then finally they catch. He rushes back to the passenger side and climbs in as I back slowly down the road.

Laughing, I glance over at the six-foot-two wall of muscle. “You're a beast, brother.”

Aero smirks, rubbing his hands together and huffing like he just finished a workout.

Becca stares at him like he's an enigma.

It takes us longer to back out of her road than it did to get down it, but ten minutes later we're back on the main road. Not that you can tell, it's worse than it was coming in. I keep it

around fifteen miles per hour the entire way back. By the time we arrive, Becca is thawed out and half asleep with her head leaning on Aero's shoulder. I park the truck and make my way around to help him lift her out. Grabbing her bag, I follow them inside. The moment we walk into the room, I spot my Angel. Her eyes shimmer and I can see her body physically relax as she takes in her mother's presence. When her eyes find mine, her hand lifts to cover her heart and she lets out a heavy sigh of relief. And that right there, is why I went and got her mother.

I'd do anything for my Angel.

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## EDEN

The moment they stepped inside, and I saw that my mother was okay, I could finally breathe. And it wasn't just her; they were all safe. I thought I was as deep in love with him as I could be, but seeing the look in Chap's eyes when he walked through the door took my love to a whole new level. The man has done more for me than anyone else, including my own brother.

I press a kiss to Chap's chest, inhaling his spicy scent. We climbed into bed after making sure my mother and Larisa were comfortable in Aero's room. He insisted on them bunking there because it was nicer than the other's with a king-sized bed. Chap shares a room with Wolf, but the big man decided to stay up with Aero and give us some privacy.

I sigh as Chap rubs his hand up and down my arm. My fingers swirling the salt and pepper hair on his chest, and I can't help but hope that one day I will be able to fall asleep like this every night for the rest of my life.

“What are you thinking?”

Chap's chest rumbles beneath my cheek. I take a deep breath; his scent helping to calm and relax me. Letting it out slowly, I twist my head so I'm looking up into his hazel-colored eyes.

“I'm wondering what the hell I did to get so lucky.”

He shifts beneath me, his eyebrows drawing together and creating an adorable crease between his brows. “What do you mean?”

I prop myself up on my good elbow. “I mean, what is such an amazing man doing with a woman like me? I have nothing to offer you, Chap. I'm a single mother who barely makes

ends meet. I help take care of my mother and struggle to put food on my own daughter's table sometimes."

"First of all," Chap says, grabbing my hand and pulling me up until I have no choice but to straddle him. He stares up at me, his hands planted on my hips. "I never want to hear you talk about yourself like you're nothing. You are a fucking amazing woman. You're strong, loving, fucking beautiful, and a damn hard worker, and you do it all without complaint. Why the fuck wouldn't I want you?"

I shake my head. "I'm just me."

He lifts his hands, cupping the sides of my face. "And in my eyes, you are perfect."

I glance away, staring at the dresser across the room. How many times have I been told I'm a failure? That I've screwed up not only my life, but my daughter's as well.

"Hey?"

I turn my attention back to Chap. The kindness in his eyes has always been my kryptonite. The man is sincere to a fault.

"I've never asked," he says, running his thumbs over my thighs. "I figured you'd tell me when you were ready."

I know what he's talking about. It's not that I don't want to tell him about Larisa's dad and the whole crazy mess with Tyler, it's just, I hate cutting open old wounds and being vulnerable. But this is Chap. The man who trusted me enough to tell me about his past. About his lost faith, his wife and his son. He deserves my vulnerability, and my trust.

I slide my hand down over his and interlace our fingers together. Nodding, I take the metaphoric knife and cut open the scars of my past.

"Twelve years ago, I was in a relationship with a man, Jimmy. He wasn't a good man, not like you." I flash back to the few times he hit me and flinch. It's been almost twelve years, but it still haunts me sometimes. Abuse never truly



leaves you; you just learn to stuff it down and forget about it as best you can.

Chap squeezes our fingers together, offering me his strength.

“He was a biker.” My voice cracks. “A member of a local club that used to run this area. They weren’t troublemakers, perse. But they weren’t upstanding citizens of the community either. Most of the people here just stayed out of their way. On the rare occasion there was an...incident, they would make sure the people in town knew they were a force to be reckoned with. It didn’t help that they never faced any serious charges on the occasions they did break the law.”

“And why is that?” Chap asks.

I stare down at our joined hands. “Because Tyler and Jimmy were best friends.”

His chest rises as he takes in a deep breath.

“Tyler warned me not to get involved with Jimmy. Not because he cared about me, but because he didn’t want to lose Jimmy as a friend if things ended badly between us.”

“What the hell happened to your brother? How did he turn out to be such a fucking prick?” Chap asks.

I huff out a laugh. “He wasn’t always like that. Believe it or not, we were pretty close when we were kids. After dad died and he became Sheriff, I guess he got a swollen head about being in charge and having the power to control this town. In a sense.”

“So let me guess, when things ended between you and Jimmy, Tyler blamed you.”

I nod. “Yeah. Tyler started getting really nasty with me when he found out we were dating. He talked to me like I was a dog sometimes, yet still treated Jimmy like he was a god or something. Two weeks after I told Jimmy I was pregnant, he disappeared along with the entire club. I guess they had

planned to move on, but he never bothered to include me in those plans.”

Chap makes a grunting noise.

“Jimmy left without telling me. I have no idea where he went, I haven’t heard a single word from him in almost twelve years. He doesn’t even know if he has a son or a daughter.” I shake my head. “I didn’t even bother to put his name on her birth certificate. Why should he have that honor when he turned his back on his little girl? Tyler thinks I tried to trap him with a kid. He’s never forgiven me, and he looks at Larisa like she’s a monster most of the time.”

“How the fuck could he look at that child as anything but a fucking gift?” Chap snaps.

I shrug. “In his eyes, she’s the reason Jimmy left. Well, her *and* me.”

“First of all,” Chap says, sitting up and gripping the back of my neck. “If he blames an innocent little girl for making a piece of shit father skip town, he’s a fucking idiot. Second, if I ever see this Jimmy, I’m going to beat the shit out of him for walking away from the two most incredible girls I’ve ever met. Then I’m gonna fucking thank him for it because he gave me the best gift of my life.”

My eyes sting as I take in the man in front of me. “Chaplin,” I whisper.

His fingers work the back of my neck. “You have no idea, do you?”

I stare at him, unable able to respond.

His other hand comes up and strokes over my jaw. “I fucking love you, Angel. For the first time in a long time, hell...maybe even ever, I’m so damn deep in love with someone that I physically crave them. I crave your scent, your touch, your presence. It should scare the shit out of me, but it doesn’t. I’d fight the devil himself for you, Eden. I’d do any fucking thing in this world for you and Larisa.”

My heart pounds harder with every word he says. This is what I've been missing. What I've been holding out for and hoping to find in a man. Someone who puts me and my daughter first and makes us a priority. Chaplin is the answer to the prayers I've been praying for, for more than ten years.

"I didn't plan this," he says, stroking my cheek again then reaching down and taking my left hand. "But it feels so fucking right." He presses his lips to my finger, right where a wedding ring would be. "Marry me, Angel."

My breath catches in my throat. My eyes widen as his words sink in, swirling around and around in my head. It's only been three months since we've known each other. Two that we've been dating.

"Don't think so hard about it, Eden. Time doesn't mean shit." He says, his voice taking on a serious tone. "I know in my gut that you're the one. I don't have a fucking doubt in my mind." His eyes bore into mine, searching. "Do you?"

Do I? True, we haven't known each other very long, but what does time have to do with it? It's a formality. It's a waste. I'm forty-seven years old, and I'm tired of waiting for the things I want. And I do want him. More than anything. Chaplin isn't a whim; he *is* my forever. I've known that for weeks now. Pulling my hand from his, I rake my fingers through his hair. Our faces are close, our noses almost touching. Adrenaline races through me as excitement, love and acceptance wash over me.

"No," I whisper. "I have no doubts about you, or us."

I can see his pulse racing in the base of his neck, he's nervous or excited. I completely understand, because I feel the same way.

"Do I need to ask again?" he says, a hint of a smile on his lips.

I can't help but grin. "I think you might."

His hands go around my waist, and he pulls me closer, until my chest is pressed against his. "Eden Sinclair, will you marry

me?”

I nod, smiling like an idiot. “Yes. I’ll marry you.”

His lips are on mine before I can blink. His tongue dives into my mouth, searching, claiming. And I’ve never been more ready to surrender. To give myself over so completely to someone, to trust with everything I have. He has broken all my walls down, just as much as I’ve broken down his. I never believed in soulmates before, but with him, right now, it feels meant to be, and I’ve never felt more complete. Chap is one hundred percent my soulmate. And I am one hundred percent in love with the man of my dreams.

He flips us over, being careful of my arm, until I’m pinned beneath him, his hard cock pressing into my clit. I wrap my legs around his waist, and he groans deep and low. Pulling back, he reaches down and rips my thong clean off. I gasp as my body jerks from the movement. My mouth waters as he strips out of his boxers, his cock hard and ready. I’m so turned on my pussy aches.

Reaching down, he grasps the base of his dick and runs the head of it up and down my clit. “Fucking beautiful,” he growls, his eyes transfixed on what he’s doing.

“Chap,” I pant, desperate to have him inside of me. He doesn’t disappoint. He finds my opening and slowly presses into me, stretching me open and making my insides scream in pleasure.

“Fuck,” he breathes, settling over me until our bodies are pressed together, chest to chest. He sucks my nipple into his mouth as he starts to thrust. Setting a slow but forceful pace.

“Yes.” I moan, digging my nails into his scalp as I guide his mouth back to mine. We kiss, stroke, move together like we’ve been doing this our whole lives. That’s what it’s like when you’re with the right person. Everything flows perfectly. You fit together perfectly. You communicate without talking and you understand each other perfectly.

“Fucking mine,” he growls into my mouth as his tongue claims me once again.

“Yours,” I whisper.

And I never meant anything more in my life.

# CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## CHAP

I finally heard back from the trucking company I applied to several weeks ago. They need a dispatcher to sit in their guard shack to handle the paperwork and trucks as they come in with their products. The company is one of the biggest on the east coast and the pay is pretty damn good. I had almost given up on hearing back from them, but they called me an hour ago to tell me the job was mine. Thank fuck! Because I officially moved in with Eden and I want to take the financial strain off her shoulders.

Her bar stood up to last week's blizzard except for a small part of the roof in the storeroom. It collapsed under the weight of the snow before we were able to get there to clear some of it off. All and all, she made out pretty good. She was able to open for business two days after the storm, so we considered it a win. It could have been a hell of a lot worse. Her house had no issues thankfully, and I had all my belongings, not that there was much, moved in just yesterday. Larisa is over the moon about the wedding. She argued that she's too old to be a flower girl, so Eden asked her to be her maid of honor. The way she's been spending every waking moment with me tells me she's even more excited about finally having a father. If I'm honest, I'm pretty fucking excited to be a dad again too.

We heard from Tyler the day after the storm, when he finally decided to show up at Becca's house at four o'clock in the evening. The minute he walked in, Eden lit into him. He looked remorseful for all of two minutes, then he was right back to his normal self-centered ways, telling Eden *she* should have stayed with their mother, because he had a life outside of Clear Spring. That's when I'd had enough. I not so gently escorted the *good* Sheriff out the front door. When he tried to arrest me, Eden threatened to tell everyone in town that he

abandoned his own mother in the middle of the worst storm the state had seen in decades. Tyler backed off and we haven't heard a word from him since. I was a little disappointed that we didn't get to share the news of our engagement with him. Call me childish, but I really wanted to rub that bit of info in his face.

I open the door to the meeting room and pause. On the opposite side of the room is Aero and Wolf, talking to two men I haven't seen since last summer. Not since we left Covington Falls, West Virginia the day the president of the Road Demons claimed his bride. Now he's standing in our clubhouse meeting room with his Sergeant at Arms.

"You still look like a fucking lawyer or something no matter how much denim and leather your ass wears." Kellan smirks.

I grin, entering the room to shake the man's hand. "What the fuck are you doing here?"

"Making a delivery," Wren says, motioning to the huge table in the center of the room.

I shake his hand next and glance down at the dark wood of our new meeting table. The Highway Henchmen logo is carved into the wood, every detail fucking perfect. Two skulls facing outward with a double H connecting them in the middle. After the Road Demons helped us deal with our old Prez, we decided to change the club logo as well as the name. We were no longer Hell's Henchmen, but with so many of us having the double H tattooed somewhere on our bodies, we couldn't stray too far from our original club's name. Thus, the Highway Henchmen were founded.

"God damn brother," I whistle as I run my hand over the carving in the wood. "This is sick work."

Kellan King has a talent for wood working. The last I heard his stuff was being sold in local shops throughout the state. How he manages his business, club and being a new husband and father is beyond me. But what I know of the King

brothers, they're strong as shit and tough as nails. Two men I'd want to have my back in any sticky situation.

Aero takes a drag from his cigarette, then blows it out through his nose. "Do you think Eden could help set up a dinner for tonight? Kellan and Wren will be joining us with their ol' ladies."

"Jenna and Al are here?" I ask.

"Yeah, why?" Wren scowls.

I shake my head and chuckle. The King brothers are also some of the most protective bastards I've ever seen. "Eden is my ol'lady. I think she'd like to meet them."

Kellan cocks a brow, his arms folded over his chest. "Ol'lady?" He smirks. "That didn't take long."

I return his smile. "When I see something I want, I take it."

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"You're the first ol'lady of this club," Alora tells Eden. "You'll have a lot to do and some bitches to put in their place."

Jenna and Al have been chatting with Eden all afternoon. When I called and asked if she'd be willing to help set up this dinner, she didn't hesitate. Within thirty minutes she had ordered food from the smoke house in town and had arranged for it to be delivered to the clubhouse by five thirty. The woman makes me fall in love with her every single day.

At four o'clock, Larisa and Eden showed up with a truckload of chairs and folding tables, and with the help of Al and Jenna, they had the main room of the clubhouse set up to host our first official club meal. My girl has stepped into the club life like a pro.

"What Alora means," Jenna laughs. "As an ol'lady, you will be in charge of club functions such as meals, fundraisers



and parties. When the guys go on a club run, you'll be expected, with the help of the other women of course, to have food and beer ready for them when they return. Even if you're on the run with them."

"And..." Alora cuts in. "If the sweet butts don't know their place, you'll have to make sure it's crystal clear. Once a club member claims an ol'lady, that member is off limits. Some of those...girls," Alora's nose wrinkles. "Don't seem to understand that."

I chuckle as I drape my arm around Eden's shoulder. "Eden has already made that pretty clear."

"Yes, but have you?" Alora asks, one perfect blonde brow arched in question. She doesn't wait for me to answer before turning back to Eden. "Essentially, the club and anyone associated with it should respect your position as much as any member."

"Trust me, they will." I tell them.

Eden gives me a soft smile and I decide to leave the ladies alone to join the men at the bar. I knew talking to Jenna and Al would help her understand exactly what it means to be an ol'lady and what her role within the club would look like. She's in good hands with those two.

"You think it's trafficking?" Kellan asks.

I move in closer, wanting very much to be a part of this conversation.

"It has to be," Wolf says. "Four girls have gone missing from Clear Spring and the surrounding towns in the past three months. It can't be coincidental."

Wren scrubs his jaw, making a rough sandpaper sound. "You got any leads?"

Aero takes a drag from his cigarette. "Suspicious but no real leads." He blows the smoke out. "Not solid ones anyway."

"And this other MC, you don't know who they are?" Kellan asks.

I shake my head. “We’re not even sure they’re technically an MC. For all we know they’re just guys riding bikes.”

“They have no colors, no logos.” Aero stubs his cigarette out into an ashtray. “They don’t want anyone to know who they are. Which makes me want to find out even more.”

“Agreed,” Wolf growls.

“What about their bikes? Any tags that can be searched through the DMV database?” Kellan asks. “We could get Cypher on it.”

Aero grunts as he shifts his weight from one foot to the other. “I’ve only seen one bike. A black Harley Switchback. Didn’t get the chance to check for a tag.”

“Same,” I nod. “I saw two riding through town a few weeks ago, but they were too far away to see tags.”

Wren works his jaw; the big man gets easily irritated when he can’t solve a problem. “What about the fucking cops? What are they doing about this?”

Wolf snorts. “The local PD couldn’t find their own dicks.” He glances at me. “The Sheriff is his ol’ ladies brother.”

Kellan’s eyes widen. “Your woman has ties to the cops?”

“Believe me, she wishes she didn’t.” I fold my arms, tightening my hands into fists. “The fucker could care less about her, her daughter or his mother. There’s no love loss between them.”

Wren lets out a slow whistle. “You have balls, brother. Make sure you hang on to them.”

“What the fuck does that mean?” I snap.

Kellan bumps his brother’s shoulder. “It means if the day comes your ol’ lady and her brother decide to patch things up, don’t let them tame your ass. Remember, your first loyalty is to your club.”

I grit my teeth as I stare him down. “I know where my loyalties lie. That’s never been a question.”

Aero pulls another cigarette from the pack laying on the bar and lights it. "I've got my club handled, brother." His voice lowers in warning.

Kellan shrugs his shoulder. "Let me know if you need any help with these guys. I can send some men down, and we have the resources to look into some places you may not be able to."

And just like that the focus is off Eden and back where it belongs. On finding out who these pieces of shit are, and if they are in fact part of a human trafficking organization.

"Hey!"

We all turn at the sound of Larisa's voice. She's standing behind Wren, staring up at him like he's a challenge. I bite the inside of my cheek, because I know what's coming. The kid has a way of bulldozing over even the most toughest men, so this should be good.

Wren stares down at her, his expression never changing. "Yeah?"

She holds up a box of beads in several different colors. "Everybody else is busy. Come make a bracelet with me."

The big guy's eyebrows scrunch together. "What the fuck?"

"Language!" Aero, Wolf and I say at the same time.

Wren looks at us like we've lost our damn minds. Kellan actually chuckles. I don't think I've ever seen the man crack a smile.

"I *need* to make a bracelet," Larisa says, shaking the box of beads at him. "And you need to help me."

Before he can say another word, the spunky little girl grabs his hand and pulls him towards one of the tables. The kid doesn't take no for an answer. Hell, half the time she doesn't even give you a chance to say a word. We all snicker as we watch the small girl, who doesn't even come up to the man's chest, pull out a chair and demand he sit down. A very confused looking Wren does as he's told. Larisa sits down next

to him, opens the container of beads and hands him some string, while explaining exactly how to make a bracelet.

“Oh, I need a picture of this,” Alora giggles.

The girls have joined us, and Kellan tucks his wife under his arm. Classic King move. I’ve seen him do it on more than one occasion. The man is protective as fuck.

We all fight to keep our laughter under control as Wren struggles to slide a green bead onto the piece of twine with his big hands. The look of concentration on his face is hilarious. When the bead pops up out of his fingers and hits him in the face before rolling off the table and onto the floor, we all lose it. He glares at us, and I can just imagine the string of foul language running through his head. Alora has her phone out recording, and I have no doubt this will come back to haunt him for years to come.

Eden slips her arm around my waist, shaking her head as she watches her daughter steamroll over yet another man.

“You know, I always thought I’d have to worry about her when she starts dating, but I’m starting to think I’m gonna have to worry about the boys instead.” she laughs.

Dating? I stare at Larisa, wondering how long before some punk ass kid comes sniffing around like a dog in heat. Glancing over at Wolf and Aero, I find them staring at me with the same pissed off expression I’m sure I’m wearing.

Dating? Yeah, the horny little shits will have to go through us first.

# CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

## EDEN

I stare at my reflection in the full-length mirror. There's still a hint of purple under my eyes, but unless you're looking for it, you wouldn't notice. I've done a great job of covering it with foundation and powder. My hair has been curled; the sides pulled back with two pearl combs that my mother wore the day she married my father. Today, I'm marrying Chap. Neither of us wanted a big affair, something simple, quick and completely us. We decided we didn't want to wait. We've both waited long enough to find our person, and now that we have, we just want to spend the rest of our lives making each other happy.

"I've waited forty-seven years to see you looking like this," my mother sniffs.

I meet her eyes in the mirror, and that's when reality hits me. I'm getting married today. I'm taking vows and committing myself to the love of my life in less than thirty minutes. Today is my wedding day. Turning my attention back to my reflection, I take in the simple white sundress. I didn't want a wedding gown, nor did I have the money for one. I paid a whopping thirty-three dollars for the one I'm wearing, and it will be worn every summer for years to come. Practical, functional and affordable.

Smiling, I smooth down the front of my dress. "I almost gave up hope I'd ever see this day."

My mother runs her hand over my back. "I've prayed more prayers than you'll ever know that you'd find a man like Chap."

I grab a tissue and blot my eyes. "I never thought I could love someone so much. He completes me, you know?"

“I do, darling.” She smiles. “That’s what it’s supposed to be like. Powerful and fulfilling. You are his one, I’ve seen it in his eyes every time he looks at you. Just as I see it in yours when you look at him.”

“Even if he is a biker?” I ask.

My mother waves her hand like she’s brushing me off. “I don’t give a shit what he is.”

My mouth drops open. “Mom!” I giggle. I’ve hardly ever heard her cuss.

“Every one of those men are more than meets the eye. They’re kind, compassionate and they treat people with respect as long as they deserve it.” She reaches over and picks up the mix-matched flowers Larisa picked out for me. “And they know what it means to be a family.” She hands me the flowers. “Every single one of them has been more of a father to Larisa than her own flesh and blood. The two of you *are* a part of their family. That was true before Chap ever put that ring on your finger.”

I glance down at the gold band with the half carat solitaire diamond. With his very first paycheck he went out and bought the ring, surprising me with it the minute he walked in the door. The sentimental fool even got down on one knee and asked me all over again. Right there in my mother’s living room in front of her and Larisa.

“They are my family now, aren’t they?” I sniff.

My mother nods, her eyes shimmering with tears. “They are. And I know Chap and his club will take good care of you and my granddaughter.”

“What the fuck is going on?”

We both turn to find Tyler standing in the doorway to our mother’s bedroom. His eyes look like they’re about to pop out of his skull. I’ve no doubt he saw all the chairs and decorations in the backyard, as well as all the bikes parked in the front. Tyler wasn’t invited, nor did I even bother to tell him when the

wedding would be. He made his feelings clear that day in the hospital.

I turn back to the mirror, checking my makeup and hair yet again. “What does it look like?” I ask.

He stomps into the room, slamming the door shut behind him. “It looks like your about to make the biggest fucking mistake of your life.”

“Tyler!” our mother snaps.

He stares at her, his lips curling in disgust. “You can’t be okay with this.” He motions to me.

“I’m absolutely fine with it,” she says, brushing past him.

Tyler throws his hands up in the air. “Have you both lost your damn minds?”

The door swings open, and Chap steps into the room. He’s dressed in his boots, black jeans, a white dress shirt and his cut. His hair is combed, and his beard is trimmed, and he looks even more handsome than I’ve ever seen him. And that’s saying something.

His eyes narrow on Tyler as he moves to stand in front of him. “I’m pretty sure you didn’t get an invite, brother.”

That vein in Tyler’s forehead pulses and he grits his teeth. “I’m not your brother.”

“You will be in about,” I pretend to look at a watch on my naked wrist. “Fifteen minutes.”

“How many more stupid mistakes are you planning to make?” Tyler shouts. “You’ve learned nothing from Jimmy.”

I spin around to face him, my pulse racing as I gear up for another round. “My relationship with Jimmy might have been a mistake, but my daughter is not. I didn’t need your approval back then and I certainly don’t need it now.”

Tyler fumes as stares daggers at me. “That’s your problem, Eden. Everything has always been about you. You don’t think about how your actions hurt other people.”

“My god Tyler,” I huff. “Jimmy left twelve years ago. If he was such a good friend, why didn’t he keep in touch with you? He didn’t just abandon me, he abandoned all of us. You act like you...” I trail off as realization hits me. How the hell did I not see it before? It’s practically a flashing neon light. “You were in love with him.”

Tyler’s face turns bright red. He clenches his hands into fists at his side and it’s like watching in slow motion as he reaches his boiling point.

“He left because of you,” he roars. “I told you to stay away from him. I begged at one point. But you never listened. You’re a selfish bitch who always had to do the opposite of what you were told.”

“That is enough!” My mother shouts.

“How can you support this?” Tyler asks, spinning to face her. “How many more times is your granddaughter going to have to pay for the mistakes of her slutty mother?”

It’s like the air gets sucked out of the room. My eyes blur with tears as my heart cracks open from those horrible words. All these years that’s how my brother has seen me? I knew he blamed me, but I never thought he hated me so much.

“Chaplin!” my mother screams as my future husband slams his fist into my brother’s face. Tyler flies backward, toppling over the corner of the bed and landing on his ass.

“No!” I gasp. Rushing to stand between them. I plant my hands on Chap’s chest in an attempt to stop him. Aero and Blaze rush into the room, grabbing his arms and holding him back.

“Not today, brother,” Aero growls.

“Please,” I beg.

Tyler scrambles to his feet, shaking his head like he’s trying to clear it. “I’m arresting you...for assault on a police officer...you piece of shit.”



“No, you’re not!” My mother snaps. Everyone looks at her. Her eyes are wide, her chin jugged upward in challenge. “I don’t know what happened between you and Jimmy and personally, I don’t care. But your sister is right, Tyler. Jimmy is the one who abandoned *them*. If you can’t stop blaming your sister and more importantly, your niece, then you are no longer welcome in this house.”

Tyler’s mouth drops open. “Mom?”

“Furthermore,” she says, ignoring his plea. “Chaplin has been more of a son to me than you have here lately. If it wasn’t for him and Aero, I wouldn’t have made it through that storm last month. You were the one who was thinking only of himself.”

His eyes dart around the room. “I apologized for that.”

“Yes, you did,” mom sighs. “And I forgave you, because that’s what family does.” She steps forward, placing her hand on his chest. “So, when are you going to forgive your sister?”

“She didn’t do anything to be forgiven for,” Chap grunts.

“Yes, I did.”

Tyler stares at me, and I nod. “I didn’t pay enough attention. I should have seen how you felt about Jimmy. I’m sorry.”

Tyler lowers his eyes to the floor as he shifts his weight from one foot to the other. My heart breaks knowing he’s hid this secret for so many years. It all makes so much sense now. Why he never really dated a woman. How he begged me to stay away from Jimmy. How he watched him every time he was around him. How the hell did I not see it? And why didn’t he ever tell me?

“I uh, I should...” he moves past me, and I grab his arm.

“Stay.”

Our eyes meet, and for the first time in years I see the little brother I’ve missed more than anything.

“You look beautiful, sis.” He leans down and presses a kiss to my cheek before turning and walking out.

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“You really are mine now,” Chap grins down at me. My arms are wrapped around his neck, his hands resting on my waist as we sway back and forth to Elvis Presley’s *Can’t Help Falling in Love with You*.

I press my lips to his. “I’ve always been yours.”

A low growl rumbles in his throat. “Damn right you have.”

Giggling, I turn us in a slow circle. The ceremony was short and sweet, and my mother’s yard was the perfect setting. I couldn’t have asked for a better wedding day. Larisa was all smiles as Chap and I said our I do’s. My daughter was looking forward to this day as much as I was. She stood proudly at my side, holding my flowers and handing me Chap’s ring when the time came. My little girl isn’t so little anymore.

“Can I do it now?” Chap asks.

Glancing around I look for Larisa. This day isn’t quite over. Chap wants to ask her if he can officially be her dad, by adopting her. The day he asked me, I lost it. I knew he thought of her as his own, but to want to claim her officially? It just assured me that I was making the right move by marrying him.

“I’m not sure where she is,” I tell him as I scan the yard.

“Maybe she went inside to change,” he says. “She said she was cold in that dress.”

I smile as I kiss him again. “I’ll get her. She’s going to cry you know.”

“No promises I won’t,” Chap smiles.

I laugh as I pull away from my husband. “There’s no hope for me then. If you two start, I’m done for.”

He slaps my ass as I head towards the house. We're about to give my daughter the one thing she's always wanted.

A real father.

# CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

## CHAP

I watch Eden as she walks towards the back of her mother's house. My wife. I'm fucking married. Again. But this isn't like the last time. Back then I married my ex because she was pregnant. This time, I married because I'm so fucking in love with the woman who now wears my ring. This time, I plan to make it work, no matter what I have to do or how hard I have to fight. Eden and Larisa are my forever.

My shoulder jerks forward as Lennox slaps it. "Having second thoughts?"

I smirk, shaking my head. "Fuck no. Just praying this isn't a dream."

He cocks an eyebrow. "Praying?"

The smile slips from my face. Of course, my brothers know my back story, so whenever I slip and thank God or pray for something, they call me out on it. Not that they're really questioning me, they just like to bust my balls any chance they get.

"How's Eden's house coming along?" I ask, changing the subject.

Lennox digs into his pocket and pulls out a key, dangling it in front of me. "Happy honeymoon." He grins. "Don't go breaking the shit we just fixed when you christen every room."

We couldn't get to it until now because of the storm and well, everyday life, but we've all been taking turns replacing the drywall in Eden's house on our days off. Lennox did most of it since he didn't have a job yet, but he just got hired at the pawn shop in town. It took less than a week to hang new drywall and patch some of the smaller holes. The club provided all the materials. Becca covered the cost of new

furniture for Larisa's room but I told her we would pick out new bedroom furniture for ourselves after we were married.

I snatch the keys and shove them in my pocket. "No promises."

"Chap!"

The panicked tone of Eden's voice has the hair on the back of my neck standing on end. Everyone goes quiet as Eden comes running out the back door. Her eyes are wide, and she looks almost as white as her dress. The look of terror on her face hits me like a sledgehammer. I sprint across the yard, knowing what I'm about to hear is going to gut me. As soon as I reach her, she bursts out crying. Her hands shake and she's gripping what looks like a photo for dear life.

"They took her," she cries.

I cup her face in both hands, forcing her to look at me. "Who?"

"L...Larisa. They got my baby."

My chest squeezes. Panic comes rushing in as I try to understand what she's saying. "Who took her?"

She's shaking so bad she can hardly stand, but I need answers. Focusing on the picture in her hand, I pry it out of her grip. Tyler pushes through the crowd that is now surrounding us and stands at my side as I unwrinkled the polaroid.

"Fuck me," he gasps. The image of Larisa, wearing the same blue dress she was in just moments ago stares back at us. Her hands and feet are bound with duct tape and there's a gag over her mouth. Her red rimmed eyes look terrified. I read the message that's been written at the bottom of the picture in black sharpie.

You were warned.

"What is it?" Aero asks.

I hand the picture to him, before turning back to my wife. "Baby," I whisper, taking her face in my hands again. "Tell me

what happened. Where did you find this?"

She opens her mouth but the only thing that comes out is a strangled sob. Tears track down her face leaving streaks in her makeup. My beautiful new wife is on the verge of a breakdown, and I feel fucking useless.

"Eden, I need you to talk to me. Please baby."

She's hyperventilating, struggling to take in a breath. "I...it was on th...the counter. Chap," her face twists and it's like someone is ripping my heart out as I watch her break. "They took my baby!" She collapses into my chest, and I wrap my arms around her, holding on as tight as I can.

"My god," Becca cries. "Tyler?"

He scrubs his hands down his face as he takes a few steps back. "I'll uh, I'll call it in." He hurries off, frantically pressing buttons on his phone.

"Wolf!" Aero says, shoving the picture into his hands. Call Cypher, we're going to need help with this.

"On it," Wolf grunts then pulls his cell out as he walks to the back of the yard to make the call.

Blaze looks at his watch. "Larisa went inside less than twenty minutes ago." He slaps Kenos back. "Let's get riding, see if we can find anything."

They take off running towards the front of the house, and a few seconds later I hear the sound of their bikes roaring to life. Lennox is nowhere to be found.

Eden's legs finally give out and I bend, scooping her up and carrying her back into the house. I place her on the couch, checking her over like I'm going to find more injuries. How the hell did this happen? The entire club was here. How the fuck did they slip in and snatch her without anyone seeing or hearing anything?

Wolf walks in, glancing around. "Akuma?" he shouts.

The animal doesn't come. It's not like him not to come when his master calls.

"What did Cypher say?" Aero asks.

Wolf glances down the hall, still looking for his...dog. "Give him ten minutes and he'll call back."

The front door opens, and all heads turn towards the man standing in the doorway. "Tell him to follow the Sheriff," Lennox's gravelly voice rumbles.

I slowly push to my feet, not liking the feeling that's creeping over me. "Why?" I ask.

Lennox meets my stare with an icy one of his own. "Because he knows where Larisa is."

"What?" Eden gasps. She scrambles to her feet. "Where?" She tries to run out the door, but I grab her around her waist. "Let me go! Tyler?"

"He isn't here," Lennox says.

"How do you know he knows where she is?" Aero asks.

Lennox brushes his hair from his face. "Because I overheard him."

"Overheard him?" Becca asks.

Lennox nods. "He went to his car to call the station," he says. "But that's not who he called."

Becca stares at him, her face growing paler. "Then who?"

"He left the door open while he was talking. He didn't see me, but I was close enough to hear his conversation."

I grit my teeth. "What did he say?"

Lennox looks at Eden, then Becca before turning his attention back to me. "Word for word...What the fuck Raven? You took my niece? That was not part of our deal."

My body vibrates. Flashes of light spark in my eyes as my pulse pounds in my ears. Every interaction plays out in my mind. The brush off when the first young girl went missing.

The way he went easy on Red and Jag when we got arrested. And somehow, they got off with a slap on the wrist. Fucking Tyler is working with them.

“I’ll fucking kill him,” I roar.

Eden falls back to the couch, her face buried in her hands. Becca sobs, clutching her chest as she shakes her head.

“No. He wouldn’t.” she mutters.

Wolf’s phone rings and I spin around waiting for him to answer. He presses the button to put it on speaker. “Yeah?”

“I’ve hacked into the Clear Springs traffic cameras.” Cypher’s voice comes through the line. He’s the Road Demon’s treasurer, and one of the best computer minds I’ve ever met. The man is a fucking genius with a keyboard.

“And?” Aero asks.

“And I wasn’t really sure what to look for. I watched the feed heading out of town, but I didn’t see any bikes. Not a single one.”

“Fuck!” I shout.

“But, I did see something.” Cypher says.

I move closer, waiting for him to give me something. Any fucking thing.

“Wolf? Does that animal of yours often chase after cars?”

Wolf’s eyes shoot to mine.

“Green pickup trucks to be exact.” Cypher says.

That green fucking truck. The one I saw in the parking lot of Double D. And the same one Aero saw the night he stopped that young girl from being taken.

I can hear the clicking of computer keys through the phone. “Your canine companion was hauling ass behind an old beat-up Dodge. Sure looked like he was on a mission to me.”

Wolf sucks in a deep breath, letting it out slowly. Akuma has gotten so attached to Larisa, he’d do anything to protect



her, or die trying. I'm sure that's exactly what Wolf is so concerned about.

"Cypher?" Aero says. "We just found out the Sheriff is in bed with these pieces of shit. Although it sounds like he wasn't included in this particular plan." He glances at me. "Larisa is his niece. I think he knows where she is and he's on his way there now."

More clicking as Cypher's fingers fly over the keyboard. "Is he in his cruiser?"

Lennox nods once. "Yeah."

"Most of them have tracking devices on them. In case an officer goes down, the station can pick up their location." Cypher mumbles to himself as he searches for a way to get into the Clear Springs police station. I pace back and forth, every second feeling like an eternity.

"I'm in," Cypher says. "I have two cruisers still sitting at the station, one parked at the bakery in town, and one that is cruising at a high rate of speed down Route Two. I'm guessing that's your man."

Aero turns and points to Smitty. "Take Eden and Becca to the club. Tell Patriot and Sparky to watch them like their lives depend on it, cuz they fucking do." He points to Lennox. "Go with them, grab my duffle bag from my room, we're gonna need some iron." Lennox nods.

I turn back to my wife, gripping her upper arms and pulling her to her feet as Smitty helps Becca. "Eden, you need to go with Lennox."

She shakes her head. "No, I need to help, please."

I stroke my thumbs under her eyes, wiping away her tears. "You can't, baby. This isn't going to be pretty. I need you to go with your mother and Lennox." She starts to argue, but I give her a little shake. "Damn it Eden, you have to trust me. I'm going to bring Larisa back. I promise you."

Her chin quivers as she stares up at me. Slowly she nods, and I press a kiss to her forehead before handing her off to Lennox. I wait until the door closes behind them before grabbing the phone from Wolf.

“Find me a place to dump the trash,” I growl.

“Already working on it, brother.” Cypher says. “Wren, Kellan and Riggs are on their way to help. They should be there in a few hours.”

Clenching my fingers around the phone my lip curls back over my bared teeth. “In a few hours there won’t be anything left for them to play with.”

Cypher grunts. “Yeah, well, I couldn’t keep Wren away if I tried. I’m not sure what that little girl did when he was there, but when the big man heard about this, well, let’s just say our clubhouse needs a new front door.”

“I’ll make sure you get one as soon as we find Larisa and take care of the fuckers who thought it was a good idea to touch my daughter.”

“From one father to another,” Cypher says. “Rip their fucking throats out, brother.”

I fucking plan on it!

# CHAPTER NINETEEN

## CHAP

Cypher was able to track Tyler's police cruiser to a house about fifteen miles outside of Clear Springs. Other than being completely secluded, you'd never look at the place and think someone was being held captive inside. It's fairly new construction and anyone passing by would think a nice little family lived there. There are no bars on the windows, nothing threatening or out of place. It's the kind of home you'd find in a country living magazine. But I know what lies are hidden just behind those walls, and it's taking everything I have not to rush in and rip the place apart with my bare hands.

Movement catches my eye, and I watch as a figure in black emerges from the side of the house. My gut tells me it's one of the men who took Larisa. I close my eyes as images of her screaming, trying to fight as they held her down and tied her hands and feet flash through my mind. I clench and unclench my hands, fighting the urge to beat the fucker to a bloody pulp.

"What the fuck are we waiting for?" I growl, keeping my voice low and my eyes trained on the man in black.

There are still no signs of Akuma, but Tyler's cruiser is parked around the back, so there's no doubt he's involved. To what extent is still questionable. From the conversation Lennox overheard, it sounds like he didn't know anything about this kidnapping. I can't help but wonder if he was involved with the others.

We did a sweep of the woods surrounding the place when we got here. That was almost twenty minutes ago. Now we're spread out, waiting for Aero to give us the go ahead. I get it, we need to have a level head and a clear plan. Rushing in unprepared and hot headed won't end well. But I can't fucking

stand the thought of Larisa inside, bound and gagged and crying for her mother.

“That,” Aero says, pointing towards three men moving quickly in our direction. I recognize Wren’s giant frame and Kellan’s stance. When the third man comes into view, I clench my hands into fist because I know we just leveled the playing field a little bit more. Riggs is carrying a riffle with a scope; the man is former military like me and he’s one hell of a shot.

“Where are we set up?” Kellan asks, squatting down next to us.

Aero motions around the house. “Keno and Blaze are on the left. Lennox and Wolf around back. I figured you and Wren could cover the right. Chap, Riggs and I got the front.”

“On it,” Kellan whispers. The two men quietly slip away.

Riggs settles in next to me, giving my shoulder a slap. “Didn’t think we’d have this kind of reunion so soon, brother.”

“Didn’t plan on it,” I mumble.

He grips my shoulder, giving me a quick nod. “Let’s get your little girl.”

Fucking finally!

Riggs positions himself against a tree and raises his rifle. I hold my breath while he gets the man in black in his sights. His hands are steady as his finger slowly presses against the trigger, then freezes. “Shit!”

My head whips around to see what’s happening. Another dark figure has emerged from the side of the house, and he’s stalking the first guy like a lion stalks his prey. Lennox! The sneaky bastard can move sight and sound unheard. He creeps closer, and I can make out the blade he’s clutching in his hand.

Riggs adjusts his position, keeping his rifle trained on his target. “I’ve got him covered if this backfires.”

“It won’t,” Aero says.

Lennox gets less than a foot behind the guy before the man realizes he's there. Just as he starts to turn, Lennox wraps one arm around his head in a choke hold and plunges the knife into the guy's heart and twists. The guy doesn't get the chance to scream it happens so quick. Lennox releases the guy, letting him drop to the ground as he spins around and lets another blade fly. It embeds in another man's throat, dropping him immediately.

"God damn," Riggs whispers. "I didn't even see that fucker come around the corner."

Aero stands but stays crouched low. "I told you it wouldn't."

"Where the hell did you find that guy?" Riggs asks.

"Sitting in the middle of our clubhouse one day like he'd always been there." Aero grins. "Apparently, he had been. We just never noticed him. Not until he wanted to be noticed anyway."

Riggs shakes his head. "Strange fucker," he mumbles.

"Let's go," Aero commands.

The two of us move from our spot in the woods, leaving Riggs behind as our sniper. We quickly make our way across the front yard to where Lennox is collecting his knives. The man is so calm he hasn't even broken a sweat.

"Guns make noise," he says, wiping the blades off in the grass. "Knives are silent killers. Let's you get closer without announcing you're here."

A loud whistle comes from the back of the house, letting us know Wolf is in position and ready to move. Another comes from the left, Blaze and Keno. Wren and Kellan make their way towards us, having cleared the right.

"Someone's arguing in the back room." Kellan says. "Sounds like it's your new brother-in-law."

My nostrils flair thinking of Tyler having a hand in all this. "And?" I ask.

“He doesn’t sound to happy that your girl was taken. He’s demanding to see her.” Wren says.

Kellan leans in closer, keeping his voice low. “From what I heard; the good Sheriff is as much a pawn in these fuckers’ game as your daughter. They’re calling the shots; he’s sticking his neck out right now and pissing off the man in charge.”

I grip my gun tighter. If the man was standing in front of me right now, I’d probably put a fucking bullet between his eyes and call it a day.

“I don’t give a shit about Tyler.” I sneer. “He made his bed, he can fucking rot in it.”

“You ready, brother?” Aero asks.

“Yeah,” I grunt.

He lifts his gun, nods, and with a murderous glint in his eye, he quickly makes his way to the front door. My pulse races as I follow behind him, Wren and Kellan at our backs. Yet again I have no idea where or when Lennox slipped away. We creep up the stairs, my heart pounding in my chest. Sweat rolls down my temple, despite the fact I have a bandana on. Aero stops in front of the door and glances over his shoulder at me. We stare at each other, both of us breathing hard and then together, we nod. With a perfectly placed kick, Aero sends the front door crashing in.

A few men scramble to their feet, but they don’t get the chance to go for their guns. Aero takes aim and fires, hitting his target right between the eyes. I fire as soon as I brush past him, plugging the second guy in the chest three times.

That’s when all hell breaks loose.

Gunshots ring out through the house, shouting and cursing from the men inside. I have no idea how many there are or where they’re all located. I don’t care. All I care about is finding Larisa. Aero dives behind the couch as I rush in and plaster myself against the wall. Wren and Kellan move in, guns raised and firing at anyone that tries to enter the room.

“Fucking move!” Someone shouts.

The sound of boots retreating to the back of the house has me on edge. I want to chase after them, but I don't know if anyone is still inside. Plus, I know our guys are out there. My chest heaves as I glance around, spotting Aero peeking out from behind the couch with his gun.

Then I hear it. The high-pitched scream of a girl.

Larisa!

Baring my teeth, I don't wait for Aero to give the all clear. Shoving away from the wall, I lift my gun and rush into the next room.

“Chap!” Aero shouts.

But I don't stop. When a man steps in the doorway from the room to my left, I swing my arm around and fire. His body jerks from the shot to the shoulder. I fire again, and this time he falls to the floor.

I spin around when someone rushes past me, roaring like a beast about to charge. Wren tackles two guys at once, slamming them into the wall. I never even saw them. He quickly puts one in a head lock and twists. A loud cracking noise telling me he snapped the guy's neck. Kellan grabs the second guy by the head and shoves him face first into the wall, cracking the plaster. Then he shoves his gun into his back and fires.

When Aero enters the room, I turn and run into the next. The last of the men are retreating out the back door and I take aim and fire. Blood splatters from the back of the guy's skull. More gunshots and shouting come from outside and I rush to the back door keeping myself shielded from stray bullets.

“Damn it, Chap,” Aero pants as he slams into my shoulder to hide with me. “I get it brother, I do. But calm the fuck down or you're going to get yourself and us killed.”

I grind my teeth. At this point I don't give a fuck about me. But I do about my brothers. Aero hands me a new clip and I

quickly switch out the magazine, so I'm fully loaded again. I close my eyes, taking a deep breath.

"You ready?" he asks.

I open my eyes, cock my gun and look him dead in the eyes. "Fucking ready."

I step into the doorway, staring out into the darkness. Several dark images are moving through the yard. Sparks from guns briefly flash as people fire their weapons. I scan the yard, looking for Larisa. On the far right there's a group of men, and in the middle, I can just make out the blonde hair of my daughter.

"There!" I shout. Pointing in her direction.

I take off at a sprint but within minutes they have her loaded into that fucking green truck, a man on each side of her. The truck roars to life and I take aim and shoot, trying to take out as many of the bastards as I can along the way. Fire shoots through my arm and I jerk back from the force of a bullet hitting me. Turning, I come face to face with the barrel of a gun not ten feet away. Before I can lift my arm, the side of the guy's head explodes. His wide eyes glass over as he drops to his knees, then topples onto his side. The shot was clean and precise, and I know I have Riggs to thank for saving my life.

The truck speeds off, running over one of their own men as he tried to climb into the back. Blaze charges another that got tossed over the side as the truck takes off. Keno fires, hitting one of the guys in the truck bed. I take off, sprinting as fast as I can but it's pulling away.

"Fuck!" I shout, unloading my clip into the men in the back.

Dread overtakes me as I watch the taillights grow farther away. Several more shots ring out from the woods and one by one, Riggs takes out the last three men in the back. But we need to stop the truck. My chest heaves as I push myself to keep running. The sound of heavy boots grows closer and then Kellan blows by me. His arms and legs pumping like a



machine. The fucker is fast as shit, but he's not fast enough. The truck is still getting further away. Panic claws at my throat the closer they get to the road. If they make it there, we've lost them.

I can't fucking lose my little girl. I can't.

My lungs burn and despite wanting to push harder, my body is slowing down. I collapse to my knees, knowing I've failed and pray to a god I no longer believe in to save the child I've come to love as my own.

Then I see it. A familiar form bolts out of the woods, striding at full speed towards the passenger side of the truck. Akuma launches himself through the open window and the sound of screams can be heard across the entire yard. The truck swerves, the headlights catching on a man standing in front of them. His long hair whips around as he steps to the side, throws his arm out and releases his knife. It sails through the driver's window, and I don't have to see it to know he hit his target.

The man never misses.

The truck jerks hard and I watch in horror as it hits a dip in the yard and veers off into the trees. With a loud bang, the truck comes to a stop, glass shattering. I scramble to my feet and take off once again at a sprint.

"Larisa!" I shout.

Lennox makes it to the truck first, followed closely by Kellan. They yank the driver's side door open, and Kellan grabs the driver's limp body and pulls him out. He hits the ground with a thud. I shove past the two men, not sure what I'm going to find but I need to be the one to get Larisa out of that truck.

Akuma is stretched out across Larisa. My little girl's face is buried in his fur and she's sobbing, but she's fucking alive. Relief slams into me and I quickly reach in and wrap my arms around her small frame.

"Larisa," I pant.

She wraps her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck. I carry her a few feet away, running my hand up and down her back trying to sooth her. “I’ve got you, sweetheart. I’ve got you.”

Akuma jumps down from the truck as Wolf comes to a stop in front of me, breathing hard from his run. He squats down, checking his furry friend over for injuries. He’s covered in blood, but I have a feeling it’s not his. The mangled throat of the man in the truck all but confirms it.

Turning to Lennox, I reach over and clutch his shoulder. “Thank you.”

He nods once, his eyes locked on the girl in my arms. I glance down at Akuma, who’s sitting at my feet staring up at me. If it wasn’t for both of them, Eden could have lost her daughter forever.

“I’m buying that mutt of yours the biggest fucking steak I can find,” I tell Wolf.

He grunts as he scratches behind his dog’s ear. “We’ll talk about the mutt comment later.”

I spot Aero walking towards us, and I take a few steps in his direction to meet him.

“Found the good Sheriff.” he says, his eyes raking over Larisa. “He’s been shot, but he’s still alive and talking.”

I clench my teeth, biting my tongue to keep from saying something I’ll regret in front of Larisa.

Aero takes a deep breath. “Get her home. We’ll take care of this.”

Nodding, I turn and head down the driveway. Riggs steps out of the woods, his rifle slung over his shoulder. “Hold up.”

He cocks his head looking at my arm before placing his fingers in the hole the bullet made in my shirt. He yanks them open, ripping it more so he can see the wound. “I’m coming with you. We’ll get this patched up back at the clubhouse.”

Tipping my head in thanks, I continue on with a sobbing Larisa held tightly in my arms. After tonight there are two things, I'm sure of.

Larisa and Eden aren't just *my* family, they're just as much a part of this club as I am. And two...

God or no God, someone answered my prayers tonight.

# CHAPTER TWENTY

## EDEN

I'm in a nightmare. That's what this is because it can't possibly be real. I'm in a nightmare and I need to wake up. Please let me wake up. Let me wake up to find my daughter sound asleep in her bed, or curled up next to me on the couch because we fell asleep watching TV like we so often do. There's no way this is real.

"Eden," my mother's voice slips into my dream. Why is she in my dream? Her hand touches mine and I blink because it feels so real. Why does it feel so real? "Eden, sweetheart. Drink this."

She hands me a mug of tea and I stare down at it wondering why I can smell it so vividly. Then it hits me. This isn't a nightmare; this is all really happening. The mug slips from my hands and shatters. I scream as I bury my face in my hands, my heart feeling like it's being ripped from my chest. How? How did they take her right out from under our noses? How did they know where we were? Have they been watching us?

I can't shut my mind off. I can't stop thinking about what's happening to her. I just want it all to be a dream. Please, God, let it be a dream.

My mother sits beside me, wrapping her arm around my shoulders. "Eden, sweetheart, I'm so sorry," she sniffs.

I lift my head and look at her. She reaches over and grabs my hand, tears spilling from her own eyes. "I should have locked the front door. Maybe they wouldn't have gotten in if I'd locked it."

"Mom, they would have gotten in because they wanted to. This isn't your fault."

Her chin wobbles as she nods her head. I squeeze her hand offering what little comfort I can give. It's been hours since Larisa went missing. Hours since Chap and the guys went looking for her. Hours of not hearing anything.

Why haven't I heard anything?

"Where are they?" I shout, shoving to my feet. "Why aren't they back yet?"

Smitty, Sparky and Patriot watch me from behind the bar. They haven't said more than five words to me the entire night. What's there to say? They don't know any more than I do. A few other prospects and the sweet butts are here, but they've been keeping to themselves. Ruby has tried to talk to me a couple of times, but I haven't been in a good head space for chit chat.

My mother leans over and starts picking up the broken pieces of the mug. "Chap said to trust him." She sniffs. "I have to put my faith in him because that's all I can do."

I do trust Chap. I know he will do everything he can to get my daughter back. But there are some promises you just can't keep. I cover my mouth with my hand, holding back a scream. I can't take much more of this waiting. I can't...

The door to the clubhouse swings open and it's like slow motion as I turn towards the man striding into the room. Relief hits me like a tsunami when I lock eyes with my husband. His arms are wrapped tightly around my daughter, who is clinging to him like a baby monkey to its mother. My vision blurs, then a steady stream of tears spill down my cheeks as I scramble around the furniture to get to the two most important people in my life.

"Larisa!" I cry, crashing into the two of them and prying her from Chap's hands. I need to hold her. To feel her in my arms and know that she's really here. That she's okay. That I've finally woken up from this nightmare.

"Mommy," she sobs, wrapping her arms around my neck the same way she did with Chap.

I kiss the side of her head over and over again, her apple shampoo making me choke up even more. “Baby. Are you okay?”

“Chaplin?” my mother gasps.

I spin around, my eyes landing on my husband bloody arm. The sleeve of his shirt is covered in blood and has been ripped open to expose a small bloody hole.

“Oh my God! You’ve been shot.”

“He’ll live.”

A guy I don’t know appears behind Chap. He’s wearing a baseball hat pulled low over his eyes and a leather cut that tells me he’s another one of the Road Demons. He walks into the room like he owns the place, carrying what looks like a medical bag.

“I’m fine, Angel,” Chap says. “Riggs will have me stitched up in no time.”

“Chaplin?” Becca says, clutching her hands together over her chest. “Where is Tyler?”

His chest expands as he takes in a deep breath. “He was there.”

“No,” my mother whispers, shaking her head.

“He was involved with these guys somehow, but I don’t think he was involved in this.” He places his hand on Larisa’s back. “He was shot trying to get her back.”

My heart jumps right back into my throat. “What?”

“Dear God,” Becca cries, her hands moving up to cover her mouth.

Smitty is next to her in a blink, his arm going around her waist to support her. I clutch the back of Larisa’s head, still holding her against me.

“He’s alright,” Riggs says. “They’re taking him to the hospital. He was alert and talking when we left.”

“I need to go,” Becca says, wiping away her tears.

“Smitty, you take her,” Chap commands. “Sparky, you go with them.”

The prospect nods. “You got it.”

My mother grabs her purse off the couch and together the older couple hurry out the front door. I’m torn between going with them and staying here with my family. But the struggle is short lived. There’s no way I’m leaving either of these two tonight. They are my priority.

Chap runs his hand down Larisa’s hair. “If you want to go, I’ll stay with her. I can’t walk into a hospital with a gunshot wound. They’ll have to report it to the cops and right now I don’t know what the story is going to be.”

I shake my head. “I’m not leaving my daughter, or you.”

“Sit, brother.” Riggs says, pulling him over to the couch. He glances over his shoulder at Patriot. “I need bandages, towels and a bottle of Jack.” He glances around the room. “And I need everyone to clear out for a while.”

Patriot quickly grabs a bottle of Jack and brings it over before taking off down the hall. The rest of the prospects and girls leave. Most of them going to their own rooms. I sit on the chair next to the couch as Chap removes his shirt and sits next to Riggs.

“I’m gonna have to dig it out before stitching it up,” Riggs says. “You good with that?”

“Yeah,” Chap grunts. He looks at me and jerks his chin towards the hall. “She shouldn’t be here for this. She’s been traumatized enough.”

My lip quivers just thinking about what my little girl has been through. As much as I want to stay with Chap, I know he’s right. Pushing to my feet, I carry Larisa down the hall, passing Patriot along the way.

“Is she okay?” he asks.

“She will be.”

He gives me a reassuring smile. “If you need anything, let me know.”

I turn to look back at Chap, who’s downing half a bottle of Jack. “Be with him while Riggs...” I trail off unable to finish the sentence.

“You have my word.” Patriot says.

I watch as he continues down the hallway and hands over the towels and bandages to Riggs. Chap looks up and sees me. Our eyes lock and, in that moment, I see it. I see the hell he went through tonight to save Larisa. What he risked for the two of us. And what he’d risk over and over again if he had too.

“Thank you,” I mouth silently.

He nods once, and I turn and carry our daughter to his old room.

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The door creaks open and I squint into the light from the hall. Lifting my head, I smile when Chap slips into the room and crawls into bed on the other side of our daughter. He smells of alcohol, but he doesn’t appear to be too far gone. It’s been hours since I left him in the main room to suffer through the agony of minor surgery without anesthesia, so I’m assuming the Jack he downed has had the chance to wear off some.

“Hey,” his gritty voice rumbles.

“Hey,” I whisper. “You okay?”

“Yeah.” He strokes Larisa’s hair, staring down at her. It took a while, but eventually she cried herself to sleep. “How’s she doing?”



“Terrified.” I sigh. “In shock, traumatized.”

“We’ll get her through it.”

I reach over and take his hand, linking our fingers together.  
“Yes, we will.”

His eyes meet mine over top of her head and he lets out a long, slow breath of air. “I was worried you’d want to pack up and run as far away from me as possible.”

I prop myself up on my elbow, my eyes brows scrunching together. “Hell no. Chap, you proved to me tonight just how much you love our daughter. I mean, I already knew you wanted to adopt her. But this...what you risked for her, for us...I have no words to express how grateful I am.”

“I’d do it again in a heartbeat.” He says.

I shift myself so I can lean over top of Larisa, bringing my face closer to his. I stare into his hazel eyes, seeing every ounce of love he has for me staring back. This is what I prayed for. What I dreamed of for so long. I’ll be damned if I ever let it go.

“And I’d marry you all over again in a heartbeat.”

He smiles as he closes the distance between us, our lips coming together with a shock of electricity. Nothing and no one will ever make me run from this man.

He’s my one.

My person.

The absolute love of my life.

# EPILOGUE

## EDEN

“What are you doing?” I ask, rushing over and taking the box Tyler is carrying out of his hands. It’s been three weeks since he got shot, but he’s not supposed to be doing any heavy lifting.

“Jesus, Eden. It’s a box of stuffed animals.” Tyler groans.

“I don’t care.” I place the box on the floor next to the couch. “You shouldn’t be doing anything.”

We moved back into my house a few days ago. It took a little while to convince Larisa it would be safe. We’ve been staying at the club but honestly, an MC clubhouse isn’t the ideal place for newlyweds. Not to mention an eleven-year-old girl.

The house has been wired with a very secure security system, thank you Cypher, and motion sensor lights on the outside. The damn things are so sensitive they go off if a fly farts. But it makes my daughter feel safe, so I’ll learn to live with the lights flashing all night.

“Sit,” I command.

Tyler rolls his eyes but does as he’s told. There’s still some tension between us, and Chap isn’t his biggest fan, but we’re working on mending our fences and I’m hoping that one day I’ll have my brother back the way he used to be.

“How’s the investigation going?” I ask.

Tyler sighs, kicking his feet up on the coffee table. “I think they’re about to close it. They believe my story.”

I shake my head. “I can’t believe you had to burn down the house.”

“It was the only way to hide all the evidence.” He says.

I stare at him. I've tried to ask him a dozen times, but it never was the right time. But I need to know. "Why?"

He lifts his head and looks at me.

"Why were you working with those men?"

He pulls his feet off the coffee table and sits forward, his elbows resting on his knees as he stares down at the floor. "I wasn't working with them; I was being blackmailed."

My eyebrows pull together. "What the hell were they blackmailing you with?"

He lifts his head and looks at me. "I'm gay, Eden."

I shake my head. "So?"

He huffs out a laugh. "I'm forty-five years old and I've kept that secret my whole life. What will everyone think of their Sheriff if they knew we was into men?"

"They'll think the same thing they think now. That you're a damn fine cop and they're lucky to have you."

He rubs his hands up and down his thighs. "Not everyone is as understanding or nice about it as you."

"Then fuck them." I reach over and grab his hand. "They don't matter. And who's going to tell them anyway?"

He gives me a weak smile and a nod.

I scoot closer. "Why can't you tell me what you did with all the bodies?"

"Hey," Chap says as he and Blaze carry in my entertainment center and place it up against the wall. He walks over, leans down and presses a kiss to my forehead. "I told you, you're better off not knowing. Stop asking."

I purse my lips, annoyed that I'm being left in the dark. But if I'm honest, I'm not that hard pressed to know all the details anyway. I'd rather close the book on that chapter and move forward with a fresh start.

"Fine," I mumble.

Chap leans forward, putting his lips next to my ear. “We still need to christen the laundry room. Let’s try putting the washer on the spin cycle as I’m balls deep in your pussy.”

I bite my lip, said pussy clenching just thinking about it. He pulls away with a sly grin, then winks before straightening and walking back outside. The bastard is going to get it later.

“I was wrong about him.” Tyler says.

“Yeah, you were.” I smile.

Tyler chuckles. I slap his knee then push to my feet. “Come on. You can help me hand out some cold beers to this crew.”

“Hey mom?” Larisa pants as she comes busting into the house. “Come see what I finally got to do.” The smile on her face is so wide it looks comical.

I follow her outside where Aero, Chap, Blaze and Keno are standing around the picnic table laughing like a bunch of schoolgirls. Then I spot Lennox. As he turns to face me, my eyes widen. “Oh shit,” I gasp.

“Doesn’t he look great?” Larisa asks.

The poor man has pink and blue extensions clipped into his hair. His beard is covered in pink glitter and his eyes are sporting a very eighties shade of blue. But it’s the pale pink lips that are pursed into a little pout that makes me lose it. Tyler bursts out laughing, and I cover my mouth trying to hold in my hysterics. I’ve never seen anything so freaking hilarious in my life.

“Okay,” Lennox grunts. “You had your fun now get this shit off of me.”

“Wait,” Blaze says pulling his phone from his back pocket.

“Snap one picture and I’ll remove each of your fingers as painfully as I can.” Lennox growls.

Larisa rolls her eyes as she reaches out and takes his hand. “Fine, come inside and I’ll clean it all off. Then we can make a necklace.”

The man follows her, grumbling the entire way.

Chap strides towards me and when he's within reach, I throw my arms around his neck. His fingers twist in my beltloops and he jerks my hips against his.

“You seem happy my Angel.”

I twist my fingers into the hair at the base of his scalp.  
“That's because I am.”

And I thank God every single day for the gifts he has given me.

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**Thank you so much for joining me on this introduction to the Highway Henchmen. Chap was just a small taste of what's to come. Get ready, it's gonna be a bumpy ride!**

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

T.L. Drake was born and raised on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. A married mother of two, she has a degree in paralegal studies. Although she enjoys the life of law, her passion has always been writing. Dabbling in writing since a young age, she never considered it anything more than a hobby, until now. After writing her first novel, Heart of Stone in 2017, she was compelled to bring more of her stories to life. With a weak spot for hot alpha males and happily ever afters, her stories will bring to life fantasies you only ever dreamed of! With powerful characters that grip you from beginning to end, her books will have you begging for more.

Find out more about TL Drake

<http://www.tldrakeromance.com>

# BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

## **Kellan (Road Demons MC – Book 1)**

*KELLAN*

As the Road Demon's VP, this club is my life. I'm loyal to my MC family, and they're the only thing that matters to me. Until I decide to play hero to a damsel in distress. Normally, I'd use my charm to convince her to take me for a ride. But the moment I see Jenna, something about her calls to something in me. With all her secrets, she's a complication I don't need, but everything in me shouts with a primal urge to protect her.

*JENNA*

A woman on the run isn't supposed to make pitstops, let alone consider putting down roots. I know the only way to stay safe is to keep moving. I can't afford to let anyone get close to me. It's too dangerous for me and them, but I can't fight it. I'm drawn to this biker and the members of his club. They prove that family isn't always about blood.

*Can Kellan save her from the demons chasing her? Can Jenna peel away the Road Demon's tough exterior and show him love does exist?*

## **Riggs (Road Demons MC – Book 2)**

*RIGGS*

Serving my country is my past; my club is my family. As the Road Demons secretary, I'm in deep, and I wouldn't have it any other way. I have a reputation with the ladies, one that's never bothered me before. Getting attached is a complication. I kick them out of my bed the minute I've had my fun.

Then *she* walks into the gym, and I know I'm in trouble.

Salem is sex on two legs with an attitude to match my own. I try to fight against the pull I feel towards her, but damn, the woman is my perfect match.

## *SALEM*

Starting over after losing everything isn't easy. My shop is my number one priority. Making friends with a biker's ol' lady was just what I needed to help pull in customers. Having an instant connection with the club's playboy was not what I was expecting. I didn't leave one arrogant man just to fall for another. But here's the thing about me, *I like to be in control.* Good thing Riggs seems to like that too.

*When the past collides with the present, something's got to give. Can Salem and Riggs both overcome their inner demons?*

## **Ryder (Road Demons MC – Book 3)**

### *MIA*

I've been in love with Ryder since I was fourteen years old, admiring the older man from afar, knowing I can never have him. My grandfather didn't want this life for me, so he put a do not touch order on me with his club, keeping me at arm's length for more than half my life. I've made it known, painfully, that I wanted him. But Ryder had never shown a hint of interest in me. That is until I finally noticed a man who's been under my nose for months. A man on the verge of making it big. Now Ryder was all in, and my heart is torn between the two men. One of them makes me feel wanted, and the other has held my heart since the moment he walked into our club twenty years ago.

### *RYDER*

My life officially began when Breaker took a chance on me and offered me a place within his world. Patching in as a Road Demon gave me the family I lost as a kid. His only rule was that Mia, his granddaughter, was off limits. It seemed easy enough, since she was only a kid back then, but something changed when the skinny fourteen-year-old girl I first met suddenly turned into a woman I can't stop craving. What



makes it worse is that I knew she wanted me, and I'll never be able to have her. After two decades of ignoring her advances, I finally get the green light, only to find her in the arms of another man because she's done waiting. Fighting for her is the only option, and I don't care if I have to walk through hell to get her. I'm determined to claim what was always mine—*my Mia.*

### **Wren (Road Demons MC – Book 4)**

*ALORA*

It's been eight years since Wren broke my heart and only months later my world crashed around me. I should have left Covington Falls, but my past keeps me here. Walking away means leaving the last of my heart behind. Now Wren wants me back. He's determined to prove that he's changed, but I vowed to never let him break my heart again. Because it wasn't just my heart he broke, it was my trust. How can he fix that when the woman he chose over me years ago, is still a part of his life?

*WREN*

I was a kid when a blue-eyed goddess walked into my club. Barely nineteen I was just finding my way into the ranks of my family's MC. I thought Al and I were just having fun, until she sent me into a tailspin with three little words and I royally messed up. I got lost in a bottle of Jack, as well as a woman I should never have touched. Years later, I'm still paying for my mistakes. No matter what I do, Al refuses to let her walls down. I want her, more than I've ever wanted anyone. It can't be too late to fix the mistakes of the past. But how can I get her to trust me, when she's been hiding the truth from me for eight years.

### **Declan (Road Demons MC – Book 5)**

*Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations. Live to Ride!*

*EMBER*

My whole life I've been a victim. Touched, tormented and eventually, taken. Trust isn't something I give easily. But I trust Mia, and eventually I found my place within her family. When her cousin, Declan gets hurt by the same men who haunt me, I feel it's my place to help him through the nightmare. After all, he's the man who saved me. Declan has always respected my boundaries, staying firmly on the other side of the wall I built around me long ago. But the thing about walls? They're not indestructible.

And Declan's busting through, one brick at a time.

*DECLAN*

Beaten, broken and left for dead, my last thought wasn't about my family or my club. It was about an angel with silver hair. Ember's voice brought me back, pulling me from the depths of hell, but now my soul is as damaged as hers. She wants to fix me, but she's a distraction from the revenge my club craves. The revenge I need. I was meant to die that night, but I wasn't ready. I still had so much to live for, including her. I have to focus on dealing with the threat but once it's eliminated, I plan to claim her, in every single way.

The problem is, I'm not the only one captivated by Ember.

**Cypher (Road Demons MC – Book 6)**

*SICILY\_*

I had a life most people envied. Wealth, family, friends, and a future career I had dreamed of having since I was a little girl. My life was perfect, until it wasn't. I lost everything thanks to a bottle of Jack and...him—a man I don't even know! A man that I have no choice but to trust now. Being thrust into his

world, I find myself in the middle of a war with a target on my back and enemies I shouldn't have. Falling for a Demon has deadly consequences, but Cypher is willing to walk through Hell to save me.

### *CYPHER*

I fell in love with the wrong woman, and almost lost everything. My family, my club, my sanity. But fate had other plans when she threw a fiery woman my way. She's sexy, smart, stunningly beautiful with a body that could bring any man to his knees. But she's way out of my league. When her life gets flipped upside down, I have no choice but to step in and be her hero. But being with a Demon is dangerous, and the wrong person has taken notice of Sicily. With her life in my hands, I realize I never knew what love was...until her.

### **Southern Comfort**

Sometimes perfect has to fall apart before you can find exactly what you need.

Life for Dr. Melanie Holland is damn near perfect. She loves her job, and her wedding is in a few months. But as the big day gets closer, her fiancé, Drew, gets farther away.

A chance encounter with a sexy cowboy only adds to her chaos. She fights her attraction to Beau, but when a cruel twist of fate throws her in his arms, she loses that battle.

With her life derailed, Melanie decides she needs to make some changes. New town, new job, new love. But of course, new beginnings can't go smoothly.

Is a dose of southern comfort just what the doctor ordered?

### **Heart of Stone (Stone Series - Book 1)**

#### *LEAH*

A year. Twelve months. Three hundred and sixty-five days. Sounds like plenty of time, right? But it's nowhere near enough when you're saying goodbye. After the devastating

news of my mother's illness, I packed up and moved back home. I need to make the most of the time we have left. My new job at Stone Investments is just supposed to be a way to support myself. Catching the eye of my notorious playboy boss, isn't part of the plan. But plans change.

*AADEN*

I never saw her coming, but the gorgeous redhead is consuming all of my thoughts. She's an employee, and therefore off limits, but it appears my brain hasn't gotten the memo. Leah is quickly turning into my obsession. After returning from a trip with my friends, it seems they have also developed an interest in my auburn beauty. When I find out why, it's too late. I'm in too deep, and risk losing everything I've built with the woman who's won my heart.

A lot can happen in just a year—saying goodbye, falling in love, even melting a heart of stone.

### **Carved in Stone (Stone Series - Book 2)**

*LEAH*

Brokenhearted, pregnant, and alone. Aaden shattered my world when it was already cracked and fragile. Once again, I trusted the wrong man and found myself in the same position I was in during college. The difference is, Aaden isn't running. He's chasing me. Saying all the right things and offering me his heart, I fall back into his arms and find myself wearing his ring. As my pregnancy progresses, the chaotic mess of both of our lives hits us from every angle. Aaden's ex, his former psycho friend, and my mother's health make my already high-risk pregnancy even riskier. Through it all, Aaden is there, giving me the love and support I need.

In the end, will it be enough to save us both?

*AADEN*

I almost lost her. The only woman I've ever loved. When tragedy struck, I thought she would be taken from me, and I felt the most excruciating pain rip through my chest. I couldn't lose her. I couldn't lose either of them. With a second chance, I promise to make everything right. She's carrying my baby, and now I want her to share my last name. They say the first year of marriage is hard, but ours feels like it's us against the world. My wife is strong, though, and I've kept my promise to be there every step of the way. When a new threat comes out of the woodwork, I vow to protect her and our baby at all costs.

But when the threat is closer than I ever thought possible, will my vow be enough?