

*Ring*

**SIN CITY MC**

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
**COURTNEY DEAN**

KING

**SIN CITY MC: OAKLAND CHAPTER**



Courtney Dean

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When Grimm, the President of Sin City's Mother Chapter in Las Vegas asks the Oakland Chapter to protect his sister and her friend from the Bianchi Syndicate, I don't hesitate. We are brothers. It doesn't matter if the girls aren't Sinners. They are family and we take care of our own.

But when the spirited, Romance Author, that can make a priest sin on holy ground, walks into our clubhouse, I get more than I expect. She's beyond beautiful. She's also one of the most intelligent people I've ever had the pleasure of having a conversation with. And she's an absolute pain in the ass.

I'm only supposed to protect her from the enemy, but she becomes so much more. She becomes my everything.

The members of Sin City never leave until all the cards are played.

*The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time. -Mark Twain*



## Prologue



THE FRONT DOOR SLAMS to our place so hard the large, frosted panes of glass rattle against the wooden door frame. Matteo's angry voice echoes through the massive house he bought us three years ago as a surprise to me. Not really a surprise that made me happy at the time, but it's Matteo. He really isn't a person you can say no to even if you wanted to.

His heavy footfalls disappear upstairs. I let out a breath of relief he doesn't come into the kitchen. I don't feel like arguing about anything and everything, especially today. Today I just want to leave.

Lately, he's angry all the time, and I think it has to do with what I overheard—the final straw that's forcing me to do what's right. He's a sadistic bastard, and I have no business being here or being with a man like him.

I pick up my phone, send a quick text message to Amelia Grace, my best friend, to let her know Matteo's home, and there'll be a slight change in plans.

I didn't expect him home this early in the afternoon. When he left this morning before sunrise to go to the club he manages, he said he wouldn't be home until the next morning.

His workdays have been getting longer and he's been working well into the early morning hours. Sometimes he slips into bed around 4:30 in the morning but only after taking a nice long shower. I have no idea if he's cheating, and it really doesn't matter if he is. The love I had for him died a long time ago. I've wanted to end our relationship for a while now, which I planned to do today by leaving, while he was at work.

When you're involved with a *made man* in one of the country's most notorious crime families, you have to be careful about what you do, when you do it, and how you do it.

We haven't had the best relationship for the last few years and what I overheard gave me the final push to get my ass out of here. In the beginning, he sold me a dream. When we first started dating, he was one of the most caring and remarkable men I'd ever met. Or at least I thought he was. He wined and dined me. Showed me the person he wanted me to see by promising me the world. Most of the time he delivered. Surprise dates, vacations, and candlelight dinners for no reason. Anything overly romantic Matteo Messina did it for me with a smile on his face, a bouquet of my favorite flowers in one hand and diamonds in the other. At one time I thought he was my forever. Honestly, I'd never met a more amazing man. Then one day it all ended. Like someone flicked the light switch on. Then I came to the realization those good times were nothing more than an illusion, a way to make me fall for

him. A very expensive form of manipulation. Why he focused on me, I never understood. Maybe it's because he's a narcissistic bastard and he can't let go of something he wanted so bad.

It took a long time for him to show his true colors, or I just refused to see him for the person he truly is. But when it clicked... when I discovered the truth and got a real understanding of who Matteo Messina really is and not the mirage, he showed me all these years, there wasn't any way for me to stay with him.

I'm in one of those damned if I do, damned if I don't situations. Try to leave and I might die. Stay and it's still possible I might suffer the same fate. However, by leaving I'm able to help other people less fortunate than me. That's how I know I'm doing the right thing despite the danger it puts me in.

I pull Matteo's favorite liquor from the cabinet, a nice single malt whiskey, along with a glass, a butcher knife, and a spoon from the drawer. It's early but I know he won't turn it down because he's been drinking a lot more lately.

I sit them on top of the white marble counter of the kitchen island. Digging into the pocket of my jeans, I pull out two sleeping pills. I've had trouble sleeping for years, and hate taking them, but today they'll come in handy.

With shaky hands, I crush the two pills with the blade of the knife on the countertop, scrape the thin powder in my hand, then dump it in the glass. I uncap the liquor and pour it into the

glass then grab a spoon from the drawer of the kitchen island, and stir the liquid, making sure the pill totally dissolves.

“Hope the hell this works,” I mumble to the empty kitchen. “If it doesn’t, I’m dead.”

Those two little pills aren’t enough to kill him but just enough to keep him knocked the fuck out at least until the next morning. When he wakes up and realizes what I’ve done, and that I’ve left him, he’ll try to kill me. But I’ll be long gone.

“Here goes nothing.”

I take a deep breath, grab the glass with the two sleeping pills dissolved in it, and head out of the kitchen, then upstairs to our bedroom. I hear him yelling and cursing before I even reach the door. It’s gotten to the point he doesn’t care if I’m in the same room when he discusses family business now, which is very different from when we first met. He thinks he has me on a tight leash and whatever I hear I can’t understand, or I’ll keep my mouth shut about it. I guess when he wakes up in the morning, he’ll know how fucking wrong he’s been about me this entire time.

I take another deep breath, push open the door and step over the threshold of our bedroom. He’s sitting in one of the chairs in front of our floor-to-ceiling bedroom window, his olive-skinned tinted red in anger.

Matteo’s a gorgeous man. His square jaw is visibly tense from the argument he’s having over the phone, but it highlights his aquiline nose and high cheekbones. Wavy hair, dark as night, reaches his shoulders, and gleams in the sun’s

rays filtering through the window contrasting nicely with his bronze skin and green eyes. He's absolutely stunning.

*The devil in disguise. The devil I wish I never met.*

He's so engrossed in his argument he hasn't even noticed or acknowledged me. I have time to take in another deep breath and then out, letting go of the doubts of how all this could go terribly wrong. Now's the time to set my plan in motion for better or worse. There's no turning back after I do this. And if I don't do it now, I'll die alongside this despicable man. I refuse to die with him anywhere near me. I will not be another one of his victims. My duffle bag is packed, hidden deep in the back of our walk-in closet. After he falls asleep, I'll meet Amelia Grace so we can ditch town to wherever her brother's sending us.

Finally, his eyes flick up to me, as I walk towards him, putting a little more sway into my hips. His brow arches and that devilish smirk slowly forms on his face. Right now, he looks more like the man I fell in love with, and less like the devil I know him to be. I'm not fooled. At least not anymore. He's shown me his true colors a long time ago. There's nothing good about him, only evil.

I force a smile, hoping I'm able to mask my true feelings of disgust. When I reach him, I slide onto his lap. His eyes remain on me, filling with lust but questioning what I'm really doing. I haven't been as affectionate with him lately because his touch makes my skin crawl. He has good reason to question my actions right now.

I hand him the tumbler of whiskey and he grabs it without hesitation. *Thank God.* Instead of taking a sip like I thought he would, he downs it in one shot, then gives me one of the most heart-stopping kisses before turning back to his conversation.

I stay on his lap, running my fingers through his hair as nervousness and exhilaration move through me. I don't know how long it will take the pills to start working but I can see the finish line. His body relaxes as my touch lures him into a deep sense of security. Once he's asleep, I can finally breathe. And it won't be long before I'll finally be free of Matteo.

*At least, I hope.*

## Chapter One



I GROAN AT THE sound of my cell ringing. The shrill noise increases the relentless pounding against my skull. I haven't drunk that much in a long time. Shit, I haven't had that much fun in a long time. Even though I knew I'd regret everything the next day, like I regret it now, I needed to indulge. Let loose. I'm not complaining because I do love this life, but it's hectic, annoying as fuck at times, and very unpredictable. And we had reason to celebrate. One of the brothers serving time came home.

We partied so fucking hard, I don't even remember most of the shit we did. I don't remember even bringing Janie to the room I used when I'm too fucked up or too tired to drive home. But obviously, I did. The room smells like cheap perfume, sex, weed, and I untangled Janie's lithe body from mine to reach for my cell phone on the nightstand.

Janie's a fucking mistake I'll have to deal with. I shake my head imagining all the tears and yelling that'll come after I find out who the fuck is disturbing my much-needed sleep. I'm

already ready for this fucking day to be over with before it even starts.

“Someone better be fucking dead!” I shout into the phone, not bothering to look at the caller id. “If not dead the motherfucking world better be ending.”

Although it has to be late in the morning by how bright the sun is shining through the curtains, I don’t give a fuck. I have the hangover from hell, and all I want to do is sleep. I can deal with all the club shit later.

A chuckle sounds over the line. “Late night, I take it?”

“Fuck yeah.” I groan as I sit up, then scoot to the edge of the bed. “Late night, early fucking morning. You know how that shit goes when one of the brothers comes home after being locked up.”

“I do.”

“What’s up, Grimm?” I run my hand through my messy hair. “It’s been a long time, man.”

“Don’t I know it. We need to do a get-together soon. Have all the chapters come to Vegas.”

“Shit, I think the boys would like that. We haven’t done it in a while. But I know you didn’t call to make small talk.”

“Yeah, shit’s bad, man.” He sighs, the heaviness and weariness in his voice are very evident. “We got a situation here.”

I heard through the grapevine he's been working to get his father out of prison with the help of the woman who put Chief behind bars. Now, that's some crazy shit, but I hope it works out in the end for him and his family. Chief's a bastard. He's done shit like all of us in this world, but he doesn't deserve to be in prison for what he's been sent up for, hopefully, he'd be out before too long. Eleven years behind bars in one of the roughest prisons in the country for something you didn't do has got to be devastating. Sounds like shit's taking a toll on Grimm too and I know it has to be taking its toll on Chief.

"I'm gonna need your help, King."

"Whatever you need, brother. You know I got you. This got something to do with Chief?"

Helping him isn't even in question. Grimm and I are cut from the same cloth. Neither of us put up with bullshit, and we're about this club and our brothers above anything else. What we can do to help each other, that's what we do.

He sighs, again. "I got that shit handled with Chief. Not something you can deal with anyway, but we do have some other shit going down with the Bianchi Syndicate that I'll need your help with."

"Who doesn't have something going on with them?"

"Right. They're like a fucking STD you can't get rid of. Fucking bastards. Anyway, my little sister and her friend are mixed up with them."

“Shit!” I grab the roach from the ashtray on the nightstand and light the end. “For real?”

“Yeah. Anyway, I’m not going to get into the how’s or why’s because I’m still working through that shit myself, but to make a long story short, Amelia Grace, my sister, dated a Bianchi associate. He’s been dealt with, but her friend, that’s another beast. She’s dating a soldier. The friend slipped us information and now they may have bounties on their heads. I need to send them to you to keep them safe or at least until we find out if the Bianchi’s are looking for them.”

“Do what you need to do brother.” I take a hit from the joint, then blow it out, white smoke filtering from my mouth and nose. “We’ve got ’em. I promise.”

“Thanks, man. They’ll be heading your way within the hour with one of the guys.”

“No problem. I’ll meet them when they get here.”

He ends the call and I take another hit, then blow the white smoke into the room, wishing the effects would hit me sooner than it’s happening. A bunch of shit is headed our way. I can feel it. I look back over my shoulder at the other problem I have to deal with before shit hits the fan.

Janie.

I scrub my hand over my face. This is why I don’t like fucking with the same woman more than once. *Attachment*. And Janie is getting too attached. She’s a good lay, I can’t deny it. Can suck dick like a pro. And we’ve been fucking

since she showed up on the clubhouse's doorstep. However, she knew from the beginning I'll never settle down. I let that shit be known upfront with everyone. It isn't in me to keep my dick in my pants for one woman and I don't go into any entanglement without letting bitches know where I stand.

I used to laugh off the crazy shit she says and does, but now she's taking it to new levels. Threatening the other club whores to stay away from me like she has the damn right. Claiming she's my Old Lady, which is bullshit. Snake's Old Lady, Daisy says she's been trying to throw her weight around with the real Old Ladies which is causing problems between them and their men. Nobody likes anybody fucking with their woman. I'll never make a club bitch my woman. I'll never make any woman my Old Lady. That ship sailed a long time ago.

I've let shit go too far and go on for too long. Now she believes she actually means something to me other than a good fuck because I haven't done shit about her behavior. I've shrugged it off as Janie being her usual crazy self. But I did pull away from her when she first started bitching at the other girls to stay away from me, but it looks like I fucked up again last night. I'm not in any hurry to brand anybody especially her.

"Fuck my life," I mutter, then toss the roach back in the ashtray.

No better time than now to let her know last night is the last time we will ever fuck. It's time she moves on.

“Janie! Get the fuck up!”

## Chapter Two



### **CHURCH**

Everyone's sitting shoulder to shoulder, crammed into the largest room we have at the clubhouse. It won't be too long, and I'll have to expand it so all of us can fit comfortably in one room. We have new prospects which will add to the amount of people in this room if or when they patch in. This means we also need to expand the living quarters too. As of right now, some are crashing wherever they can.

All these grown damn men crammed in this small ass room and in the clubhouse is getting fucking ridiculous. The smell of fucking body sweat, sex, weed, and cigarette smoke is damn near nauseating. That's how I know I'm getting too old for this shit. Things that didn't bother me when I was younger and are normal in this life, now got on my damn nerves.

I glare at Gavin, my baby brother who we call Saint, as he slips into one of the vacant chairs at the back of the windowless room. There are only three of us. Me the eldest, Reaper, the middle son, and Saint, the baby. I don't know why

in the hell he thinks he can slide in without me noticing because I notice every fucking thing. You'd think he'd know that by now.

He flips Reaper off. However, I ignore their childish behavior because we have more pressing shit to deal with. Technically, Saint isn't late, but as the Prez of this chapter, and them being my brothers, I expect more from him and Reaper than the other brothers. What they do will always be a reflection on me as President. It can't look like I show them any favoritism on anything even when they do decide to slide their asses into Church after the time I want them to be here. So, technically he isn't late, but he isn't on King time and by the look on his fucking face he knows it. Something I'll address with him as soon as we are done with Church.

We haven't had the best relationship since he got home from prison three years ago. I know he thinks I'm a hard ass towards only him and not Reaper, or the other brothers for that matter. But that isn't the case at all. I'm a hard ass to everyone in this room. Blood doesn't have a factor in that because it's my nature.

Everyone has to stay in line. It's the reason outlaw motorcycle clubs have a fucking hierarchy and it's one of the reasons Sin City MC is at the top not only in California but on the entire west coast. People know not to fuck with us because of how we run our chapters, especially this one. So, if as Prez, I don't put up with members' bullshit, I sure as fuck won't put up with anyone else's.

Leadership starts with me.

When shit goes wrong or right with the club, it starts and ends with me because I'm the one wearing the president's patch on my cut. Nobody else. And I take that responsibility very serious. Everyone in this chapter is under my protection. Under my leadership from the whores to the prospects, to the brothers including my blood brothers to their Old Ladies.

But I didn't lie to Saint when I told him how much he disappointed me when he got sent up. I don't sugarcoat shit for anybody, let alone somebody that's my fucking blood that I love unconditionally. Everybody deserves to hear the truth, from someone who wants nothing but the best for them, especially him. He should be a fucking priest giving absolution or penance right now, not a tattooing ex-con sitting in a clubhouse full of motherfuckers who don't give a shit about anything.

He's different from us.

He's a better man than any of us sitting in this room. I can't understand why he can't see that.

For the past seven years, it has been hard getting shit straight between us especially when I don't know what the hell is wrong in the first place. Yes, I'm disappointed in the path he chose, which landed him in prison for seven years, but what the fuck can I do about it now? And what the hell did that have to do with us today? All that shit is in the past, at least for me it is. He's done his time and as long as he doesn't fuck up again, what happened in the past is just that—the past.

Before Saint went to prison, I had my own life. I was prospecting with the New Orleans chapter of Sin City after getting into some trouble, trying to get my own life straight before coming back to Oakland. I didn't even think Saint would be caught up in shit like that. Reaper? Yes. Saint? Nah. He's the good one out of all of us. I couldn't believe it when Reaper called and told me the news.

But now he's a grown motherfucking man and has served his time. Back then, I was scared shitless for him while he was on the inside. Did everything I could do on the outside to keep him safe while he was in there. Padded as many pockets as possible to do whatever needed to be done to keep him safe. The Warden, guards, anyone, and everybody. Something to this day he doesn't know anything about. And I would do it all over again if it meant he'd come out of there alive.

But he's free now. His life is going good. His business, *Forbidden Ink*, is one of the most lucrative of all the club's businesses and the most successful tattoo shop in Oakland. Hell, I'd bet money it's one of the most successful in California. He's been featured in magazines and has a ton of clients, celebrities, and regular people. He's doing extremely well for himself despite being an ex-con. I've let all that shit go a long time ago and I wish he could too.

With all that said, I don't believe that's all that's happening between us. We are brothers. Family. And families don't see eye-to-eye on everything all the time. But I have the feeling he's keeping something from me. Not club shit. Club shit he wouldn't be bold enough to keep from me. But personal shit

he can get away with. Personal shit, I haven't been able to figure out because he makes sure he's never around long enough for me to question what the hell's going on with him.

He stays away from the clubhouse for days on end unless we have a run or a get-together. He's even started dodging our parents. Not taking their calls or going by to see them. That's when I came to the conclusion whatever he's hiding has to do with our Da. If I were a betting man, I'd bet my life on it. He would never separate himself from our Ma unless something major went down because he's a mama's boy. And the frosty relationship between Da and him is all the proof I need.

My two brothers are closer than I am to either of them. I believe our age difference plays a big role in the strain on our relationship, but he's shut me completely out of his life unless it has to do with the club. No matter what I do to correct things, it seems the divide between us only gets wider with each passing day. Not something I want, but also something I can't really rectify if he isn't willing to meet me halfway. I'll have to tackle the situation with my brother after all this shit calms down with the club.

*I'm getting too old for all this shit.*

"Church is in session," I say after the door closes and the last patched member takes their seat.

I wait for everyone's attention to shift to me.

"I spoke with Grimm."

I rake my hand through my hair and pull on my beard. Frustration and anxiety about the coming storm weighs heavily on me. We have enough shit going on with another mc testing the boundaries of our territory when they set up shop in San Francisco. Even the Bianchi's and Russians will do minor shit sometimes. Honestly, the only ones that mind their fucking business are the Cartel. But this is a new level of shit we're dealing with, especially from the mafia.

“That's the reason for this emergency meeting,” I continue.

The Mother Chapter in Las Vegas will always remain quiet unless shit's about to hit the fan and it might affect other chapters, or we are doing a large get-to-together with all the brothers whether that's a barbeque, wedding, or funeral. Whatever we have to do to support each other we do. But if you hear from the Vegas chapter, you know either shit's really bad or shit's going really good. This time, shit's really bad. However, they're our brothers, so if helping them brought shit to our door then so be it. That's what being a Sinner meant.

Sinners all, never fall.

“He needs us to provide sanctuary and protection to his little sister and her friend.”

“Who are we protecting them from?” Snake asks, crossing his arms over his chest. “And what did they do?”

Snake's one of the older members and ornery as hell, but very dependable. He stands about six foot six, and although he's approaching sixty the motherfucker is built like a Mack truck. All muscle. The boys even boasted he can dead lift over

four hundred pounds. For his age that's unbelievable. And he has the mind of someone in their twenties. He can talk strategy with the best of them. If I need something done, he's on it. One of the most loyal motherfuckers I've ever met. The man will be a Sinner until the day he dies.

"Bianchi Syndicate," I respond to his question. "The friend is the ex-girlfriend of a Bianchi soldier, who gave intel to the brothers that led to charges against Alonzo Bianchi. And Grimm's sister dated a Bianchi associate. According to Grimm, they may have bounties on their heads."

Why the hell these women were allowed to be involved with the Bianchi's, I have no clue. I didn't question it because it's none of my business who they fuck. I'm sure Grimm and his father, Chief, had their reasons for allowing it, but that doesn't negate the fact that who they chose to spread their legs for has brought a bunch of shit to the doorsteps of both chapters. And good men could die because of it.

Groans and chatter sound throughout the room. The few run-ins we've had with the Bianchi's over the past years had to do with our sports rackets. For years we've controlled most of the pro sports betting in California except soccer, which the Mexican Mafia controls. Dealing with the Bianchi's has been more annoying than anything because our clients are loyal to a fault and anytime the Italians approach any of our clients we're notified immediately.

"Listen. We're not taking a vote on this. They're family," I call out over the noise in the room. Everyone quiets down.

“Their fight is our fight, so fucking deal with it. Like I said, these women are our family. We’re here to protect them not fuck them.”

The men groan.

“Hey!” I call out and the men quiet again. “That’s what the club whores are for. So, keep your dicks in your pants and make them feel at home. Church dismissed.”

Saint jumps up and heads for the door with the rest of the brothers, but he’s not getting off that easily. Our father has been ringing my damn phone off the fucking hook because Saint hasn’t been by in weeks without any explanation. I’m tired of listening to Da bitch and gripe about him making our Ma cry. It’s time for my little brother to grow a pair of nuts, handle his business and fix whatever shit is wrong between them because I’m damn sick and tired of playing the middleman and the peacemaker between two grown-ass men with shit that doesn’t have anything to do with me.

“Saint, Reaper,” I call out. We need to get some shit straight as a family. “Stay behind.”

Saint stops in his tracks and curses under his breath. He doesn’t think I heard him, but I did. He probably knows what I want to talk about before I’ve said anything. And Reaper has already voiced his concerns about him keeping his distance from the family too. Now it’s time to find out what the hell’s going on.

Reaper and I are standing at the front of the room while the brothers file out. When the door closes behind them, Saint

plops down in the seat in front of us with a scowl on his face, while I lean against the table beside Reaper.

“Make it quick,” he says with his usual attitude. “I’ve got a client.”

I’m getting very tired of dealing with his attitude. I’ve always given Saint a little leeway with his feelings. He’s the more sensitive one out of us, like our mother. And he’d been locked up so long and had a hard time adjusting to the outside world because he went in as a kid. Growing up behind bars and missing some of the best years of his life, I assume had to be difficult. It’s not like he’d tell me anyway. But he has missed a lot and now he’s always angry.

I don’t understand where all the anger comes from, other than he’s pissed he got caught up in shit he had no business doing. I couldn’t save him, no matter how many hoops I went through, no matter how many bribes, and deals under the table I made. It wasn’t enough.

He was on his way to seminary school before he got popped. Searching for Jesus to save Da’s soul. Back then I hated to tell him, the Devil couldn’t be saved but he was dead set on giving his soul to the Lord, despite our Da giving up his to the Devil a long time ago. You can’t save someone from themselves when they don’t want to be saved.

We all have tried before Saint made it his mission in life. First our Ma, then me, and even Reaper. No one can help someone who doesn’t want to be helped. Our Da’s a piece of shit but our Ma loves him despite it all. He’s our father too, so

we all try to do our part in making him a better husband, and a better father but so far, it's been in vain. He was a piece of shit then, he's a piece of shit now. The only good thing about him is our Ma.

“Where you been?” I ask, biting my tongue at the way he's behaving. I'm trying to be the big brother and give him a little grace.

He rolls his eyes and I want to slap the shit out of him, but I don't. I control my anger the best I can. I remind myself not to let his attitude get the best of me. That's been my mantra lately especially dealing with him. He's struggling with something, and I'm doing whatever I can not to add to it.

“Where I'm always at, King. Work.”

I cross my arms over my chest. “Da said you haven't been answering his calls.”

He shrugs. “Like I said, I've been busy.”

“You know how he gets when we don't come around,” I say.

I'm so fucking tired of having this conversation with him. He doesn't have to kiss Da's ass. None of us do that shit. We aren't having these conversations over and over for our Da. We're doing it for our Ma. All he needs to do is show his fucking face once in a while. Not every day, just once a damn month. How hard is it to do that? Show up, let Ma know he's alive and breathing, then leave.

*Jesus fucking Christ! He's going to cause me to have a damn stroke.*

“Not my problem, Prez.”

I glare at him. I don't like him calling me by my title. I'll always be his damn brother first especially when we're not talking club business. But I do however expect him to respect me as both. He only shows me respect when around the brothers. When it's only the three of us or me and him, he comes at me with this damn chip on his shoulder.

He sighs. “Look, I have a life and a business to run,” he says before I can call him out on his bullshit. “I can't be around all the fucking time. If he needs to talk to me, he knows where to find me.”

“Drop the attitude, little brother,” Reaper says before I can. “We're only checking up on you.”

I'm on my last nerve with him. I've never come to blows with my little brother but I'm close to doing it now. Maybe beating the shit out of him will open his eyes. Make him realize we're here to help him. We aren't the fucking enemy.

“Fuck you, bro.” He flips Reaper off again and I just shake my head. I'm so fucking tired of the childish shit. “You both know where to find me too.”

“Well, it's time you make fucking time for your family, Saint!” I yell, stopping their bickering before it gets started. “You have to get over whatever the fuck is wrong between you and Da because Ma wants to see you.”

“Easy for you to say,” he says. “He didn't fuck you over, King. Or you either, Reaper.”

*What the hell is that supposed to mean?*

My brows dip in confusion. “What do you mean he fucked you over?” A sinking feeling settles in my gut. “What the hell did he do, Gavin?”

He stands and shoves his hands in the pockets of his jeans. “It doesn’t matter. What’s done is done.”

My fists clench. Why the hell is he protecting him? Obviously, it’s something major if he’s keeping his distance, especially from our mother. Maybe he’s trying to protect her?

“If you don’t tell us what the hell you’re talking about, how do you expect us to understand, Gavin?” Reaper asks. “How do you expect us to help fix it?”

He throws his hands in the air. “I don’t expect either one of you to fix shit!”

He drops his head, places his hands on his hips, and inhales deeply before releasing it. “Look,” he says, “I’ll try to make time to go see Ma, but I can’t promise anything, I’m booked solid.”

He’s always booked solid. I’m starting to think he’s using *Forbidden Ink* to stay away from all of us. Although it isn’t what I want to hear, it’s a small step towards a compromise. However, I don’t miss that he ignores Reaper’s questions. Whether my brother wants my help or not, I’ll find a way to fix whatever the hell is going on with him even if it does have something to do with our piece of shit father.

He's had a rough go of things. If I can fix it, I will because I hate to see him so angry. So closed off from all of us. I understand he has a business to run. We all fucking do. We all have shit that needs to be done. But we make time for what matters. Work isn't an excuse to stay away from his fucking blood family. And I won't let him use it as one anymore. It's time for him to grow up.

He turns on his heels and makes his way to the door. "Do more than try, Gavin. I'm not fucking asking you to, I'm telling you too," I order. "I'm tired of the bullshit. And your ass better be here tonight."

He slams the door without responding.

"How in the hell are we supposed to help him if he won't open up?" Reaper sighs. "He's not the same."

"Fucking prison will do that to you, Reaper. He missed most of his damn life. If that doesn't change you, I don't know what will. If he doesn't open up, I don't know how to help him, other than ask Da if he knows what the hell's going on."

"It'll be a cold day in Hell before Da owns up to anything, and you know it. We have to do something."

"Let's table it for now. We got other shit going on."

"But..."

A knock on the door interrupts whatever he's going to say.

"Come in!"

The door opens slightly, and one of the new prospects sticks his head in. “Prez, Snake says the girls are here.”

“We’ll be out there in a minute.”

The prospect closes the door, and I turn my attention back to my middle brother. We aren’t close in age either. He had a closer relationship with Gavin than me before he got locked up. Now they’re trying to work on their relationship and get it back to how it used to be. But we became closer after getting some of the bullshit straight between us. He held a lot of anger towards me too because when I went out on my own, he thought I abandoned him. Left him to deal with our piece of shit dad. That might be the reason Saint acts the way he does toward me too.

“I’m not saying we won’t get to the bottom of whatever’s going on with him, Reaper. Let’s just make sure these girls are settled in and safe first, then we’ll tackle it, yeah?”

“Yeah.”

I can tell he doesn’t agree with me not dealing with Saint right now, but I think he trusts me enough to know I’m not going to let whatever’s happening drop. We just have to get these girls settled into their new lives for the unforeseeable future, then tackle the heavy family shit later.

I slap him on the back. “Let’s go greet our guests.”

## Chapter Three



AMELIA AND I ARE laughing like two crazy bitches as we walk inside the Sinner's clubhouse in Oakland, California when all eyes turn to us. Other than the 80s heavy metal music blasting through the surround sound, you can hear a pin drop. Everyone's looking at us like we've got three heads. Like we don't belong—like we're outsiders. I get it. Nobody here knows either of us, but I hate being the center of attention while my best friend doesn't give two fucks. She acts like she's right at home.

The women are glaring at us which isn't all that unusual for either of us. And the men do what men always do—stare, like we're their next damn meal. Today I actually don't mind. It's been a while since I've had good sex. My vibrator has been my go-to for a while now. I wouldn't mind having a good fuck from one of these gorgeous men to release some of the tension of having to uproot my life because of my ex. Hopefully soon incarcerated ex.

As it stands, we probably don't look like we're running for our lives. We've been laughing and joking around the entire ride down here just trying to make this situation as normal as possible. While I know the seriousness of the situation, I can't let it get to me or I get more pissed off at myself for being so stupid for getting involved with a sorry motherfucker like Matteo Messina. If I had listened to that little voice inside my head that said 'bitch you better run,' when we first met, I'd be in my tiny studio apartment right now, writing my next novel, and enjoying my life. Instead, I'm in California with a bunch of gorgeous men, which I hope won't be so bad, despite the women looking like they want to claw my eyes out for just existing. I assume they think we're stepping onto their turf. Women can be worse than men when they believe another woman is creeping into their territory, trying to take their man. I'm not here for any of that. But I'm not making any promises either.

Amelia's totally in her element seeing as she grew up in this type of atmosphere. Me, not so much. I'm a country girl from the backwoods of North Carolina who moved to Sin City to make a new life and escape my old one. It has been absolutely amazing. Everything I could dream of. That is until Matteo.

Never in a million years did I think the craziest shit to happen to me would be getting mixed up with a *made man* from one of the country's most notorious mafia families and having to go to a biker gang for protection. But I can't say I'm surprised it all turned to shit. My life has always been full of surprises. Shitty surprises most of the time.

Everyone's attention goes back to what they were doing before we came in and I'm relieved. Heavy metal music continues to blare through the surround sound system. Half-dressed women walk around drunk off their asses wearing heels too high to be worn off the stage of a strip club. I'm not judging, it's just not practical for this environment. But what do I know about bikers and their women?

There's also a couple bent over the pool table. The man's pants are around his ankles and the pantyless woman's skirt is pushed up over her narrow hips. No one seems to pay it any attention, not even Amelia. Like it's normal for someone to fuck in front of a crowd. Not for me, but I guess my friend is used to this kind of atmosphere because she didn't spare the couple a second glance.

Minus the woman bent over the pool table, all the other women are either propped on the laps of men who have their tongues shoved down their throats, hands on their breasts, up their skirts, or wrapped around beer bottles.

It reminds me of what a hippie commune would look like—free love and all that shit. Not that I've ever been to a hippie commune before. But I imagine it's something like this. Free love for everyone.

Dagger, a Sinner from Las Vegas, and our chaperone for the trip from Vegas to Oakland motions for us to move to the bar. To me, he's more like our grumpy, mute babysitter.

The gruff man barely spoke two words to us the entire trip despite both Amelia and me asking a million questions about

what's happening with the information I gave them. All he would say was *its club business*. I rolled my eyes every time he said that shit. If it wasn't for me, they wouldn't have club business. Last I heard from news reports, Alonzo, the head of the Bianchi Syndicate, and my ex were on the run from the Feds. On the run to where is the question.

*Can he find me here?*

*Probably.*

I got involved with Matteo Messina after he relentlessly pursued me after we bumped into each other at a coffeeshop not too far from my studio apartment. At the time I had no idea who he was and no clue he was a soldier in the Bianchi Syndicate. Or who the Bianchi Syndicate even was. The only thing I really knew about the mafia came from movies. Never in my life did I believe it would become a part of my reality.

For years I was around these men before Matteo slipped up and got comfortable enough around me to speak about family business. For a long time, like an idiot, I thought he managed one of the local nightclubs which wasn't completely a lie. He manages one of the nightclubs owned by Alonzo Bianchi, which they also use for some of their illegal operations.

In their world women are seen and not heard. And I learned how to play the part of a wallflower to perfection. The perfect, obedient mafia girlfriend. When we sat in the VIP sections of the club or certain restaurants, I always kept my eyes and ears open, gathering information for the day I'd run away. He told me, I'd never leave alive and because of the threat, I had to

have some kind of plan in place when the time came. Information I could use to keep me protected.

When I found out about the human trafficking operation, I really understood the danger to my life. It scared me shitless, but I also knew the more information I got the more people I could help. Then when I overheard some of the guys who hung around our penthouse say the Sinners had an undercover FBI agent in their clubhouse and a judge on their payroll, I decided it was time to come forward with what I knew. It didn't matter Matteo, or some other Bianchi soldier would kill me. Being quiet is being complicit and I'd been complicit too long. So, I confided in Amelia about the shit my ex-boyfriend was involved in and what he'd been putting me through in our relationship in hopes that it would be useful to her family. And just maybe they could save me too.

“Make yourselves at home,” an older man calls out from one end of the bar, pulling me from my thoughts about where my life has ended up. “Prez will be with you in a few minutes.”

He's greying at the temples, with a salt and pepper beard, and tattoos on every available space on his body that can be seen except his face. Silver foxes aren't usually my thing but this one is fine as hell.

“I'm stepping outside to call Grimm,” Dagger says, pulling my attention away from the gorgeous older man. “Let him know we made it safely. Sit at the bar, have a drink, and don't cause any shit while I'm gone.”

Amelia rolls her eyes. “How much shit can we cause, Dagger?” Amelia taunts, knowing very well the amount of shit she can get into giving the opportunity.

He glares at her like she just said some of the stupidest shit he’s ever heard, but he doesn’t respond. I guess he knows her well enough to know all the trouble she can get us into. Amelia Grace is definitely the troublemaker out of the two of us.

“Asshole,” I mumble, as I watch Dagger head out the door.

He’s an asshole, but I have to admit he’s a fine asshole. Grumpiness and all. The man wears the hell out of a pair of blue jeans. They mold to his firm ass and sculpted thighs like a second skin.

“Come on and stop perving.”

“I’m not perving, just enjoying the view.”

“Same thing,” she says, laughing and dragging my attention away from Dagger’s ass as she pulls me to the bar. “You’ve been enjoying the view since you were introduced to him at the clubhouse in Vegas.”

*This is true.*

“I don’t want a drink, Amelia.”

I want a room so I can take a shower and go to sleep. Maybe when I wake up all this will be a dream. Dream isn’t the right word for this crazy situation I find myself in. Maybe when I wake up all this will be just a nightmare I can shake off and move on with my life.

We slide onto the barstools. They aren't the most comfortable. The bases are worn, the yellow stuffing showing through the black synthetic leather. And the metal backs are digging into my skin, but hey, I'm alive. At least for now, I'm alive. A little discomfort is okay. Hopefully, the Feds will hurry up and do what the hell they have to do, then we won't be here too long. And I can get back to my life in Vegas.

A young guy with dirty blonde hair, a shy smile that makes him look even younger than he probably is with the prettiest crystal blue eyes I've ever seen on anyone, stands behind the bar. His black leather vest hides most of his frame, but from what I can see he has a swimmer's build. Tall and lean. While I know I've never seen him before he looks very familiar.

"Do all these guys look like freaking models," I whisper, leaning over to Amelia who hasn't taken her eyes off the bartender since we sat down.

"Pretty much. He looks like Alexander Daniels, don't you think?"

"The actor?"

She nods. Maybe that's why he looks so familiar.

With his hand, he swipes the hair flopping in his face away from his eyes then plants his forearms on the wooden bar in front of us with that beautiful smile on full display.

"Haven't seen you two around here before."

His voice is deeper than I expect. It adds a few years to his appearance.

“Because we aren’t from around here,” Amelia Grace says. “Has anyone ever told you that you look like the actor, Alexander Daniels?”

He smiles. “Well, I’m David.,” he says ignoring her last question. “The brothers call me Switchfoot. What can I get you, beautiful ladies?”

“Hot and respectful,” Amelia Grace says with a flirtatious smile across her face. “I like it, Prospect.”

A red flush stains his cheeks and Amelia bats her eyes, while I roll mine. While she’s the biggest flirt I’ve ever met and can have this man or any man eating out of the palm of her hand, she never takes it past innocent flirting. She’s never said why but I believe she’s still hung up on her ex-fiancé, who left her after she lost their baby. She doesn’t talk about that time often, but I believe staying single has been a way of punishing herself for the past.

“We’ll have two beers, baby,” she says. “In the bottle.”

“Make that a bottle of water for me,” I interject.

There’s no way in hell I’m drinking anything other than water around all these men. I tamed my wild ass when Matteo and I became exclusive, but I’m a free woman now and with all these gorgeous bikers surrounding us, that does not bode well for me and my self-imposed celibacy. I need to be able to reason and talk myself out of spreading my legs for one of them. Maybe two. And being drunk will not allow me to make that decision.

David sits a bottle of water in front of me, then pops the cap on Amelia's bottle of beer, and places it in front of her.

"Thank you," I say.

"No problem, gorgeous."

He winks and we watch him until he disappears into a room behind the bar.

"Now I'd like to ride that," Amelia Grace says, her eyes remaining on where the man disappeared.

"You need to." I nudge her, getting her attention. "I'm sure he'd be up for it. Probably any one of these guys would."

"Cheers, bitch!" she shouts over the music, lifting her bottle towards me, ignoring my comment.

I laugh and touch my water with her bottle of beer, then we both take deep, long sips. There's no use dwelling on Amelia Grace and her love life. She'll talk a big game, but she's not going to make a move. Even though I wish she would. She's a wonderful person, and loyal to a fault. Anybody would be lucky to have her in their life just like me.

"How long do you think we'll be here?" I ask, before taking another sip of water.

I have a novel to finish, and I do my best stories when at home in my bed. Now that I'm on the run from Matteo, home's no longer an option. I'll have to start over completely, again. Hopefully, I won't have to leave Vegas. I happen to love the life I made there.

She sighs. “My asshole brother wouldn’t tell me.” She takes a swig of beer, then twists around on the stool and looks out at the crowd along with me. “I know it’ll be at least until Alonzo’s caught.”

I groan. “Why the hell did I get mixed up with Matteo?”

She laughs. “You know why, Alana. The man is fucking hot. And he knows how to wine and dine a woman. I don’t blame you for falling for him.”

“Well, I blame me.” I shake my head. “If it weren’t for me, we wouldn’t be in this situation. I can’t let everything in my life fall apart because of my stupidity.”

“You aren’t stupid. And everything will work out. My brother will make sure of it. He always does. Just look at this like a mini vacation.”

I roll my eyes for what seems like the hundredth time we’ve been here. “A vacation where we’re running for our lives and don’t know when or if we can return home. That sounds like the best fucking vacation ever, Amelia.”

“Look at the glass half full, instead of half empty, Alana. Yeah, we may be in hiding from the mafia, which is bullshit, but look around you. Is there any other place you’d rather be hiding? Have you not seen the men walking around this place? I might have to give up my life of celibacy with all this hotness.”

My life and hers has been turned upside down and she wants me to see the bright side of this very shitty situation. I

get it. Really, I do, but despite the gorgeous men who seem to be never-ending in the place, I much rather have my life back. Beautiful men come and go. It's something I learned a long time ago.

While normally I handle my own fuck ups, this is way above me. It's hard to step away from the life I've built for myself, but I understand why I have to do it if I want to survive. And I need to remember, Amelia Grace stepped away from her life because of me as well. Even though she's dealing with it a hell of a lot better than me.

“I'm sorry, Amelia.”

Her brows furrow. “For what?”

“For pulling you into this shit. This has nothing to do with you.”

She waves her hand dismissively. “That's where you're wrong, Alana. You didn't pull me into anything. We're best friends and you helped my brother more than you could ever know. You helped my family and now it's time we helped you. And I'm sure Alonzo would have pulled me into it anyway. He's going after my brother.”

I first met Amelia at the same coffee shop I met Matteo. It's not too far from her tattoo shop in Las Vegas. Back then, I just started my career as a writer and wanted to make waves in the publishing world. I've been writing since I was a teenager. I decided to leave my nine-to-five and completely start over. New career, in a new city. I needed new scenery to forget the past, so I chose a city far away where I could get lost among

the thousands of people. Where one person blended in with the next.

Before I can respond to Amelia it's like the entire energy in the room shifts and the people on the floor part like Moses holding up his staff. Lust fills the women's eyes and nothing but respect comes from the men.

I lean to the side just a little to look around the crowd of people so I can see who everyone has focused their attention on. And immediately, my eyes go wide as I watch the most attractive man, I've ever laid eyes on, walk towards me like he knows he has every pussy in here wet.

Including mine.

I thought Matteo was the best of the best in the looks department, but this man has my panties melting with the way his gaze devours me.

"Oh hell," I mumble.

Amelia knows exactly where my mind went. I'm a sucker for the bad boys and this motherfucker right here is as bad as they come. Normally a man in a suit pushed all my buttons and had me salivating at the mouth, but apparently, I wasn't averse to a man in a pair of fitted black jeans, a Henley, leather vest with a beard.

"You're in trouble," she snickers. "Do you see the way he's looking at you?"

"I'm trying not to see. I do not need that kind of trouble. I've already got one bad boy to deal with. I don't think I can

handle another one.”

*Or can I?*

“Sorry to say, you may not have a choice, my friend.”

Amelia Grace MacDaniel knows the weakness I have for men like the one walking my way like he didn't have a care in the world despite us possibly bringing trouble his way. He looks like a man who rules the world and conquers everything in his path. He looks like a man I should definitely not fuck with. But regrettably most of the time my body won out over my brain which is the reason I'm involved in the shit I'm involved in now.

While Amelia isn't a romantic at heart like me, we hit it off immediately and became fast friends. She's done all my tattoos and we hang out with each other when we aren't too busy. She's the sister I never had. And when I started dating my ex and I found out his bosses had been targeting her family, I went to her. I felt obligated too. She's my family. I wasn't expecting it all to end with me losing everything I've worked so hard for and ruining my life. But it has, and here we are in Oakland, California at a motorcycle gang's clubhouse with hot men, women who look like strippers, and me trying not to become someone who easily gives it all up again for somebody like the man coming towards me.

“What were you saying about swearing off all men?” she asks, chuckling. “Honey, let me see if you stick to that plan with that man right there devouring you like you're a five-course meal.”

I slap her arm. “Shut up, Amelia.”

She just laughs like a banshee then takes another sip of beer while we both watch the man walk towards us like he’s on a damn runway. With his blue eyes locked on me, I squirm in my seat. His powerful strides and muscular frame are highlighted by the fitted gray Henley stretching across his broad chest covered in a black leather vest, and black jeans wrapped around his muscular thighs. I can only imagine how one night with him will probably destroy my world.

“He must be King,” Amelia whispers in my ear over the loud music. “He looks like a King.”

I nod.

*King. She’s definitely right. The name fits. He can be the King of my world any day.*

“Who’s King?” I ask not taking my eyes off him. It’s like I’m trapped, and he’s trying to see into my soul.

“The Prez.”

His progress to us is only stopped by a beautiful, petite blond who barely reaches his shoulders despite the stripper heels she’s wearing. She stands on the tips of her toes as best she can, wraps her lithe arms around his neck, and tries to kiss him. While she looks happy as hell to be in his arms, he looks like he isn’t feeling it at all. He doesn’t return the kiss, his jaw clenches while his eyes fill with fury and remain trained on me. He looks like he wants to murder her.

“Looks like my vagina is safe around that one,” I say, relief, disappointment, and surprisingly jealousy moving through me. “He’s taken.”

I pull my gaze away from the stranger and whirl around on the stool, reluctantly facing away from him, and breaking the connection between us.

“I can guarantee you, that isn’t his Old Lady.” Amelia turns up her beer, finishing the last of it, then sits the bottle on the bar. “None of the Old Ladies are here tonight. None that I’ve seen anyway.”

“You’re gonna have to speak in English, Amelia. Not biker. I have absolutely no freaking idea what you just said.”

She chuckles. “Old Ladies are who bikers consider their wives, girlfriends, fiancés, women like that. Ladies who are their other half. Women they’d die for.”

“Okay, if she’s not an Old Lady, then who is she?”

“Club whore.”

“You got to be freaking kidding me. Are you serious?”

“Yeah.” She shrugs like it’s the most normal thing. “Some clubs or the men in them may have different names for the women who hang around mc’s but that’s what I grew up knowing them as.”

“Wow. Okay. So, you have Old Ladies and club whores. It’s like I’m taking Biker 101.”

She laughs. “You can tell the difference between an Old Lady and a club whore in how they carry themselves around their men and the other members. Most of the time Old Ladies are branded and wear Property cuts—the leather vests you see the men wear. So, if she were his Old Lady she would have a cut on that would say *Property of King*. That woman with her arms draped around him definitely isn’t an Old Lady. She’s someone all these men will pass around if they want sex.”

“Not judging or anything, but they’re cool with that?”

“Sure. They get what they want from the club and the guys get what they want from the girls.”

She shrugs like it’s normal for this type of exchange to happen.

“She’s just trying to mark her territory because of us,” she continues. “Probably because of the way that man’s eyeing you right now. I don’t think he’s feeling her at the moment.”

I look over my shoulder and the disgust and anger on his face are intense. His nostrils are flared, and his jaw is tightly clenched. He looks like he’s minutes away from strangling her.

“Definitely, not his Old Lady,” Amelia mumbles.

His eyes briefly meet mine, again, before focusing back on the woman who clearly is doing everything in her power to keep his attention on her and not me. King or who we think is King, peels the woman’s arms from around his neck like she has some type of disease while glaring at her like she’s a piece of shit on the bottom of his shoe. She still doesn’t see the

disdain on his face even when she drops to her knees in front of him and reaches for his pants.

“Is she getting ready to do what I think she is?” I ask, shocked that I’m seeing what I’m actually seeing.

“Anything to keep his attention,” Amelia mutters.

He steps away from her, and snatches her up from the floor, before pulling her from the room.

I’m embarrassed for her. She’s willing to suck that man’s dick in front of everyone to prove to me that he’s hers. That’s some real dedication. But she didn’t take his obvious hints. He did everything but tell her to get the fuck away from him. Like I said embarrassing for her.

I sit the empty bottle of water on the bar after dragging my attention away from the room where he and the woman disappeared. Whoever she is to him or whatever their relationship is or isn’t, is none of my business. I’m not here for anything other than my safety.

## Chapter Four



HO. LY. FUCK! I wasn't expecting her. I don't know what the fuck I expected exactly but it was not her.

When she came into my line of sight, I thought I was having a damn heart attack. My heart sped up, then abruptly stopped inside my chest. I've never seen someone so breathtakingly beautiful.

I've been around plenty of women in my lifetime. I lost my virginity at fourteen, almost made the biggest mistake of my fucking life and got married at twenty-five and fucked everywhere possible in many different places around the world. But never have any of those women captured my attention like her. And now instead of meeting the woman who's too good to be in a place like this, I have to deal with this bullshit.

Again.

I thought I'd made myself fucking clear where I stood. I said it in the nicest way without coming across like a dick but

apparently being nice was a mistake. Maybe I need to be the bastard I try not to unleash so she'll get the fucking hint.

We are nothing.

Janie means absolutely zero to me other than a warm, wet cunt to sink my dick into. And it's past time she stops throwing her weight around the clubhouse like she's my Old Lady when in fact she doesn't mean shit to me.

I give everyone grace. You can fuck up and I'll give you another chance as long as whatever you did, doesn't land me or one of my brothers in prison. If you need a place to go, the Sinners welcome you with open arms if you pull your weight. Some of the women who want to live this lifestyle come from good families, good homes, and are highly educated. They just want to experience motorcycle club culture. Why? Who the fuck knows. I'm not in the business of knowing why people do the shit they do especially the women of this world.

We're killers, thieves, drug dealers and so much more. Why the hell they want to associate with men like us is beyond me, but over the years the revolving door of women has never stopped at the clubhouse. When one decides it's time to move to the next stop in their life, it doesn't take long for another one to take their place.

The other type of women that somehow got involved in the motorcycle club life didn't come from shit, and we offer a roof, food, and protection. While they sleep with whoever is looking for pussy, whenever and wherever they want it, the women find it better here than sleeping on or walking on the

street just so they can get enough money to survive. Once again, not my business and I don't judge anyone for what they do to survive.

However, it's taking every fucking thing in my being not to ban this bitch from the clubhouse. I'm not that much of a prick because this is the only place some of the women have to go. And Janie is one of those girls. Her wealthy family disowned her years ago. More than likely because she embarrassed her father and uncle who both happen to be State Representatives. The Sinners are keeping her off the streets. We have been for years. But she's getting on my last damn nerve. And when she acts like this—like we're together because we fuck whenever I want pussy, she's not leaving me much of a choice.

“What the fuck did we just talk about, Janie?”

She pulls away from me, but she doesn't step back despite how fucking angry I am at her for the shit she just pulled. I'm not a damn moron. She wanted to lay claim to me in front of our guests. But I hate to tell her, there isn't one fucking woman who can do that, especially her. I'm not looking for an Old Lady. Not now. Not ever.

She lays her hand against my chest, then runs her red polished nails down to my stomach, landing right above the waist of my jeans. Normally I'd force her to her knees and shove my cock down her throat for fucking with me but that'll be counterproductive at this point since that's what she wants. I need to get away from her, not have her acting like she's my damn wife because I let her taste my cum.

I grab her wrist before she has the chance to unhook the button of my jeans, squeezing it in warning.

“Don’t Janie.”

“Don’t be like that King.” She pouts her lips that had been injected with some shit that makes them way too large for her face. “You know you want me. You’ll never get enough of me.”

I let go of her wrist and take a much-needed step away from her then run my hand through my hair, my frustration with this entire situation almost reaching its peak.

“Janie, it has never been serious on my part, and you fucking know it. It’ll never be serious. Just like I fuck you, I fuck other women. That’s what you’re here for. You’re not special. I don’t know how many times I have to tell you.”

Her brows furrow. “Which one of those bitches are you screwing, King? I told them to stay the hell away from you!”

And that’s the problem right there. I throw my head back and sigh. That’s the only thing she got out of all I just said. The point just went over her damn head. I don’t owe her fucking names. I don’t owe her any fucking thing. However, I can assure her, she’s not the only one I fuck around here and that’ll never change. But before I can say anything else approaching footsteps grab both of our attention.

“Prez!” one of the prospects, shouts as he comes around the corner. I think his name is Daniel or David. Something like that. The boys say he’s the kid of some famous actor.

“What is it Prospect?” I ask.

“Dagger from the Vegas chapter says he needs to speak with you about the women before he hits the road again.”

I pulled Janie into one of the side rooms. I want to get this shit straight with her in private instead of embarrassing her in front of everyone. We have fucking guests I need to tend to, show around, and explain the fucking rules to, but instead, I’m in here trying to get shit straight with a club whore.

*What the fuck?*

“On the way, Prospect.”

He nods, his eyes briefly glancing at Janie before he leaves the room.

I turn my attention back to the problem at hand. “No more of this bullshit, Janie. I’m done. It stops today.”

I have nothing more to say. I turn away from her and head back towards the main room where our guests are seated at the bar.

“It will never be done, King!” she shouts. “Trust me. I’ll do whatever the fuck I have to do to make you see that we are forever. *This* isn’t over. It will never be over!”

I whirl around on her so fast her eyes widen and fill with fear. Good! She should be fucking scared. I’m tired of dealing with this bullshit.

“Are you fucking threatening me!”

She shakes her head profusely, taking steps backward.

“Listen, Janie. And listen good. I take threats seriously. So, make sure you remember who the fuck I am before you start tossing them my way. This is my last warning and I’m not going to say it again. We are not a thing. We never were a thing. You’re never going to be my Old Lady. You are a club whore and nothing more to me. It. Is. Done.”

“Over my dead body, King.”

“I can make that happen. Keep fucking around and I’ll personally make sure you disappear.”

She gasps and a look of horror blankets her face.

I turn around and walk out, not phased one bit about her threats. She can shove them up her ass. There’s nothing more for me to say. If she keeps pushing me, it won’t end well for her. I don’t like to be a prick to someone who needs help, but I’m also not going to stress about a bitch who means absolutely nothing to me. I drew my line in the sand. She can stay on her side and leave me the fuck alone and be grateful she has a damn roof over her head or cross it. And if she does that, then I will not be responsible for what happens next.



By the time I’m done dealing with Janie and her bullshit, Saint, and a few other brothers have surrounded both girls. I ignore the jealousy rising in me. I’ve already made it clear

both girls are off limits, but I can't help but want to beat everyone's ass that made her laugh or smile.

I pull my gaze away from everyone gathered around them and walk to the Vegas Sinner who isn't sitting too far from the girls at one of the tables near the bar. He's scrolling through his phone, but he keeps glancing up at the girls ever so often. So, I know he's keeping an eye on them even though they're safe here.

I take the seat across from him, and Artyom, my VP, takes the seat to my left. Dagger looks up from his phone, eyes us, then places his phone on the table in front of him.

“The name's Dagger.”

I stick out my hand and he grasps it. “I'm King, the Prez, and this is my VP, Artyom.”

“Good to meet you both. I'm sure Grimm gave you the run down, so I won't go back over it. We don't know for sure if the Bianchi's will be heading this way. But we got a shitstorm back home. We just need them out of the way because we think they might come looking for them, especially with this info she gave us.”

“I've been informed.”

His eyes flick to the girls then back to me.

“Grimm's little sister, Amelia Grace can be a handful, but if you give her a tattoo gun you can keep her busy and in line.”

“She can tattoo?” I ask with surprise. “Is she any good?”

Over the years I haven't come across many female tattoo artists. It'll be good to have a woman on board.

He nods. "She's the best Vegas has to offer. As long as you keep her occupied, she won't cause trouble."

"I can stick her at my little brother's shop as long as she's here."

He nods. "Good." His eyes zero on the one I can't keep my eyes off, then back to me. "I don't know much about her friend." He shrugs. "But I do know she's a talker. Since the story is long as hell, I won't go into detail, but the Sinners owe her big fucking time. She may not be connected to anyone in the club, but she's family, and should be treated as such."

His meaning is very clear. The goddess is protected. She isn't to be treated as an outsider, a whore, or anyone off the street. She's like a sister of a brother or an Old Lady.

"Anyway, Grimm said give him a call if anything comes up. We'll send reinforcements as soon as possible if needed."

"Sure will."

He stands, and Artyom and I follow. We grasp hands and say our goodbyes. I thought he might go over to them and say something before he left, but he just glances at them one last time and walks out of the clubhouse.

Feminine laughter draws my attention to the woman sitting at the bar in nothing but an oversized off-the-shoulder light blue shirt with *hashtag Smut Writer* emblazoned on the front, gray yoga pants, and a pair of black Chucks. Her hair is cut

short, highlighting her slender neck and collarbone that's covered in a black and white tattoo that goes perfect against her deep brown skin. I can't quite see the design from here, but I'd love to see how far on her body it goes. Her nude lips part in a smile at something Saint says, and her dark eyes light in humor. She's stunning.

"Are you going to just stand here and perv on her?" Artyom asks, chuckling.

Reluctantly, I move my gaze away from her to focus on him.

"Fuck you. I'm not perving on anyone."

He crosses his arms over his chest. "If you say so, King. Just remember the directive you gave the guys at Church. And I quote, they're here for our protection, not for us to fuck."

He laughs like he said the funniest shit, slaps me on the back, and saunters away, his laughter still loud and fucking obnoxious. Just because I can't fuck her, doesn't mean I can't look like every other bastard in here. And that's all I'm doing.

*That's all I'm doing right now.*

I walk towards the bar, the men moving out of my way until I'm standing in front of our two guests. I slap Saint on the back and wrap my arm around him.

"Bro, glad to see you could make it back."

"Did I have a choice," he mumbles.

“Of course not. Now since you’ve been properly introduced to our guests, you can do the honors.”

He grunts when I squeeze his shoulder telling him to do that shit now even if he doesn’t want to. “Ladies, this is King, my *much older* brother, and the club’s Prez. This is Amelia Grace, Grimm’s little sister, and her friend, Alana.”

While he introduces me to both ladies my eyes briefly glance at Amelia who throws up a small wave before bringing my eyes back to Alana.

“Nice to meet you, ladies.” I return Amelia’s wave and grasp Alana’s hand.

I’m probably holding onto it longer than I should, but I can’t help myself. I only let it go when she arches her brow at me. I smirk.

“Our home is yours for as long as needed.”

“I’m not sure your friend will be too happy about that.”

I almost groan at the velvety sound of her voice. But the mention of Janie and the shit she pulled a few minutes ago kills any desire rising inside me.

I shrug like it’s nothing because it isn’t and slide onto the barstool beside her while Saint stands beside me propped against the bar, scrolling through his phone.

“She won’t be a problem.”

“Hmmm,” she mumbles, taking another sip of water. “We will see.”

“Can I get you something to drink? Well, something a little stronger,” I say not commenting on Janie and changing the subject.

Janie isn't important and will no longer be a problem whether she believes it or not.

“She's not going to drink,” Amelia Grace chimes in, laughing, her voice a little slurred, “especially with all these hot men around. She's scared she might not stick to her commitment to swear off all men.”

“Amelia!” Alana glares at her.

Amelia shrugs and takes another swig of beer.

I chuckle. “Ahh...don't know if you can control yourself around me, pretty lady?”

“I have plenty of control.” Her eyes rake over me boldly. “Believe me.”

She takes another sip of water, and I can't help but think about what her beautiful, fuckable mouth will look like wrapped around my cock, my cum sliding down her chin.

I watch the movement of her slender neck as she swallows, and how she pushes her legs together. The attraction is mutual. That's good to know.

I shift my attention away from her body and back to her eyes. And of course, despite her closed expression, her lust is intense. Someone's eyes always told the truth.

Time to switch it up.

“If you say so.” I tap on the bar. “Anyway, if you ladies need anything, just come to me and I’ll see what I can do.”

Her brows dip in confusion. She thought I would continue the flirtatious conversation. I do want to, but obviously she’s used to men chasing her. If she wants the conversation to continue the ball is in her court. I gave her an open to end it or continue.

“Just like that, huh?” she asks. “You’re the man in charge.”

It isn’t a question more of a statement like she’s challenging me and my authority. And I fucking love it. Not too many people get into banter like this with me unless it’s Saint or Reaper. And always in private. Most of the time people are too scared, and they know I don’t play this shit. However, if she wants to play, I’m all up for it.

I lean back on the barstool and cross my arms over my chest. I don’t miss the way her eyes move down my body, then back to my face.

“I am the Prez, which means I’m the one in charge.”

“So, you tell everyone around here to jump, and they say how high, huh?”

I chuckle. “Yeah, in so many words. I make sure shit runs smoothly around here and I’m in charge of keeping both of you safe. So, to do that, I talk, and you listen. This means if I say your sexy ass needs to jump baby girl, then you’ll say how high Daddy. That’s the way shit works around here.”

Saint snorts and I look around shocked a crowd of brothers and club whores have gathered around us. I'm not one for talking much to women unless we're going somewhere to fuck, so I guess my interaction with Alana, all the brothers, and the girls found unusual and apparently amusing.

"My mama was a smart woman, King, God rest her soul. One of the smartest women I've ever known, and she always said I was shit at following orders."

I laugh because I can imagine a young Alana giving her parents hell. She seems so independent and carefree.

"So, if you ask nicely," she continues, "I might listen and that's a big if. And if you ask me *extra* nicely, I might even call you Daddy."

She winks.

"Oh shit," Amelia mutters. "Shots fired."

I lean toward her, close enough that her citrusy, clean scent wraps around me causing me to harden in my jeans.

"Didn't you learn it's not good to play with fire, sweetheart?" I whisper in her ear just so she can hear since we have a crowd.

She looks at me, our faces so close, her minty, hot breath brushes against my skin like a feather. I want to take her mouth so bad. Bite her plump lips. Just one taste is all I need.

"Sure, but like I said I don't always listen." The beginning of a smile tips the corners of her mouth. "And a little fire isn't so bad, is it? Well, as long as I don't get burned."

“Don’t make me tie your ass to my bed so you’ll listen, doll.” I pull back and lick my lips as I scan her perfect body again before my eyes move back to her face. “Trust me, I’d enjoy it way too much and I might not ever let you go.”

Her breath hitches and her palm goes to her chest. Then the shock quickly fades from her face, and a mischievous glint enters her eyes. “Don’t make promises you don’t plan on keeping, King.”

“I prefer you call me Daddy.”

“And I prefer to have my pussy licked. Let’s see if you can help with that before I start calling you, Daddy, yeah?”

“Damn.” Saint whistles.

To say she didn’t shock the hell out of me is the understatement of the year. Without another word, she turns her attention back to Grimm’s sister like she didn’t just say that shit and I’m left standing there speechless.

What the fuck do I say to that? Because it looks like I might just go against the rules I gave the brothers concerning our new houseguests.

The slap on my back brought me face to face with the grin of my youngest brother.

“Sounds like she’s gonna be trouble,” Saint says, chuckling. “Have fun with that.”

That’s all he says before he sits on the other side of Amelia next to Reaper.

I rise from the stool and adjust myself through my jeans. While she acts like she doesn't notice anything I'm doing, her body shivers when I graze against her.

I lean forward, my mouth only inches from her ear. "Challenge accepted, sweetheart."

And before she can respond, I walk off. But I can't keep the smile off my face. As long as she's here, we are going to have a little fun.

## Chapter Five



### *CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.*

It's the only thing I can think about since he whispered those two words in my ear. My big fucking mouth always gets me mixed up in shit. And now I have a sexy damn biker to worry about along with a *made man*. Two men I should stay so far away from. But no. My traitorous body has my mouth speaking shit before I can stop it.

We were shown to our own rooms at the clubhouse after the VP, Artyom, gave us a tour of the clubhouse. Also giving us strict instructions on what we're allowed to do and where we can go. We have free reign of every room in the clubhouse except King's office, the room where they have meetings, and the room where King sleeps when he's here at the clubhouse. Apparently, he has a house somewhere else, although Artyom wouldn't tell us where, even though I have no plans on ever seeing it. Not only were we order to follow those rules without exception, we also aren't allowed to leave the clubhouse

without at least two of the men going with us or without the permission of King first, which I think is a little much.

Not only are we on the run, but now we're in prison too.

“At least Amelia will get to tattoo and not be couped up here like me,” I say to the empty room. “Maybe I can hang out at the tattoo shop too. But if I do, I won't get any work done.”

I'm going to go bat shit crazy not being able to go out on my own or go anywhere I want to go. My mother always called me a free spirit. Needing to spread my wings as much as possible or I'd go stir-crazy. Whether in Matteo's gilded cage or King's biker clubhouse, I hate not being able to go where I please.

I already took a long shower, hoping it helps me sleep, but all I can think about is King and his last words before he sauntered away from me like a King in his castle.

“Challenge accepted.” I huff and toss the covers off me. “What the hell does that even mean?”

There's no way I'm going to get any sleep. I have too much rattling around in my brain. Or dare I say a certain someone I should stay far away from is still on my mind.

Outlining a new story usually calms my mind, but there really isn't anywhere in my new room to get comfortable enough to get started. The small bedroom isn't glamorous, but it is livable and clean. I've stayed in worse places when I left North Carolina on my way to Vegas, driving a ten-year-old Toyota Corolla, with a hundred dollars in the bank, a nearly

maxed-out credit card in a purse that had seen its last days, and on a wing and a prayer. This room is definitely an upgrade.

The bedroom has only the bare minimum. A twin bed with plain white sheets, that Artyom swears are new, one brown, wood dresser, a matching nightstand, and a closet that's big enough to hang maybe two or three shirts on the small rack, and enough room at the bottom to sit my duffle bag and my shoes.

There are two full bathrooms on this floor that everyone shares. Neither is ideal as far as privacy, but at least it's free, amazingly clean for the number of men frequenting the place, and somewhere to lay low while the Feds try to find Matteo. I'm trying to look at things with more optimism like Amelia suggested despite my bleak outlook on all this shit.

Moonlight filters through the thin curtains of the only window in the small room casting eerie shadows around on the pale walls. It isn't glamorous, but I'm not going to complain. It's mine until all this shit blows over. One way or the other.

My pajamas are modest so there's no need to change. I just slip on my shoes, grab my laptop from the top of the dresser, and head to find a secluded place to write. The music died down long ago, and it's in the early morning hours. Hopefully, everyone's gone or passed out drunk. In a place like this and as hard as the guys partied before Amelia and I called it a night, they are more than likely passed out somewhere.

I descend the stairs as quietly as possible to the first floor. There's a glow filtering from under the door of the room

Artyom said is King's office and off limits. Damn, I'm surprised he's up this late. After he whispered those words to me, I didn't see him anymore. Not that I looked for him or anything. Maybe he decided to get his dick sucked by that blond. Could that be why he disappeared after accepting a challenge I didn't even realize I gave. I push the thought and smidge of jealousy away.

"If he is, it's not any of my business," I mumble in the darkness.

I tiptoe by the office door, trying to be as quiet as possible, hoping the floors don't creak as I make my way to the back area of the clubhouse. It isn't large but it has a small patio with lounge chairs where I can relax, listen to the sounds of the city, and start on my next book before it's deadline is on me before I know it.

I dodge bodies lying on the floor, and in chairs on my way to the doors that open to the patio. There's even someone passed out on top of the pool table with a woman in his arms. I've seen so many things in the past few hours I never thought I'd ever see.

I shake my head as I slip outside, sliding the door shut behind me. I take in a deep breath and let it out. It's warm, but thankfully it's cool enough I won't get too hot and sticky.

I slide into one of the white lounge chairs they have around a firepit and power up my laptop. It's been more than a year since I released a book, and my agent has been breathing down my neck for the past month. I haven't even informed her I left

town, but I guess this hiccup in my life will give me more time to get things done.

Other than Amelia, no one knows I'm a writer. Under my pen name, Lana Deveraux, I've released more than thirty books, three landing on the New York Times Bestsellers List. I love what I do, and I can't let this shit with Matteo interfere with what is one of the most important things in my life. Finally, I have some peace and alone time to get something done.

"Arabelle's Beast," I mumble as my fingers fly across the keyboard. "Chapter One."

*Merciless.*

*Ruthless.*

*Cruel.*

*They have all been used to describe billionaire playboy Florian Larsson. But nothing described him better than Beast.*

*Peace is all I want. Not just someone to spend my days and nights sweaty and in a mess of tangled sheets to slay the demons wreaking havoc in my mind—just her. If only I could have the one person, I know can make everything worth living for. I've tried to forget her. She's too innocent. Too pure to taint with my wickedness, but deep down no one else will do. To strip her of everything she is and make her into what she deserves to be, will be my greatest reward. My greatest accomplishment.*

*My grip tightens on the glass of whiskey, I've been nursing since the sun started rising while images of her stream through my consciousness. While she doesn't know I exist, she's become my obsession. She's the one thing I can't live without but have been forced to let go. To keep from destroying her, I've hid in the shadows for years wishing she wasn't unobtainable only sending her a single red rose ever so often as a reminder that I'm always thinking of her. But nothing has changed since I first laid eyes on her.*

*She's still my unattainable beauty because I would always be a beast.*

*At my large office windows, I gazed at an impressive view of the beautiful New York horizon filled with shades of pink and orange rising above the skyscrapers. The morning dew covering the window shimmers as the sun filters through the large panes of glass as the city below comes to life.*

*Sure, a little after seven in the morning is too early to have a drink but the need to remove her from my thoughts is more intense today. Nothing good comes from obsessing over the impossible, the unattainable, and for this next meeting, my anger needs to be subdued so I don't kill him.*

*Five years ago, at the age of twenty-six, I acquired Larsson Industries, and numerous other businesses expanding my reach into the business world and the criminal underworld outside my hometown of Uppsala, Sweden. My network in both worlds was now extensive and worth billions.*

*After immigrating to America and becoming a US citizen, I worked tirelessly to achieve what my father never could, taking Larsson Industries places he'd only dreamt of. His bastard took over his company and his criminal organization expanding both beyond anything he could ever do or imagine. And he hated me for it. His sons hated me for it. On many occasions, they all wished for my death, but it's hard to kill the Beast. I should know. Many have tried including my family.*

*But I still live.*

“Sounds good so far,” I say to myself, proud I at least got some words down.

“What are you doing out here?”

“Oh fuck!” My hand lands against my chest. “What the hell, King! Jesus fucking Christ. Can you make some damn noise? You scared the shit out of me.”

He laughs and it's one of the most erotic sounds I've ever heard. Or it can be possible I've already lost my damn mind after meeting the man one time.

He sits in the lounge chair beside me, only a few inches separating us. I close the laptop. There's no way in hell I'll get any work done with him so close. He'll take all my attention. The man is so sexy. In a beat-your-ass kind of way.

“I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you.”

He removes a joint from behind his ear, lights it, then sticks it out to me. “No thank you.”

“You sure? It’s my new strain, Devil’s Fruit Cake.”

Saint informed me his older brother owned his own grow farm, Sinners Grow.

I’m not sure why it surprises me that a motorcycle club would own legitimate businesses but according to Saint they own several.

“I’m not much of a smoker. The munchies fuck with my diet too much.”

He shrugs. “Suit yourself.”

He takes a hit from it, then blows out the smoke.

“How did you know where I was?” I ask with a smile. “You aren’t stalking me, are you?”

“The silent alarm went off.”

My smile drops.

“Shit, I’m sorry, King. I hope I didn’t disturb you. I couldn’t sleep so I decided to get some air and some work done.”

“Nah. You’re good. I needed a break.” He arches his brow. “Couldn’t sleep, huh? I wonder why.”

A mischievous glint fills his eyes, and I scoff. “Whatever. Don’t flatter yourself.”

He chuckles, taking another hit from the joint, before putting it out, and sticking it back behind his ear.

*Two hits? That must be some strong shit.*

“I didn’t say a word.”

He leans against the backrest of the lounge chair and crosses his muscular arms across his broad chest then crosses his feet at the ankles. And yes, I followed the movement because his body is a damn masterpiece. A work of art. He has to spend countless hours in the gym for him to look like that.

“You didn’t have to,” I answer, but I can’t stop the smile from crossing my face. “It was written all over your face.”

“What was written all over my face?”

“That you’ve been thinking about me, sweetheart. That’s the damn truth. You know it and I know it too.”

His straightforwardness is sexy as hell, leaving me speechless. And I’m pretty sure he’ll be able to tell if I lie or not. If I say I haven’t been thinking about him, then it absolutely will be a lie. A lie I think he’ll have no problem calling me out on.

“What are you doing up?” I ask instead of denying he’s the thing occupying my mind and keeping me up.

I lean back in the chair, resting my head against the backrest too. It looks like he’s getting comfortable I might as well too.

I look up at the starless night sky to keep from staring into his eyes. I’m very aware of my weaknesses when it comes to men like Matteo. Like King. And he’s exactly the kind of man I can lose my soul to. Not the right time nor the right place. I already have one dangerous man to deal with no need to add another one to it.

“I could ask you the same thing.”

He turns his head towards me, and that beautiful white smile has my panties melting. Jesus, he's dangerous. I know it. He knows it. And I can't seem to not think about how much I would love to have this man under me. On top of me, and everywhere in between.

“Touché.”

“I don't sleep much,” he says, answering my question after a few minutes. “So, I took care of some club business instead of staring up at the ceiling wondering about a certain beautiful woman and what she may be doing in the room not too far from the one I'm in.”

“And what did you think I might be doing?”

“Hopefully, dreaming about all the nasty shit I want to do to you,” he says with a straight face. “Maybe touching your pussy to the images.”

*I haven't gotten to that point yet, but I'm really close.*

“Why don't you sleep?” I ask, changing the subject and ignoring the fluttering in my stomach, the itch to see if he can live up to the fantasy I'm creating in my mind.

His smirk lets me know he'll let me off the hook, not because I want to talk about something else but because he's allowing me to talk about something else.

“Dagger was right. You are a talker. Full of questions, aren't we?”

I roll my eyes. “Anyone would be a talker with that man. He couldn't string together two sentences if he wanted to.

Grumpy ass.”

His laugh is deep, warm, and rich, touching every part of my body.

“I’m just curious about the man they call King. But you don’t have to answer if you don’t want to.”

“Insomnia.” He sighs. “I rarely sleep more than two or three hours unless I’m plastered which isn’t often, or if I’ve fucked someone’s brains out. Then I crash which is an entirely different story. Why aren’t you asleep?”

“Didn’t you already ask that?”

“Technically no, but like you, I’m just curious about the woman who’s in hiding.”

“New place.” I sigh. “And you know, worrying about the unknown. I do have an insane person looking for me.”

All the humor and lightheartedness drains from his face and in its place is a cold and calculating look. One that can make a grown man piss his pants.

“You have nothing to worry about here, Alana.” He reaches over and places his hand on top of mine, giving it a little squeeze, then pulling away taking the warmth of his touch with him. “I swear nothing’s gonna happen to you or Amelia. We protect our own.”

*Our own.*

While I like to believe what he says is true, I know Matteo. He’ll stop at nothing until he finds me. Or he’ll at least die

trying.

At the beginning of our relationship, we were happy. In the later years, we constantly fought about everything. It almost got violent a few times. The only thing that saved my ass was his brother, Emilio stepping in.

Matteo started spending more time away from home, probably cheating, and being an all-around shitty boyfriend. And anytime I tried to leave the more explosive our arguments became. The shit he's involved in was the last straw. It gave me an opening to get the hell out of there and I took it. Now it's up to Fate whether I have to pay with my life for that decision.

I sigh. "I hope you can live up to that promise because if not, things will not end well for me that's for sure."

"Don't worry. I got you."

I rise from the lounge chair with my laptop, and he follows behind me. I'm not getting any work done, and it's too late to be out here bitching about the shit I've gotten myself into and hoping King can protect me from it. But if I have to pay the piper, it's my own damn fault. I should've stayed away from Matteo. What will happen to me if he finds me is something I need to come to grips with sooner rather than later, because I can hear the clock ticking. My time is running out. Matteo will find me. It isn't a question of if but when. I can only pray I make it out alive.

"I'm going to head on up," I say, the heaviness of the situation finally making me tired. "It's late and I've got to get

an early start on work.”

“And what is it that you do, exactly?”

“I work from home.”

He arches his brow. “You know that’s not an answer, right?”

I keep my mouth closed and shrug. I want to keep something to myself since my life is spiraling out of control.

“Goodnight, King.”

I step around him, the scent of his musky cologne and weed encompassing me. He’s too close for comfort. I need to get away from him before I do something stupid like fuck him outside on this patio without a care in the world.

He grabs me by the elbow, his touch gentle but firm. I stop and face him. He takes a step forward, crowding my space. “It’s Dylan.”

“Excuse me?”

“I want you to call me, Dylan, not King.”

A smile lifts at the corners of my mouth. “And I thought you wanted me to call you Daddy?”

He chuckles. “Let’s start with Dylan, sweetheart.” He moves my hair from my eyes, his gaze intense. “You’ll be calling me Daddy soon enough.”

Well, what the hell can I say to that?

*Yes, please?*

He grips my chin and leans forward until our mouths touch. Slowly his lips move against mine and surprisingly the kiss is gentle. Not at all what I expect from a rough and tough man like him.

“Goodnight Alana.” His lips brush against mine as he speaks. “Sweet dreams.”

He pulls away, his gaze on me is like a soft caress, more tender than the kiss we shared.

“Goodnight Dylan.”

Without looking back, I make my way to the clubhouse, trying to keep myself from running. When I step back inside, and slide the patio doors closed behind me, shutting out all the sexual tension between us, I release the breath I’m holding.

“Ugggh... I’m so fucking screwed,” I mumble, quickly going upstairs to the safety of my temporary room with only thin walls and a single door separating me from the man I know I need to stay far away from. A man who I know can destroy my world.

## Chapter Six



WHEN I STEP OUT of my office all I hear is whistling, yelling, and clapping. The clubhouse is rowdy almost all the time, but never at this time of the day. I can't get any fucking peace to handle what needs to be done.

“What the fuck is going on!” I yell as I push my way through all the brothers blocking my path. “What the hell are all of you doing here!”

Never have so many of them been here during the day unless we're having a meeting, going on a run, or had shit that needed to be taken care of at the clubhouse. Now for the past three weeks, I can't get rid of them if I paid them a fucking million bucks. And it's getting on my goddamn nerves. I only have one woman to blame for the change in the brothers and that's the woman we all can't seem to get out of our systems. The woman I've been avoiding like the plague because of the intense pull between us. A pull I absolutely don't want to deal with.

Since the night I found her on the back patio when the rest of the house was dead to the world, I've been absolutely obsessed with her. From a distance, but obsessed, nonetheless. Seeing as she has nowhere to go other than here, her scent, her voice, her laughter is here all the damn time.

Everywhere.

She's only been at the clubhouse, and she hasn't asked to leave yet. So, her time has been spent with the brothers and the Old Ladies when they're here, which isn't often. Even some of the club whores have taken a liking to her, except Janie of course. Her attitude is getting worse, and it's something I'll have to deal with again. This time I'll be putting her out on her ass. I don't have the time nor the patience to deal with a spiteful bitch.

The one thing I haven't been able to get control over has been jealousy. No matter how much I try to avoid all contact with Alana, I want her all the damn time. Fucking pathetic. Yet, I can't help it. Her smiles, her laughs, that fucking adorable, little snort she makes whenever David, one of the prospects tries to flirt with her even though she's way out of his league. She knows it too, but she's too good of a person to tell him to fuck off because she doesn't want to hurt his poor little feelings. I want everything she gives everyone else. Her time and constant attention.

I haven't even been able to fuck anybody since that night. I've resorted to jacking off to the image of her which sucks

because my hand isn't enough to get rid of the ever-present need for her.

“She’s been at it for at least an hour,” Snake says with a smirk on his face, his large, tattooed arms crossed over his chest.

Like everyone else, he gazes out the huge panes of glass that gave a view to the back patio. My brows dip in confusion. I’ve never seen them act like this around the club whores before even when they’re walking around butt-ass naked. Daisy, his Old Lady, usually kept all his attention.

*What the hell is going on?*

“Who is she and what in the fuck is she doing?” I ask exasperated, pinching the bridge of my nose. I have too much going on to be dealing with this shit.

“Take a look for yourself, Prez. It’s a fucking sight to behold I can tell you that much. I don’t know how in the hell she can turn her body like that.” He tilts his head to the side. “Fucking magnificent. If Daisy could do some shit like that, I’d be in heaven. You think she can teach her?”

Snake shakes his head, with the biggest smile on his face I’ve ever seen before. I can see the wheels turning in his mind. He then steps aside to let me through. I still have to push my way to the front of the crowd of idiots who are acting like they’re at a strip club or at a frat party. Then I see what all the fuss is about. My heart slams inside my chest and all my blood sinks to my cock when I see what has all the brother’s attention when I reach the windows. Not only is Snake correct,

it is fucking magnificent, but I want to fuck every one of them up. Gouge all their eyes out and shoved them down their throats so they can choke on them.

Some of the boys are making lude gestures as she obliviously switches from one pose to the next showing her flexibility while others have their tongues hanging out of their mouths like damn dogs. The club whores look like they can eat shit or lost their damn puppies because all the guys' attention isn't on them for once which is something they aren't used to.

*Goddamn this woman! She's going to make me kill one of these motherfuckers.*

She's unaware of the crowd gathered to ogle all her wonderful body. And I really couldn't blame them. She's outside on the patio, the same place I found her in the early morning hours working although she never told me what kind of work she does. The sun is shining around her like a damn halo, she has headphones stuck in her ears, and her plump ass is in the air covered by the tiniest white shorts I've ever seen on anyone. They absolutely did a banging ass job of highlighting her beautiful deep brown skin, wide hips, and nice rounded ass as they cling to her shapely figure. She looks like she's in absolute heaven, but I'm in absolute hell.

“Motherfucker,” I mumble to myself.

It pisses me off the brothers are looking at her like they want to fuck her, but I can't really blame them, can I? Although she's absolutely stunning, she's not mine to be

possessive over. And I have to admit they aren't the only ones wanting to fuck her.

Forgetting about all the men gathered around, I step through the French doors leading to the patio. My anger and lust surges but my steps falter.

*Jesus. Fucking. Christ*

She's still bent over at the waist with her bare feet slightly apart, her palms flat on the grass, and her glorious ass in the air. Her tits are pushed together in a tight sports bra. She looks even more amazing up close.

She's not a small woman, at least five foot nine maybe ten, with toned arms, thick thighs, and a slim waist that flares into broad hips. But it's a body I don't want anyone else drooling over especially these horny bastards, who she's spent enough time giving all her attention to.

Despite the hard on I'm sporting and me being a complete ass for staring at her like everyone else, I stalk toward her when I remember the brothers are still drooling over her through the windows. When I reach her, I stand behind her, then grip her by the hips. I love this fucking position. I'd love it even more if I was fucking her. All I would have to do is slam into her to the hilt, my nuts hitting her ass.

She jumps, then stands straight up, yanking the earbuds out of her ear. The sweet smell of her shampoo, mixed with sweat is so fucking intoxicating. So, intoxicating in fact, I have to fight the urge not to sniff her glistening skin and lick the salty

wetness from her body. She tries to turn around, but I keep her in place, her back against my chest.

“What the fuck do you think you’re doing, Alana?”

My voice dips, thick and unsteady. This is the first time in weeks I’ve spoken one word to her. Weeks since I’ve been anywhere near her, and it’s felt like I’ve been going through damn withdrawals the entire time I’ve kept my distance. She’s just one of those women you want to be around. She gets into your blood. Under your skin. And I haven’t even fucked her.

*Yet.*

“King!” She tries to turn around again, but I keep her facing away from me, her body pressed against mine. “What the hell do you think you’re doing? King! Let me go.”

Although her words hold an edge to them, her body leans into mine. I don’t even think she realizes she’s doing it. Her plush ass is brushing against my cock which is hardening by the minute. It takes everything in me not to grip her by the neck from behind and grind my shit against her body.

“Dylan,” I whisper, my breath brushing against the shell of her ear.

She shivers.

“Wait... what?”

“I told you to call me Dylan. Not King.”

She smacks her lips.

“Let me the hell go, Dylan.”

“It pleases me to hear my name off your lips, sweetheart. Do you know that?”

It really does. I love it, but it’s not enough to erase all this jealousy swirling inside me.

“Pleases, you? Are you fucking insane?”

*Probably.*

I should answer, but I ignore her question. We’ll get to that eventually. “You have every damn motherfucker here salivating. You stick your beautiful ass in the air and expect me to ignore every man staring at you like they want to fuck you into oblivion?”

She looks over her shoulder towards the house and of course, we have an audience.

“I was just working out,” she says, looking at me over her shoulder with those beautiful doe eyes. “I wasn’t thinking about anybody watching me, Dylan.”

I dig my fingers into the flesh of her hips, causing her to fidget.

“You must be fucking delusional if you don’t think any red-blooded man would not stare at your gorgeous ass stuck high in the air, in these tiny ass white shorts, Alana.”

I turn our bodies towards the rear of the property, my body shielding hers from prying eyes. They’ve seen enough. I lean in, inhaling her citrusy scent mixed with sweat, my lips mere inches from her slick skin. I resist the urge to run my tongue up the column of her neck just to have one taste.

“In my office in ten minutes.”

She tries to face me, but I force her body to remain in the position I want.

“Don’t. Fucking. Move.”

“King.”

“Dylan,” I say, reminding her.

“Dylan,” she huffs, trying to face me again but I tighten my grip, keeping her body facing away from me. “I’m not going to your office like I’m some fucking child. I didn’t do shit wrong.”

She didn’t do anything wrong, but it still pisses me off every man in this place is staring at her like she’s theirs. And she isn’t.

*She’s not yours either.*

“Ten minutes, Alana,” I growl, ignoring the voice inside my head. She isn’t mine but I don’t give a damn. “Don’t make me come looking for you.”

I step away from her.

“Asshole!” she shouts.

I am an asshole, but I ignore her and make my way back inside the clubhouse, without looking back even though the heat of her glare is boring into the back of my head, hotter than the sun.

She’s angry and she deserves to be, but I’m so pissed and horny that it’s clouding my judgment to where I don’t give a

fuck about her anger.

“Fucking show’s over!” I push through the crowd again still hovering around. “Find something to fucking do or get the fuck out!”

The disgruntled groans, curses, and mumbles go around the room, but they got their free show, and now it’s over. I make it to my office without punching anyone in the face, which is a damn miracle at this point with the amount of jealous rage pumping through my veins. I open the door, slam it shut behind me, and I take a deep breath as I walk to my desk, then drop in my chair.

“She’s driving me fucking insane.”

I grab the glass, and the bottle of scotch I keep in the drawer. It’s a forty-year-old scotch, one I don’t drink often, but I need something that tastes good, and will calm me down. I pour a generous amount, probably more than I should, then down it in one shot ignoring the piercing burn coating my throat and stomach.

“What the fuck!”

I slam the glass on top of the desk, then roughly run my hand through my hair. I shake my head, trying to remove the images of her ass in the air, me standing behind her, and the way the brothers couldn’t take their eyes off her. The way I couldn’t take my eyes off her.

The image of me slamming into her over and over again will definitely play into my fantasies long after she’s gone. At

this moment, I don't know whether to be pissed at my brothers, her, or my damn self for my reaction and for not having more self-control around her.

“What the hell are you thinking, King?” I ask myself.

*Obviously, I'm not thinking with my head, or at least not the right head.*

Groaning, I blow out a breath, frustrated at this entire situation and my reaction to it. My reaction to her.

She's just another woman, King.

*But is she?*

The door to my office swings open, without warning, then slams shut. My eyes lift and meet rage-filled deep brown ones. And instead of being angry she didn't fucking knock like I would be at anyone else, my dick is hard as steel. Nothing but pure unadulterated desire moves through me.

“You summoned, *Your Highness*,” she sneers while doing a mock curtsy with her lips pressed together in anger.

Absolutely beautiful.

“I'd like to see you on your knees between my legs instead of you doing that fucking curtsy.”

Drawn to her is the only way I can explain my response to anything and everything she does. The woman can be talking shit, or just fucking breathing and all I want to do is touch her, be inside her.

I never really cared about one woman from the next. Once you've been burned it's hard to put your trust in anybody. So, women became just a warm body when my hand no longer did the trick. But there's something about Alana Robinson that makes me want to say fuck it and throw caution to the wind. She makes me want to possess every facet of her being. From her body to her mind, to that sassy fucking mouth of hers.

I stand from behind my desk, then move around it towards her. I don't know what she sees in my features, but her eyes go wide as she starts moving back toward the door. Pity for her, there won't be any escape. She can't get away from me that easily. With each step towards her, she takes one back until her back is flush with the door and she can't go any further.

Standing only inches apart, her addictive scent, fills my nose. My nostrils flare, savoring the smell. My dick's still hard from our patio encounter only a few minutes ago, and the longer I remain in her presence the harder it is to push her out of my system.

I grip her slender neck. She inhales sharply at my quick movement. Her eyes enlarge, her pupils covering almost her entire iris making them look almost solid black.

“Oh sweetheart, you like that don't you?”

“Fuck you, Dylan.”

Her half-hearted retort causes me to chuckle. “We'll get to that soon enough.”

“You fucking wish.”

“I do actually,” I say, and I know I’ve cornered her into silence because she doesn’t know how to respond to me telling her exactly what I want.

Fire simmers in her eyes the more I increase my grip on her throat.

“Did you enjoy giving that little performance?”

She rolls her eyes, but she doesn’t answer my question. I don’t know if it’s out of defiance and she wants to see how far I’ll take this, or she doesn’t give a fuck about my questions. Although I don’t know Alana at all, I’m willing to bet she doesn’t give a fuck about answering any of my questions.

“Were you trying to get their attention or mine?”

“I wasn’t trying to get anyone’s attention you asshole.” Her brows dip in anger and frustration. “I was merely doing the daily exercises I’ve done for years. I can’t control any man’s reaction to me including yours.”

She’s right, but I’m not rationally thinking at this moment. I want this woman so fucking bad it’s clouding my judgment. Even though I know it, I can’t stop my reactions. I shouldn’t have kissed her. She shouldn’t be in here like I demanded her to be. I shouldn’t be this close to her with my hand around her throat wishing I can sink my cock inside her cunt. However, she’s a distraction I can’t seem to get rid of.

I lean in, keeping my hand around her neck and my eyes trained on her.

“Well even if you didn’t want my attention or my reaction, you fucking have it now.”

“What the hell does that even mean?”

The dark chuckle that escapes from my lips doesn’t even sound normal to my ears. This is going to be so much fun. The click when I lock the door to my office echoes through the room.

“It means...” I squeeze her throat tighter, “you’ve unleashed the beast.”

Her eyes widen as she watches me with anticipation and something I never want to see in her eyes—fear. I drop my hand and take a step back, giving her just enough space. Fear in her eyes douses some of the desire surging through me, bringing me back down to my reality.

*Maybe she doesn’t want this. Maybe I remind her of him.*

“King...”

“Quiet, Alana.”

Her brows furrow, she purses her lips and doesn’t say another word. I need to think rationally and calm the hell down. Her voice and scent virtually make it impossible. But this isn’t what should be happening. We both know it.

“From the first night I saw you, I knew you’d become a weakness to me. I’m not a jealous man, but I can’t stand their eyes on you.”

I run my hand through my hair, then put my hands on my hips, looking her in the eyes. A weakness that's what she is or at least what she's becoming. I don't know if that's an admission I need to make but I think she needs to hear it.

“And that's a problem, Alana. A big fucking problem.”

“Why?” She leans against the door, her arms folded across her chest. “We're fucking adults, King.”

“Dylan.” I sigh. “How many times do I have to tell you?”

I don't know why I insist on her calling me by name, but she's different from everyone else. And I don't like it when she refers to me as King like everyone else.

She smiles. “We're adults, Dylan. We're the only ones who have a say in whatever this is, if it's anything. Nobody else. This is between you and me.”

She pushes off the door and walks towards me.

“Alana, don't,” I warn, taking a step back. “I'm barely controlling myself as it is.”

All I want to do is fuck her. Fuck her on my desk, up against the door, on the couch, on the floor. Fuck her until I own every inch of her body, her soul. Fuck her until she screams my name, and everyone in this damn building knows she's mine. At least they know she's mine while she's here. And if they don't keep their eyes off her, they'll get my wrath.

“Alana,” I call her name again in warning.

*But she's what I want. Even if it's only to get her out of my system.*

“Dylan, I want you.” She stops inches in front of me. “I’m not going to hide that from anyone. And if you want me, you shouldn’t either.”

## Chapter Seven



I'VE OFFICIALLY LOST MY mind. What in the actual hell am I thinking?

Clearly, I'm not thinking with my head but definitely thinking with my pussy. Of course, I want King. The man has the sex appeal of a god. I want to lick every surface of his sun-kissed skin. I'm sure he can give me the ride of my life, but this is not the time to lose sight of what's going on. Not to lose sight of the reason I'm even here. It's not the right time to lose myself in a man, especially this one.

And while I know all that's true, I'm still contemplating doing it anyway. He can give me a break from the chaos of my life. I need to live. To breathe. To feel. And not focusing on Matteo and what can possibly happen.

Suddenly there's no more time for contemplation. No more time to think about which step to take with King because his mouth is on me, devouring my very soul, making all the doubts, concerns, and asinine questions, disappear into thin air.

I'm getting lost as the fires of desire increase and I can't stop it. I don't want to stop it. It's intense. Fiery. All consuming. And just what I need.

"You've got too many clothes on," I mutter against his mouth as I try to remove the leather vest he always wears.

Never breaking our kiss, in a flurry, he removes his vest, then pulls his Henley over his head, tossing both somewhere. He grasps my face between his large palms, while I run my fingers over the hard planes of his chest. I giggle at both of our eagerness. I'm not sure how long it's been for him, but it's been way too long since I've had a man make me come.

He pulls away briefly, staring into my eyes. I'm not sure what he sees but his face softens, before he dives back in, tracing my bottom lip with his tongue then biting it hard, before shoving his tongue back down my throat.

His calloused hands move all over my body, increasing my desire. Our tongues war with each other, neither of us willing to submit to the other. I intertwine my fingers in his hair, the soft strands tickling my skin. I pull him impossibly closer. It's like the mere inches that separate us is too much distance.

*Will it always be like this with him?*

He steps away from our kiss and walks to the couch in the room. I face him, while he slumps in the chair with his legs open, stroking his beautiful cock. I'd never believe a man could have a beautiful dick, but King or Dylan is proving me wrong.

For years I've written about Alpha men. Those with the perfect body, the perfect hair, the perfect cock. Matteo happens to be one of those men too. Now King. Here's to new experiences and new dick.

I'm mesmerized by his large, calloused hand as it slowly moves up and down.

"Take your clothes off."

His gravelly voice moves through my body. Shit! He doesn't have to tell me twice. Although I'm going against the deal, I made with myself when I escaped Matteo, to swear off all men and focus on surviving, I don't think I can turn away from this. I deserve to be happy even if it's only for a little while.

I remove every bit of clothing I'm wearing along with my shoes. Standing before a man like King completely nude is terrifying and empowering all at the same time. I'm comfortable in my skin, and men enjoy what I have to offer, but I love it even more when I see desire in their eyes.

I'm not a small woman. Long legs, thick thighs, huge breasts, and an ass I got from my mama. But I love all of me and I wouldn't change for anyone.

"Come to me," he says while he continues to stroke his cock, which is getting larger.

He pulls his bottom lip in between his teeth as he watches me walk slowly toward him. Of course, I'm putting a little

more sway in my hips. And the look on his face makes me even more confident.

When I reach him, I straddle his hips, the tip of his cock touching my entrance. His lips crash into mine as he grips my hips. His blunt nails dig into the flesh as he devours my soul.

“Dylan,” I moan against his lips.

“Tell me what you want sweetheart, and I’ll give it to you.”

He bites my bottom lip before running his tongue across the sting.

My arousal is coating the insides of my thighs. I want so bad to defy him. Not give him my words. But I can’t hold out anymore. I want to feel him inside me.

“Stop talking and fuck me.”

He chuckles then wastes no time giving me what I asked for. His hold on my hips tightens as he slams me down onto him. He doesn’t give me time to adjust, but I don’t care. The way he feels inside of me is beyond anything I’ve experienced before.

We both groan.

He captures my nipple in his mouth, licking and sucking on the hardened peak. I look into his hooded eyes as he moves me up and down his shaft, drowning in the dark pools of lust. If I’m not careful, I’ll get used to this connection we have. And that’s a terrible fucking idea. So, I push all the thoughts to the back of my mind. I close my eyes, and let my head fall back as I let the amazing sensations take over. Body and soul.

*This is nothing more than a fling, Alana. Stay in the moment.*

He feels amazing. “Harder.”

Wasting no time, he slams my body up and down his cock without mercy. Sweaty skin colliding, and our moans and grunts fill the small office. And it feels fucking amazing.

I’m so close. My nails dig into his shoulders.

“Fuck me,” he growls. “You feel so good choking my cock. Now be a good girl and come all over Daddy’s dick.”

My orgasm barrels through me. I scream out his name, but he doesn’t stop fucking me. He doesn’t let me stop my movements. He keeps bouncing me on his cock until one orgasm rolls into another.

My eyes roll. “Oh fuck!”

“That’s it, baby girl. Give it to me.”

“Dylan!”

I’m on cloud nine. I’ve died and gone to heaven. Never in my life have I felt so alive. Never have I felt so wanted. So desired. As I’m coming down, his movements become frantic. I open my eyes and stare at the most glorious sight I’ve ever seen.

“Alana...” he groans, releasing inside me.

His head is thrown back. His plump bottom lip is caught between his teeth and his muscles are tense, but his face is so serene. It’s beyond beautiful.

When he comes down, he gazes at me, and I know after this, things are going to change between us. Not sure how, or even if it's a good or bad thing. I don't believe things will ever be the same.

“Dylan...”

He shakes his head and pulls me close. I lay my head against his muscular chest. I won't say what needs to be said. That what we just shared is a one-time thing, but I know that it'll be a lie. I can't act like I didn't experience this with him. It wasn't just sex but I'm not going to think about it right now. So, I do as he asks, bask in his warmth, and let the beating of his heart comfort me.

“Rest up, sweetheart because I'm not done with you yet.”

A smile crosses my face. “I can't wait.”

He chuckles and kisses the top of my head.

## Chapter Eight



I'VE BEEN FIELDING PHONE call after phone call all morning. Someone's definitely fucking with us. Not sure if it's the Bianchi's or someone else. I don't know whether the Syndicate has any clue the girls are here. I'm close with a few of the chapter presidents, so I've been trying to gather information on what's happening with them to see if it's lining up with what's happening to us.

Loki, from the New Orleans chapter, is the last Prez I've been in touch with. All is good down there, but he's keeping an eye out and will let me know if things change.

Everything with the Bianchi's has cooled down in Vegas with Alonzo on the run and now they're working on getting Chief out of prison. Grimm says after Bianchi and Messina are taken down then the girls can come back, until then we both agree it's best they stay here.

"I'm so ready for all this shit to be over."

Alonzo is still in the wind, but my concern centers on Alana's ex. I think he's more of a threat than Alonzo. While Alonzo Bianchi calls the shots, I think Matteo has a lot more pull in the Syndicate than Alana knows. I'm pretty sure Matteo's the one who put the bounty on her head whether or not the Don okayed it. He's definitely coming for her.

I've done a deep dive on him, and he has his hands in all kinds of shit. Prostitution, human trafficking, drugs, and counterfeiting, to name a few. But the way it looks Alana may have started a war within the Syndicate with the information she gave Grimm. His impending marriage, and all the shit she dished may have pushed Matteo's timeline up to take over, which I think he's still trying to do behind the scenes and while on the run. My guess is to do that, he needs to get rid of her.

"How in the hell did she not know all this?" I mumble as I flip through the stack of intel on Matteo Messina. "Or is this the shit she gave Grimm?"

He isn't just a soldier like everyone believes. He's not the named Underboss but he's definitely acting like it. And from the intel I've been able to uncover it looks like he's making a play for the top. Well, that was before she blew up his plans. So, yes, he has a very good reason to come after her.

"Come in!" I shout when there's a knock on the door.

I don't even look up from the stack of papers to see who it is. I gave orders not to be disturbed unless someone was dying, or we were being raided so I know it has to be one of three

people. Reaper, Saint, or Alana. They're the only ones who don't give a fuck about my orders and who'd have the balls to ignore them.

When the door clicks close, I glance up and I can't help the smile that crosses my face.

I stop flipping through the paperwork on Messina, and sit back in my chair, steepling my fingers. "What can I do for you, Alana?"

She rolls her eyes, despite the fire simmering in them. I smirk. Only a few days ago, I had her spread open on every surface of this room. But I've been so busy lately, I've only seen her in passing, and we haven't had the chance for a repeat. I've been out on the road dealing with the rival motorcycle club establishing itself right outside our territory and trying to gather as much intel on Matteo Messina as I possibly can without rattling cages that don't need to be rattled.

"Don't flatter yourself."

She plops on the couch, then crosses her leg over the other at the knee.

She looks good, like always. She's wearing this long flowy black skirt, a matching tank top with skinny straps, and her black Chucks. She looks casual but sexy. Although at this point, I think I may be biased when it comes to her. It doesn't matter what she wears, she makes everything look downright sinful. I can imagine licking that delicious pussy underneath that skirt.

Not being able to stay seated any longer, I stand and walk around my desk, making my way to her. Her eyes roam down my body before resting back on my face. When I reach the couch, I stop in front of her and cross my arms over my chest. She looks up at me with so much desire it almost knocks me on my ass. She may have come in here to ask for something else, but this dick is what she really wants. And she's going to get it anywhere and everywhere she wants it.

She gasps when I drop to my knees in front of her. I push her legs open, and push her skirt up some, hoping to get a glimpse of what I've been missing.

“What can I do for you, Alana?”

Her smile is barely detectable, but she pulls her long skirt up further, letting it rest just above her knees. I run my hands up and down her thighs loving the feel of her smooth, soft skin against the calloused pads of my fingers.

“Depends,” she says with that mischievous glint in her eyes I've come to love, as she moves her hands slowly down her stomach.

I inch my fingers further up her thighs, closer to her pussy.  
“Depends on what, sweetheart?”

I have no doubt she's drenched. Alana is one of the most forward women I've met when it comes to her sexuality. She knows what she wants and she's not afraid to ask. She's someone I can get really addicted to. Right now, I haven't decided if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

“It depends on whether you have the time for me, Dylan.”

She pulls her skirt higher, the billowy fabric now resting above her hips. She has no fucking underwear on.

*Fuck me!*

“You’ve been very busy lately.”

“Hmmm... I think I can make the time.” I lick my lips. “What exactly do you need?”

Two of her fingers travel down her wet folds, gathering her arousal. Then she removes them from her dripping wet pussy, then brings them slowly to her mouth, licking her arousal from them while never taking her eyes off me.

“You know what I want, Dylan.”

I’m impossibly hard but I want to hear the words from her mouth. She wants to tease me. Now she’s going to have to ask for me to eat her out, or I’ll return to jacking off like I’ve done since the last time we fucked in here.

“I do.” A smile lifts at the corners of my mouth. “I know exactly what you want, but I also want you to ask Daddy for it.”

She smiles as her fingers move through her pussy again, and I want so bad to knock her hand away and take over.

“Just say the words, Alana. Just say, Daddy can you fuck my tight cunt,” I taunt. “Can you lick my pussy?”

She arches her brow, grazing her pierced clit. Now that was a pleasant surprise. She doesn’t look like the type, but she’s

been a complete enigma since the first day we met. She's nothing like I expected.

"Your ego is insane." Her body shudders as she grazes her clit over and over again. "Do you know that?"

I groan as I watch her pleasure herself. Her swollen wet pussy looks good enough to eat.

"I've been told that a time or two."

I lick my lips again and squeeze my hardened dick through my jeans. It's becoming hard to enjoy the show when all I can think about is becoming a part of it.

"Say the words, Alana." I'm losing my patience, but I have to remain calm. Hide it from her so she'll give in instead of making me suffer. "You came to me, now ask for what you want before I make you beg for it."

She tilts her head and smiles. If I didn't know any better, you'd think she's innocent with the way she's looking at me.

"And you think you can make me beg for it?"

*I know I can.*

Standing to my feet. I unbutton, then unzip my jeans, and pull my dick from my pants. It's long, thick, and hard, with a bead of precum leaking from the tip just begging to be shoved in one of her holes. Doesn't matter to me which one. I'm not picky. It's torture not giving her exactly what she wants but I'm willing to suffer just to hear the words from her fuckable lips.

I fist my aching cock. Immediately, she stops playing with herself, her eyes fixated on my dick. I know she wants to take me in her mouth, but now she's not going to get what she wants until I can get what I want, which is my mouth between her legs.

I run my hand up and down my shaft as she watches me hungrily. The desire, the lust in her eyes is overwhelming, heart-stopping.

I increase my speed, gathering precum with each pass of my hand.

Her beautiful eyes flick up at me. "Dylan..."

"Tell me what you want sweetheart. You came to me." I take a step closer to her, continuing my movements up and down my dick. "What do you want?"

Her breathing picks up and the desire to say the words are hanging on the tip of her tongue, but her pride won't let her give in to me. Her defiance. She's determined not to beg for what she knows only I can give her.

I stave off the orgasm that's creeping up on me just so I can see more of that defiance because it's going to be so fucking sweet when I break her.

Gripping her by her hair, I yank her head back with one hand while I continue to stroke myself mere inches from her face.

"I will break you, sweetheart."

I tap the head of my dick against her lips.

She wants to deny it, but deep down she knows it. The faster I stroke myself the more she squirms in her seat, however, she keeps those luscious lips of hers closed.

“Say the words or I’ll come on your face then go back to doing what I was doing before you came in here.”

That got her attention. Her eyes widen. “You wouldn’t fucking dare.”

“Oh sweetheart, I would. Make up your mind because I’m close.”

“Asshole.”

“Definitely. Just say it and give us both what we want.”

She huffs and spreads her legs wider giving me a view of her glistening folds. Jesus this woman will definitely be the death of me if I’m not careful.

“Can you lick my pussy, Daddy?”

“Thank fuck,” I growl, dropping to the floor in front of her, between her thighs. Her giggles cause my chest to tighten but I push the feeling away.

*It’s not that.*

“You’re eager.”

“I love eating your pussy.”

She drapes her legs over my shoulders, and I pull her butt closer to my mouth before diving in like a starving man. Her scent is so invigorating. I can’t get enough of it.

She digs her hands in my hair which is quickly becoming one of my favorite things in this fucking world.

I groan as the stinging on my scalp increases. With the tip of my tongue, I circle her piercing, causing her legs to tremble against my head. I open her pussy and lick from her entrance to her clit, then suck it into my mouth.

*Jesus, I can do this forever.*

“Oh fuck!”

She fucks my tongue, her hips moving up and down my face and I absolutely love it.

“Dylan,” she moans. “Oh damn.”

“That’s it, sweetheart, ride my face,” I mumble against her pussy.

She’s pulling me closer and pushing me away. She’s close. Her body’s trembling against me.

“Give it to me, Alana.”

“Oh! Right there! Oh!!”

I give her what she wants, sucking her clit in my mouth, then releasing it before sucking it in again and again.

“I’m coming!” she yells, before flooding my mouth with her delicious juices.

I groan as I drink down every last bit. When her body slumps, I stand up, flip her on her stomach, and slide into her to the hilt. We both groan.

Jesus Christ, she feels like fucking sin. Slick, warm, and so inviting. I've never been with a woman who felt this good. I grip her hips and slowly pull out, only the tip remaining inside her before I slam back in.

“You're fucking mine, sweetheart.”

I can't hold back any longer. The way her pussy is choking my cock is driving me insane. Gripping her hips tighter, I slam in and out of her without care, relentlessly, chasing my orgasm.

“Oh! Dylan!”

I slap her ass. She hisses. “What's my name sweetheart?”

I pull her harder and faster against my body. Our moans, groans, and the scent of sex blanket the air.

“Oh! Fuck me, Daddy!” she yells as her pussy flutters around me before clamping tightly around me.

“Fuck, baby. I'm coming.”

My eyes close, I throw my head back, and groan loud as hell as my orgasm slams into me full force. I continue to move in and out of her slick pussy until every last bit of cum is drained from me, coating her womb.

I slump over her back, my sweat dripping over her glistening skin. We both remain like that until our breathing returns to normal. I kiss her down her spine, then pull out of her.

She sits on the couch while I walk to my desk to get something to clean both of us. I pull wet wipes from my desk drawer, then clean our juices off my dick.

“You are a beautiful, man.”

I look at her and I can't help but smile like an idiot while I continue to wipe off my dick.

“I've been called many things,” I say, tossing the soiled wipes into the trash can beside my desk as I walk to her. “But beautiful isn't one of them.”

I pull a couple of wipes from the container. She reaches out her hand, but I knock it away. I crouch in front of her and gaze at our arousal leaking from her beautiful cunt.

“You have a beautiful pussy,” I say, as I reluctantly wipe away the mixture of our cum.

She laughs, squirming under my touch. “What?”

I want so bad to dip my tongue back into her but unfortunately, we've been in here for a while and I have business to take care of.

“You have a beautiful cunt,” I repeat.

I swipe my finger down her slit, then stick it inside her entrance before pulling it out. I bring it to my lips, then suck the wetness from my finger. My eyes close as I revel in her taste mixed with mine.

When I open them, I gaze into her hooded eyes. “I have business to take

care of right now, but I want to eat your pussy again.”

“If you let me go out for a few hours, I’ll give you all the pussy you want.”

“Is that so?”

She smiles. “Yes. I have some things I need to get, and I’d like to go see Amelia at the shop.”

I didn’t like the idea of her going out, especially since we have no idea where Messina is.

I tilt my head. As long as two of the guys go with her, she should be safe. But will she listen to them?

I sigh. “I don’t like the idea, but I’ll let you go only if two of the guys go with you and you listen to everything they have to say.”

“No problem.”

“Alana, I’m serious,” I say, standing to my feet.

My dick is still semi-hard, but I’ll have to wait until later to fuck her again. I’ve got too much shit to do.

“I will, Dylan. I promise.”

She grasps my cock, moving her hand up and down my hardened shaft. She stands on her tiptoes, and runs her tongue across my lips, before dipping inside my mouth.

I groan pulling her closer, taking over the kiss. Far too quickly she pulls away, releasing my shaft.

“Later, King.”

She heads towards the door, then looks over her shoulder, before she leaves, the door closing behind her. I groan, shaking my head as I pick my clothes up off the floor.

“I’m so fucking screwed.”

## Chapter Nine



I STUMBLE OUT OF Dylan's office, and I can't wipe the smile off my face. It's been a while since I'd seen him. According to the chatter around the clubhouse, shit's getting dicey in Oakland and Dylan's been trying to find a way to handle everything including the shit I brought to their doorsteps.

It didn't take too much convincing to let me get out of here for a few hours, as long as I listen to whoever he assigns as my chaperone, and I fuck him. Both, I'm willing to do. I understand his concern for my safety even though I don't believe I need two bikers to escort me everywhere I go. One is enough. I don't know if I'm just hoping Matteo has forgotten about what I did or just being naïve.

I make it up the stairs to my room.

Almost.

“Hey bitch! Who in the hell do you think you are?”

I stop in my tracks, then turn around. It takes everything in me not to roll my eyes, but I keep calm, blow out a breath, and plaster a smile on my face.

Daisy already warned me sooner or later I'd have to deal with this woman. Apparently, she's obsessed with Dylan. What the hell that has to do with me, I don't know. We're only having a good time, nothing more and nothing less. While it's not any of her business what I'm doing with him, I'm the last woman she needs to be concerned about when it comes to King or Dylan as he insists, I call him. This thing between us is only temporary.

I watch as she walks towards me with a perfect stride in her ridiculous high platform heels. Even though I don't like where this is headed, it's impressive, I can admit.

Her stringy box blonde hair reaches her breasts that are virtually on display in the halter top that's barely covering at least a double d chest size. Her clothes are way too small even for her tiny frame, and her makeup is way over the top, but who am I to judge. If this look works, good for her.

“Excuse me?”

I really didn't want to talk to this woman, but it's bound to happen. I've heard her sneers behind my back, which up to this point I've chosen to ignore. If she wants to be a bitter bitch that's on her. I'm going to enjoy my life regardless.

*Enjoy my life while I still can which includes fucking King and enjoying every damn minute of it.*

“You heard me bitch.”

Her lips that are way too large for her face, purse, and her nose is scrunched like she smells shit.

She stands toe to toe with me, and because she’s shorter than me even in her heels I still have to look down.

“Stay away from, King or we’re going to have a big fucking problem.”

I hate stupid bitches like her. Who approaches another woman about a man? Most women take that shit up with their man if he’s fucking around. Her problem isn’t with me, it’s with him. And apparently, she hasn’t gotten the message he’s been sending her.

I’ve heard the men and women talk about the two of them and how he doesn’t give a damn about her. Apparently, it ain’t clicking if she’s warning me to stay away from him. And not only did Daisy warn me about Janie and her obsession with Dylan, but she also informed me, she pulls this stunt with every woman who comes in and out of the place.

I don’t know why he hasn’t put a stop to it yet. Maybe he does have a soft spot for her despite what everyone says. Who knows, but I know it has absolutely nothing to do with me.

Daisy explained the hierarchy of the motorcycle club culture when it came to the women and apparently, Janie wants to be Dylan’s, Old Lady, even though according to Daisy, that’s not even in the cards for little Miss Ray of Sunshine here. Janie’s nothing more than a club whore to him

and I'm just someone who's having a good time with a gorgeous man while I'm still alive to do so. But I refuse to let this bitch try to bully me into getting her way. She needs to take her grievances to King and leave me the fuck out of it.

“Look you need to have this conversation with Dylan...”

“His name is King!” she shouts, pointing her long red polished nail at me, only inches from touching my chest. “Stop calling him that!”

*Yeah, this bitch is crazy.*

“Okay.” I hold my hands up, trying to put a little distance between us. “Look, Janie. Your name is Janie, right?”

“Don't act like you don't know who I am.” She crosses her arms over her chest. “I saw you the first day you came in here and had your sights set on my man. He'll never want someone like you.”

I can't stop my laugh because obviously, that's not true. Not even five minutes ago his face was buried in my pussy and his cock inside me, but I'll keep that information to myself. It might make her act way crazier than she's acting now. And it's absolutely none of her business what we do with one another.

“Look, your problem is with King, not me.”

I try to open my door to end this ridiculous conversation, argument, or whatever the hell you want to call it because I do not have it in me to waste my time or energy on a loon. But she grabs me, digging her nails into my arm, and on instinct, I

whirl around, then twist her arm around her back and push her against the door.

She screams bloody murder but that's not going to get me to let her go. She started this shit and now I'm going to finish it.

I push her arm further into her back. I know the shit hurts because of years of self-defense training, I know how it feels. It's almost like your shoulder is being slowly pulled from the socket. But she shouldn't have touched me and saved us both a bunch of trouble.

"I was trying to be nice, Janie. I was trying to deal with you, woman to woman."

She screams as I push her arm up a little higher just to make sure I'm getting my point across. If I go any further and push a little harder, I'll break it which really isn't what I want even if it's what she deserves for thinking she can touch me.

What I want is for her to realize, I'm not like all these other women she can push around. I'm not the one to be played with or bullied. As I told her before she tried this stupid shit, her problem is with King, not me. The sooner she realizes it the better off she'll be especially when it comes to me.

*Maybe I'll dislocate it just so she knows not to fuck with me again.*

"I tried to walk away from your crazy ass. But you wanted to be a stupid bitch and put your hands on me."

"Let me go!" She struggles against my hold, tears streaming down her face. But I don't care how much pain she's in.

“You’re hurting me!”

“You should’ve thought about that before you touched me,” I say, making sure to maintain the pressure I have on her arm.

Heavy footfalls running up the stairs sound, but I don’t let her go. I know he’s coming, and I want him to see how she wasn’t supposed to be a problem, but here we are.

“Hey!” he shouts as soon as he reaches the top of the stairs. “What the hell is going on!?”

I look over my shoulder and arch my brow. “I thought she wasn’t going to be a problem, Dylan.”

“Alana...”

“King!” Janie screams, interrupting whatever he wants to say to me. “Baby, get this crazy bitch away from me. She attacked me and accused me of all kinds of shit.”

“Yeah baby,” I mock, rolling my eyes. “Get this crazy bitch away from me.”

His eyes narrow on me, and I don’t give a fuck about his anger, or my disrespect of him. I let go of her arm and push her towards him. She stumbles into him and grasps his leather vest, clinging to him for dear life. Jealousy swirls inside me but I push it down.

I admit she’s a really good actress. The tears, the snot, which is probably from me almost breaking her arm, but she pulled the victim card quickly even though she started all this shit.

“Alana...”

King calls my name, and I can hear the apology and explanation in his voice before he can say anything. But I don't have time for her shit.

Or his.

I throw up my hand stopping him from finishing his fucking apology. “I don't want to hear it.” I am so over this shit. Over him and Janie. Matteo. Life. I'm over fucking, all of it. “Handle your shit, Dylan, and leave me the fuck out of it.”

He calls my name again, but I ignore him, push open the door, close it behind me, then lock it just in case he tries to barge his way in here to excuse her actions, apologize, or explain shit to me I don't want to hear. I don't need him to do anything other than keep his drama away from me. I have enough shit to deal with, without having to deal with his too.

Leaning against the door, I blow out a breath. I'm pissed. Not only am I pissed about being in the middle of something that has absolutely nothing to do with me, but I'm also so fucking angry I *allowed* myself to be dragged into the middle. I'm not here to find a man. I'm here for his protection from someone that will kill me and not think twice about it.

“All I wanted was a few hours away from this place, not be caught in the middle of some imaginary love triangle. What in the actual fuck, Alana? This is what the hell you get for not listening to your head. When are you ever going to fucking learn?”

I run my hand through my hair. Despite Dylan being the best fuck I've ever had, I'm not putting up with this kind of bullshit because I don't have to.

His dick, no matter how good, is not worth my peace. We've had our fun, and now it's over.

## Chapter Ten



I PULL MY EYES away from Alana’s door. I want so bad to explain, apologize, and do whatever I need to do to remove that look of disgust, anger, and disappointment from her face. She doesn’t deserve to be dealing with any of Janie’s bullshit. I should have known Janie would pull something eventually.

She always does.

“Goddamn it, Janie!” I peel her from my body and grasp her by her slender arm. I might leave my handprint but I’m too damn mad to even care about it. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

This is the last straw. I’m not having this bullshit in my clubhouse. I’m not dealing with it because I don’t have to. This is my fucking house. Everyone plays by my fucking rules, including this bitch.

“What do you mean, goddamn it, Janie?” she shouts while I drag her down the stairs. She’s barely able to keep her balance

in those godawful shoes she likes to parade around in. “I didn’t do anything wrong, King! That bitch attacked me.”

When we hit the bottom of the stairs of course everyone’s gathered around the room to watch the show. Nobody knew what was happening when I asked questions, but all you could hear were Janie’s screams. I never expected her to go after Alana.

I let go of her arm and then take a step away from her. This is the last time I’ll have to deal with her, and I’m relieved.

“You really expect me to believe that shit?” I respond, my anger rising not because I know she started all this shit because that’s what she does. I’m angry because of my stupidity. I should’ve done something a long time ago about the shit and now it’s coming back to bite me in the ass.

No way in hell do I believe for one damn minute Alana just decided to attack her for no reason. Alana and I are just having fun and Janie and I are absolutely nothing. There’s no reason for Alana to attack Janie out of jealousy which would be the only reason she would have done anything like that.

“You don’t believe me?” Tears cling to her long lashes. Tears meant to make me feel sorry for her, but they only piss me off more. “You believe that bitch over me? I love you, King. I would never lie to you.”

“I’m not falling for the tears, Janie, and I don’t want your love. I don’t know how many damn times I have to say it. I don’t love you. I have never loved you. And I never fucking will.”

“You don’t mean that, baby. I know you don’t” She tries to grab onto me, but I take another step away from her. “We’re made for each other. You know I’m telling the truth. She’s just trying to take you away from me like all these bitches.”

*She’s fucking crazy.*

“Janie, get your shit and get out.”

Her eyes widen. “You can’t be serious! You’re kicking me out because of her?”

“No, I’m not kicking you out because of her. I’m kicking you out because of you. You’re toxic and I warned you. I warned you to stop it with all this possessive bullshit. I’m not your Old Man. So now you can find somewhere else to go because I’m not putting up with the bullshit anymore.”

“King, please,” she begs. “Please don’t make me leave. I have nowhere to go.”

“You should’ve thought about that when I told you to stop with all this bullshit. Attacking a guest is the last straw. I’m not tolerating your shit anymore.”

I motion for one of the prospects and he steps forward.

“Prez?”

“Make sure she takes all her shit and walk her to the road. I face everyone else. “She’s no longer allowed in the clubhouse. No member, prospect, club whore, or Old Lady is allowed to talk to or associate with her. If I find out anyone goes against my wishes there will be consequences. And if you’re a member that includes the removal of your patch.”

I walk away, heading to my office while ignoring Janie's screams, curses, and threats with Reaper hot on my heels. I want to go to Alana, check and make sure she's good and apologize but now's not the time. I got too much shit to handle to also be dealing with the trivial bullshit like her forgiving me for Janie's shit. And she looked like she wanted to fuck me up, so it might be better to let her cool off before I grovel for her forgiveness.

The door slams behind me and I plop down behind my desk. "Motherfucker."

It takes everything in me to keep from swiping all the shit off my desk.

"About time you got rid of her." Reaper sits down in the chair in front of my desk and then props his hands behind his head. "She causes too many problems."

"I know but you know how I hate for anyone to be out on the streets, but this is too fucking much. She went way too far this time."

"So, the rumors are true?" he asks, with a smirk.

"What rumors?"

"That you've got something going on with Alana?" Reaper asks. "I wouldn't blame you if you did."

"We're just having fun." I shrug. "Nothing serious."

Even as the words come out of my mouth, they feel wrong, like a lie. She's under my skin. It's serious. More serious than I care to admit.

He nods but before we can even get into the conversation the door swings open, Saint walks in the plops down in the chair beside Reaper. I look at him and I already know whatever he has to say is going to be bad news.

“Before you blow your fucking top, I’m going to start by saying it couldn’t be avoided.” He plants his forearms on his thighs. “If I could have, I would have.”

I look at him impatiently. I’ve already had to deal with Janie’s shit, and we’re having to run logistics to make sure Alana and Amelia are safe from the Bianchi’s, which means we’re stretched thin. We don’t need more shit to take on.

“Why don’t you start from the beginning,” Reaper says. I remain quiet. “Then we’ll go from there.”

“I met somebody.”

“And that’s a problem?” I ask, leaning back in my office chair.

.

“It may cause problems with the club.”

*Just fucking great.*

I narrow my eyes. “What kind of problems?”

“She happens to be the ex-wife of Thomas Williams.”

“Who?” Reaper looks between me and my little brother, who at this moment I want to strangle with my bare hands if he’s talking about who the hell I think he’s talking about.

*It better not be who the fuck I think it is.*

“Congressman Williams,” he responds. “You know the piece of shit the Bianchi’s and the Petrovas have in their pocket. He came by Oya’s home this morning while I was there, and he casually threatened me and the club.”

“Son of a bitch, Gavin!”

“Fucking hell,” Reaper murmurs.

“Look. They aren’t even fucking together anymore, King. I like her. I like her a lot and I don’t give a fuck what any of you got to say about it.”

“Does she know your history?” I ask and he scoffs.

I think it’s a valid question. I’m just looking out for him. If he really likes this woman and she finds out about his record, he can get hurt and I don’t want that. I want my brother to be happy. But of course, he doesn’t see it that way. Always wanting to believe the worst in me.

“You really do think I’m a piece of shit, don’t you?” He shoots to his feet. “Look I just thought you should know what’s going on.”

“Sit down, Gavin.” Reaper tosses his hands in the air. “We need to plan if something comes up with this. Not only is Williams a politician, but he’s also a dirty one. That can cause problems.”

He sighs and drops back into the seat. “That’s why the hell I came. I recognized his name.”

“Oya? That’s her name?” I ask and he nods. “And she knows you’re a Sinner?”

He sighs again and I want to reach across the desk and wring his fucking neck. I'm asking these fucking questions because I have to, not because I want to.

“Of course, King. Despite what you seem to think about me, I wouldn't keep shit like that from her.”

“Gavin, I'm not saying anything like that. But with your background and being a Sinner, I don't want you to jump feet first into something and bring along an innocent woman with you.”

Why the fuck can't he see I'm trying to look out for everyone involved including his woman.

“What he's trying to say,” Reaper says cutting in, “we're just worried about you. You told me a little about this woman and you seem invested. We don't want you to get hurt.”

“I'm not a fucking kid anymore. I can handle my own life.” He takes in a deep breath and releases it. “Look if shit starts going down, it could be this. I just thought you might like to know.”

and

“I've got to go,” he says, standing and walks to the door.

I don't stop him. I've got this shit now to deal with, on top of Alana, and the rival motorcycle club, we both need time to cool off.

“I got an appointment.”

“Bring her by,” I order before he can disappear out the door.  
“We need to discuss this situation.”

“I’ll see if she has time.”

“Tell her to make time, Gavin,” I say. “The fucking club could be affected. It’s not a request.”

He opens the door and walks out without looking back. As soon as the door slams shut, I pound my hand against my desk.

“Calm down, Dylan. Looks like our baby brother might be in love.”

I sigh. “I think so too, but this isn’t good bro.

Congressman Williams is a prick and can make our lives a living hell. It’s not a

matter of if, but when.”

“What’s the plan?”

“I have no fucking clue, Logan.” I ran my hand down my face. “But I got to

deal with Alana’s shit. We don’t need to be worried about looking over our

shoulders because of a love triangle with a fucking powerful politician. Williams can

do a hell of a lot more damage to us than the Bianchi’s.”

“It’ll work out.”

My brother tries to reassure me. While I appreciate his confidence in me, I don’t think he realizes the position we’re

in. I can deal with criminals, but Williams skirts the line, and I'm not worried about what he can do to us on the illegal side of things because we can handle that like we always do. My concern is the legal routes he can use to bring us all down.

## Chapter Eleven



FREEDOM.

That's the only word to describe it. Despite the two men who are chauffeuring me around like I'm a movie star, it feels fucking fantastic not to be couped up inside the clubhouse. Not that I'm not grateful to have somewhere safe to stay, I just need a change of scenery, or I start to get restless.

We've only been out for about an hour. On the order of Grimm, I closed all my credit card accounts, emptied my bank accounts, and got rid of my cell phone, so Matteo has no way to track me. I hate having to spend money on new clothes when I have a perfectly good wardrobe in Vegas, but it's not doing me any good here, so I'm taking a little of the cash I have on hand and getting some things I need. But both of my babysitters are grumbling about driving me around. It's not my fault they're saddled with me. If it was my choice, I would have come by myself.

“Hey, guys can we get something to eat, then go by the tattoo shop so I can hang with Amelia before we head home?”

*Home. That's what a biker's clubhouse has become to me.*

Since Amelia has been working at Saint's shop, I haven't seen much of her. I want to catch up and see how things are going. When she gets back to the clubhouse, I'm in bed and when I wake up, she's already gone. Although we're going through this thing together, we don't see each other, and I miss her.

David, the prospect we met the first night looks at Christian, who's also known as Tongue who's looking in the side mirror. According to the girls at the clubhouse, he can make any girl very happy with the stroke of his tongue, hence the name.

My hackles rise at the shift of the energy inside the SUV. While they don't want to drive me around, the energy isn't from frustration or being annoyed. Tension saturates the air now. It's a feeling I've gotten used to over the years being with Matteo. Danger is near.

"What's wrong?"

Neither answer my question nor spare me a look. Tongue glances at David, giving him a curt nod. David picks up speed and Tongue does his best to keep his face from showing any emotions, but I'm not stupid. I've been involved with a *made man* for years. I know when shit is going down and shit is going down. Tongue pulls out his phone.

"It's Matteo, isn't it?"

Panic chokes me. I frantically look out the back window of the SUV as terror races through me, trying to see if I can see

anything that may have put them on edge. I don't see anything other than normal traffic.

“Has he found me?”

Out of nowhere, two motorcycles come alongside us. One on either side of the SUV we're riding in. At first, I thought Tongue called some of the guys, but then I notice their leather vests are different. They don't say Sin City on the back but Savage Order across the top and San Francisco along the bottom. Relief briefly encompasses me. It isn't Matteo, just a bunch of bikers.

*But why are the guys still on the defensive?*

“On the floor, Alana!” Tongue shouts out of the blue.

But his order doesn't come quick enough. The window shatters. I understand immediately why they're on the defensive.

“Oh fuck!” I yell, dropping to the floor in the back of the SUV.

I cover my head with my hands as more gunfire erupts, the scent of burning rubber and gunpowder fills my nose. Both David and Tongue are cursing, the SUV is swerving, tires are screeching, and I'm praying that my ass doesn't die today.

*God, please. I can't die today.*

Since everything went down with Matteo, I've thought my last days on earth would be at his hands, but it looks like I may have been wrong.

“Stay down, Alana!” Tongue yells as gunshots ring out from inside the SUV. I’m not a gun person, and this isn’t the first time I’ve been shot at, or been around guns, but I’m fucking elated someone on my side has one. Maybe I’ll make it out alive after the smoke clears.

The sound of bullets hitting metal sounds exactly like it does in the movies. I’ve been in one other shootout when someone attacked Matteo. The sounds of the bullets, the smell of the gunpowder, and the absolute terror that weighs your body down is indescribable. This time is no different. With each ping I jump, bracing myself for the impact of the bullet and the searing pain that comes along with getting shot. But it hasn’t come. At least not yet.

“There’s one more coming up behind us!” David yells.

“Fuck!” Tongue curses, then leans over my body, his palm pushing my head further down into the floor of the SUV.

I can’t complain even though the way he’s pushing me down is making it hard for me to breathe.

“Stay down, Alana!” Tongue orders.

The explosion of the back window sends glass shards flying over me and Tongue. I scream and he grunts but he doesn’t stop shooting. I don’t know if he shot the glass out or someone else, but it isn’t too long before a loud boom sounds and all the gunfire ceases.

“Get us the fuck out of here, Prospect!” Tongue screams, jumping back in the front seat. “It won’t be long before the

cops swarm this place.”

The engine revs and the SUV speeds up.

“You can get up, Alana,” Tongue says. “It’s safe.”

Slowly I rise, careful not to cut myself on the broken glass. Then, I see the blood covering his shirt. “Oh, my God! Tongue you’ve been shot. We need to get you to the hospital.”

He shakes his head. “No hospitals. Are you good?”

I have some scrapes from the glass but other than that I’m fine.

“You’re worried about me? You’re the one bleeding all over the damn place.” He takes in a deep breath, but I don’t like the way he sounds when he releases it. “You don’t sound so good, Tongue.”

I’m really concerned about his injury. He’s bleeding way too much and not breathing right not to go to the hospital.

“I’ve had worse. Are you good?” he asks again.

“I’m fine, Tongue. Some cuts from the glass. But you need to go to the hospital.”

“No hospitals.”

He pulls out his phone again. I sit back in the seat while he talks to who I assume is King letting him know we’re on the way back, and that I’m fine, but he’s going to need a doctor. His breathing isn’t the best and his skin is getting paler by the minute.

“I promise, she’s fine, King,” Tongue says.

“But you’re not!” I say loud enough so King can hear.  
“David, you need to hurry up, he’s not doing good.”

David looks over at Tongue, then looks back at the road. He goes faster.

Tongue sighs but doesn’t say anything else, before ending the call. He tosses the phone onto the dash, then grips his side. The grimace on his face solidifies that he’s not fine. You can see the hole from the bullet in his leather vest, and now his fingers are covered in his blood.

Sirens in the distance are getting a little too close for comfort. I look out the broken rear window, but I don’t see any blue lights behind us or any other suspicious vehicles or anymore motorcycles. I let out a deep breath. I don’t believe this has anything to do with Matteo, but why did they attack us?

“Who were those guys?”

I don’t expect either of them to answer. And they don’t just as I expected. They only look at each other before going back to surveying our surroundings until we pull up to the clubhouse. Just over an hour ago, I had been so ready to leave this place and now I can’t believe the relief encompassing me at seeing it again.

The reality of the situation hits me. I’m lucky I’m alive. We all are.

“We could have died.”

I feel like I'm having an out-of-body experience. I shouldn't be here. None of us should.

David parks the car and kills the engine. He gazes in the mirror, his eyes full of worry.

I've come to learn a lot about him during these past few weeks. How he believes he's the biggest disappointment to his family, especially his father, because he decided to go off on his own and throw away the opportunities his father's name provided for him, which also led him down a road of crime and eventually to the Sinners. But he's young and everyone makes mistakes. He's an amazing kid even if he doesn't realize it yet. Empathy isn't something a lot of people have, but David is one of those people. I hope this lifestyle doesn't change him too much.

"Alana..."

Someone calls my name but it's like I'm stuck. I can't move. I'm not only scared shitless about what happened, but I'm also scared of what can happen in the future. My nails dig into the soft leather of the SUV, the pain from the shards of glass cutting my fingers.

"Sweetheart, it's Dylan." I look at him and tears fill my eyes, my watery gaze not distorting how beautiful he is. "Can you come inside?"

"We could've died."

"But you didn't." He reaches out his hand. "Come inside for me. Let's get your cuts looked at."

Without hesitation, I grasp his hand. My blood coats his skin. But he doesn't care, he helps me out of the car. I can barely walk my legs are shaking so badly. He pulls me closer to his frame, supporting my trembling body as we walk into the clubhouse. The warmth of his body seeps into my bones. I try my best to ignore the stares from everyone, the concern on their faces. They should be more concerned with Tongue than me.

“Tongue's hurt really bad, Dylan. He needs help.”

“Don't worry. I've got a doctor looking after him.”

Relief moves through me. I've come to look at most of these guys as friends. I don't want any of them hurt because of me.

I nod just as Reaper walks up to King and whispers something in his ear. He doesn't stop to talk but his jaw clenches. Anger washes over his features. He doesn't say anything back to him, he just ushers me upstairs.

“I'm fine, Dylan.” I lie even though I'm not fine. “Take care of what you need to take care of.”

I don't think I'll ever be fine after this. I've been in some dangerous situations, including a similar situation with Matteo. I don't know what makes this time so different, but it is.

My legs are still trembling. The only reason I haven't collapsed is because of Dylan. And the only thing going through my mind is that I never would've seen Amelia again

and believe it or not, the thought of never seeing Dylan again also weighs heavy on me.

*Maybe that's why this time is so different.*

He doesn't respond just tightens his embrace.

We make it to the top of the stairs but instead of going to my room, he goes to the room he uses when he's here. I'm so out of it, I can't protest. And I don't think I even want to. I feel safe and protected in his embrace. Not a good thing for my heart, but I don't even care at this moment.

He kicks the door close with his foot, and I press my face further into the crook of his neck inhaling the calming scent of his cologne and the natural scent of his skin.

Silently he walks me to his bed, then sits me down. He kneels at my feet and removes both my shoes.

“Dylan, I'm fine.”

He sighs and looks up at me through dark lashes. I've never noticed how long and dark his lashes are. Women would kill to have a set of lashes like his.

“Alana, you're trembling like a leaf.”

I look down at my hands and sure enough, they're shaking. I clasp them in my lap to stop them.

“You're not fine. And it's okay, I'm going to take care of everything.”

He runs his rough hands up and down my legs.

“At first, when they came up beside us, I thought it was some of the guys, but their vests were different. Tongue and David seemed concerned, then all hell broke loose.”

His hands stop and he looks me in the eyes. “Did you see the name? A picture on the vest?”

“Savage Order.” I sigh, my palm against my forehead willing the images he needs to come to me. “San Francisco. Some kind of demon with a skull. I don’t know. Everything happened so fast. One minute we were talking and the next, Tongue was shouting for me to get on the floor.”

“That’s good enough.” I didn’t miss the anger crossing his face, he tries to mask from me. “Lay down and rest, sweetheart. You’ve had a wild and crazy day.”

Suddenly I can barely keep my eyes open. I lay down, grab Dylan’s pillow, then inhale his scent, closing my eyes. I sigh as calmness overtakes me.

“Can you lay with me?” I sound needy but I don’t want to be alone. I want him near me. “At least until I fall asleep.”

He doesn’t waste any time. He slides off his vest, then neatly folds it before laying it in the chair. Then he sits on the bed, unlaces his boots, and pulls them off, before sliding into the bed beside me. Without any hesitation, he pulls me closer to his body, and I’ve never felt as much peace as I do right now.

“Thank you.”

He doesn't say anything, only kisses me on my head. I heave another sigh, closing my eyes as I let my body relax. Today has been shitty. Hopefully when I wake up all this bullshit will be over.

## Chapter Twelve



I CAN'T DESCRIBE THE fucking rage moving through me. The anger of all the brothers especially when they saw the condition of Tongue and how scared Alana was, is indescribable right now. Savage Order wants a war with us, they got one. They've been pushing the boundaries for months. But have never done something as stupid as the shit they pulled today.

“Calm down.”

My brother's voice sounds like it's a million miles away and the calmness in it is pissing me off even more. How in the hell is he so calm after we've been attacked? He's acting so cavalier like what happened doesn't mean anything.

“They could have died!”

*She could have died.*

“And you want me to calm down? Fuck you!”

I throw the whiskey tumbler against the wall. I don't care the glass shatters, and whiskey splashes everywhere.

“We all die sooner or later, brother,” he says, letting my insult roll off his back.

A few years ago, while Gavin was locked up, Logan’s entire demeanor changed. He went from the life of the party to the motherfucker who’d gut you like a fish. No questions asked. I never knew what brought about the change in him, but my fun-loving brother’s long gone, replaced by this heartless motherfucker sitting in front of me who cares less about whether he or anyone else lives or dies.

“What’s that shit Ma use to always say?” he continues like I’m not having a fucking meltdown. “We’re all born to die. When it’s our time it’s our time.”

*For me that’s fine, but not for her.*

I whirl around ready to go toe-to-toe with him. We don’t always see eye to eye, and he’s a little more callous than me but I didn’t expect him to be so nonchalant about an attack on our own. Yeah, our Ma says that shit when she’s depressed, usually because of our Da, but this isn’t the time nor the place and totally different fucking circumstances.

“Just say it,” he taunts.

I cross my arms over my chest, glaring at him in defiance. “Say what?”

“Just say she means more to you than you’re willing to admit.”

When I got Tongue’s call, my heart sunk to my gut. I love the guys like they’re my blood brothers, my family. But fear

claimed me at that moment not for them but for her. Fear she wouldn't make it back to me. However, I'm not confessing my feelings to him.

"It's cool, King." He smiles, some of the viciousness disappearing from his features. "It's cool if she's yours, I mean. Just be careful."

I don't answer him because I don't want to get into what's going on between Alana and me. But I can't deny his words. She's mine and I'll burn the world down to protect her.

Both our heads turn to the door when a knock sounds.

"Come in!"

The prospect cautiously steps in. You can see the worry on his face. He's got some scrapes and bruises, but otherwise, he's good. Most of these guys stay out of my way, taking orders from their sponsors. The only time they come to me is when it's too important and can have consequences for the club.

"Prez?"

"Shut the door behind you and sit."

I motion to one of the chairs sitting in front of my desk. He closes the door, walks to the chair, then sits.

"How are you holding up?"

"I'm good."

"Good. What's up?"

I can tell he's nervous, but right now I don't have the patience to deal with anyone. I've got shit going on that needs to be straightened out before we make a move.

"The bikers weren't the only ones involved."

I sit up in my chair, steeping my hands. "What?"

I haven't been able to get too much information about the incident other than what Alana shared. Tongue's barely hanging on.

"There was a blacked-out Bugatti along with a couple of blacked-out SUVs."

"Are you sure? Alana didn't mention it."

"If the boys haven't told you, I have a photographic memory." He taps the side of his head. "Anyway, I'm certain. As for Alana, she wasn't focused on our surroundings before the shooting started."

"You wouldn't happen to have remembered anything else with that photographic memory, did you?"

"Dark hair, dark eyes, male around mid to late forties was in the Bugatti. Other than that, I got nothing. But they're definitely involved."

"All right, Prospect. Appreciate it."

He nods, gets up, and leaves. I lean back in the chair thinking about this new information.

"What do you think?" Reaper asks. "Is it about her?"

“I don’t think it’s *just* about her.” I rub my beard. “They were targeting her and the club.”

“You think they’re working together?” he asks a hint of doubt in his voice.

He doesn’t look convinced and at this moment neither am I, but we have to look at this situation from all angles. Consider all the possibilities. Savage Order has never targeted us like this and neither has the Bianchi’s. But together...

Before we can continue there’s another knock on the door.

“Goddamn, it! Come in!”

Snake steps in and then closes the door behind him. The anger coming off him is understandable. It’s been a while since anyone has had the balls to attack us on this scale, in our own fucking territory. Savage Order have declared war.

“What’s up?” I ask, pushing that thought to the back of my mind.

War’s inevitable but right now I need to make sure Alana’s good before I go into planning mode because when I’m done with everyone involved in this shit that happened today, the world will burn at her feet. She’ll never experience that kind of terror again. Not if I have anything to say about it.

“We have a visitor.”

“Who?” Reaper asks before I have the chance to.

I want to get down to business not deal with anyone, especially after today. Sometimes there aren’t enough hours in

the day, so the walls feel like they're closing in on me. I have those days more often than I like to admit. Today is one of those days. There's no peace in this life.

*I almost lost her.*

It's time to stop wasting time. It's time to stop just having fun. From the first day I met her, I could tell she was special. Even though it's fast, when you know, you just know. And my feeling of terror when I got that phone call, and the relief that followed when she was safely in my arms solidified everything for me.

"The Savage Order's VP," Snake says bringing me out of my thoughts.

The rage from earlier roars back to life with a vengeance. Ten times stronger than it was before. I see nothing but red.

"Calm down, King," Snake says as I barrel towards the door.

He steps in front of me.

"Get the fuck out of my way, Snake!"

Reaper's pulling me away from him and all I want to do is tear him apart to get to the enemy.

"Prez." Snake holds up his hands. "I'm pissed too, but if he can give us the information we need, what's there to lose?"

Snake's a big motherfucker but that doesn't mean I won't shank his ass to get to the person I really want.

“He wants to talk, King,” Snake continues. “He says he’s got information you’ll want to hear.”

“King!” Reaper shouts, getting my attention, and breaking through the fog of anger clouding my mind. “Listen to what the man has to say, and if it’s not something we can use or if it doesn’t help with the current situation, I’ll gut him myself.”

I look at my brother. Really look at him. The truth in his eyes makes me relent. If all this is bullshit, the VP dies today.

I nod. “There’s no way in hell he’s stepping foot inside just so he can run back and tell his brothers the layout of the place. I’ll meet him out front.”

## Chapter Thirteen



I CHECK ON ALANA to make sure she's still asleep before I make my way to meet Savage Order's VP. Of course, I don't get to have this meeting alone. Flanking my sides are Fubar, my Enforcer, Toad, my Sgt. At Arms, and of course, Reaper because as my brother, his ass wants to be a part of everything.

I spot the VP. He doesn't look like he's worried about being in my territory. He's leaning against his Harley, with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. When he sees me coming, a smug ass smile crosses his face I want to wipe off.

"I'll fucking kill him."

"Calm down brother," Reaper says with a hint of humor in his voice.

I walk faster, trying to get to him before any of my men can stop me from taking out my gun and blowing his fucking head off his shoulders.

*That would make me feel so much better.*

"You have some fucking nerve showing your face here."

I try to get around Fubar who has stepped in between me and this piece of shit before I can reach him.

“I’m fine.” I hold up my hands trying to shrug out someone’s hold. “Goddamn, it! I said I’m fine. I’ll hear him out before I kill him.”

They let me go. He smirks, unconcerned by my threat. He tosses the cigarette on the ground, then steps on it, putting it out. I glare at him, but he doesn’t care. He’s about my height, most likely the same age as me, with dark hair, cut short on the sides, long on the top, and a thick beard.

“The name’s Eros.”

I cross my arms over my chest to keep from reaching out and grabbing him around the throat.

“I know.”

There isn’t much I don’t know about the one-percenter mc that decided to set up shop bordering our territory including their son of a bitch president, Crash.

“You’re named after the Greek God of Love and Sex?” Reaper scoffs.

Eros shrugs. “I earned it.”

“What the fuck do you want, Eros?” I ask before this fucking conversation gets derailed into shit that doesn’t matter. “Your club has declared war on the Sinners and I’m telling you now, face to face, man to man, I’m coming for each and every one of you sons of bitches.”

He sighs. “First off, I want to say I did not agree with the attack on your people. Most of the brothers didn’t agree to that shit.”

“Then explain why I have one of my brothers fighting for his fucking life!”

*And my woman’s scared as hell she almost died.*

I pull out my gun and place it against his head before anyone can stop me, pressing the barrel firmly against his skull. To give him credit he doesn’t flinch, no fear shines in his eyes or on his face. Right then I know he’s already made peace that he’ll die in this life. Either today or another, but it’s inevitable. Most of us in this world already have made peace that the end can come at any time. Death doesn’t scare men like us.

Tongue’s worse off than we thought when we got the call. He has a gunshot wound to his side which nicked his lung. He’s had multiple blood transfusions and has a chest tube to remove the fluid from around his lungs. Right now, we’re in the wait-and-see stage and Doc is doing all he can do to keep him alive.

The Savage Order’s VP shoves his hands in the pockets of his blue jeans. “A chick showed up at the clubhouse claiming she could help take you down. Gave Crash a description of a Black woman. Told him if he wanted to get to you, get to her.”

My brow dips in confusion but I keep my gun trained on him.

“For months Crash’s been trying to make a move but because of the size of the Sinners he hasn’t been able to get a foothold,” he continues. “So, when this chick showed up, he wouldn’t listen to anyone when we told him it wasn’t a good idea.”

*Janie.*

I run my hand through my hair. “This woman. Blonde, petite?”

“Yeah. Not too bad on the eyes.”

“How did he know when to attack?”

“She got info from someone inside your place saying the woman was going out. Next thing I know we’re getting calls some of our brothers are dead.”

*Goddamn, it! I’m gonna kill her.*

I look to my brothers. Disbelief covers their faces. I’m sure they’re having a hard of believing one of us or a prospect would be involved in this shit so that leaves only one option. It has to be one of the girls. One of these bitches almost got Alana killed and Tongue is barely hanging on.

“Find all the girls and have them go to the den. I’ll be there once I finish here.”

Toad takes off back to the clubhouse and I focus my attention on Eros.

“What do you want for this information?”

There's always a price. Regardless of what it is, it's something I'm going to have to pay. He just let me know I have a traitor in my clubhouse.

“I want you to ally with *me*.”

My brow arches. “That's a decision that goes through the top, not the VP.”

“Which I'll be at the top in no time. I'll be in touch.”

He doesn't say anything else, jumps on his matte black Harley Davidson, and speeds away.

“Do you think she was that stupid?” Reaper asks as we all make our back to the clubhouse.

“No doubt in my mind. But she's dead and so is the person who gave her the information about Alana.”



When I step back into the clubhouse all eyes shift to me. The men are deathly quiet, worry etching their faces. Concern and anger over what happened today are all they've been able to talk about. Once we deal with this little leak then it'll be time to deal with Savage Order.

“Everyone!” I shout as I walk over the threshold, and through the area where the bar is. “In the den, now!”

No one hesitates to follow orders. Everyone that's here, their heavy footfalls, and those of the prospects sound behind

me. Normally we keep this kind of violence out of the clubhouse and deal with it somewhere else. But there's no time. Whoever gave up the information will serve as a reminder don't fuck with the King or the Sinners. It's a reminder that everyone needs to see.

When we step into the room all the girls are sitting on the couches, nervously looking around. I stop in front of them, crossing my arms over my chest. All the boys are surrounding them, and the energy in the room is off the charts. You can taste the anger and confusion in the air.

"The Sinners have been nothing but good to all of you, am I right?" I ask, pacing in front of where some of them are sitting and others are standing.

They look at one another confused then their focus returns to me as most of them nod their heads in agreement.

"I've always given each and every one of you the option to leave if you did not want to stay here. If you did not agree with anything dealing with the club. You are not prisoners here. You are here of your own free will. The one thing I've asked in return is your loyalty to the Sinners."

"King, what's going on?"

Angela has only been at the clubhouse for a couple of months. She's been living at the clubhouse and working at *Sinners Grow*. She's a hard worker, keeps to herself most of the time, and is very out of place in this world. But I never question why these ladies choose this life. Everyone has a

story. It's up to them whether they share that story with anyone.

“One of you specifically went against my order of not having any contact with Janie. Who. Was. It.”

They all start talking at once, denying they were involved. The information is as good as it gets so someone is lying.

I throw up my hand. “Shut the fuck up!”

The conversation ends immediately. All the brothers present, look at each other. I'm pissed. Normally, the girls get free reign. They can come and go as they please, work, go to school, as long as it doesn't bring harm or brings the Law to the doorsteps of the Sinners. I've never raised a hand or voice to any of them. This is as angry as anyone has ever seen me with them. And it pisses me off that one of them did this.

“Prospect.” I point to David. “Grab their phones.”

He doesn't hesitate to follow orders. He's beyond pissed about what happened and the fact that he was almost killed too, he also wants to know who the hell is the cause of it.

He hands me each girl's phone. I pace in front of them, my anger rising.

“Before I go through each of your phones, I'm going to give you one last chance to tell me the truth. One last chance to plead for my mercy.”

No amount of pleading will save whoever did this. Not only did they put, Alana, Tongue, and a prospect in danger, they've put every single person connected to the Sinners in danger.

They allowed Janie to start a war where many are going to die. Some in this room.

Rachel stands on wobbly legs. "It was me."

Before she can plead for her life, I yank my gun from the waistband of my jeans, aim, and pull the trigger. Her body crumples to the floor, and the girls' screams fill the room. I shove the gun back into the waistband of my jeans. No remorse. No guilt. I have done what needed to be done.

"Shut up!"

Their screams stop. Only light whimpers continue. "I'm only going to say this once. If you are disloyal to the Sinners, it's a death sentence. Let her death be a lesson to every one of you. Keep your fucking traps shut about Sinner business."

I face Reaper. "Get rid of her."

He nods and leaves. I turn back to the room full of brothers and whores. "Clean this shit up," I say then head downstairs to check on Tongue.

Hopefully, he makes it through the night.

## Chapter Fourteen



THE HEAT SURROUNDING ME I want to sink deeper into. I moan and snuggle closer letting the comfort of the warmth consume me. A strong arm pulls me closer, and I slowly open my eyes.

“Dylan?”

“Yeah, sweetheart?”

I roll over and face him. He looks like he hasn’t had much sleep. I’d think he was high if he didn’t have dark circles under his red eyes and he didn’t look so stressed.

I brush the hair out of his eyes. “You look tired.”

He sighs, pulling me closer to him, then kisses me on the tip of my nose. The action is oddly comforting, but strange for someone like King. His rough, no-nonsense attitude is different than the tender person he’s showing me now.

“I already told you, I don’t sleep much. And with everything going on even if I wanted to sleep, I couldn’t. There’s too much shit to do.”

I cup his face. He closes his eyes, and I don't even think he realizes he leans into my touch. "I know, but you still need to try, Dylan. You're no good to anyone if you don't have any energy."

"How are you feeling?"

"I like how you changed the subject," I say, smiling.

He shrugs. "We've done enough talking about me. You were the one in the middle of a shootout."

"Don't remind me. How's Tongue?"

He sighs. "He's hanging in there. Still, touch and go. Doc says we may have no other choice but to move him."

"He saved my life. Him and David."

"I know."

His response is filled with anger and frustration. He didn't have to say he was scared for us; I saw it in his eyes when he helped me out of the bullet-ridden SUV. It was in the way he gripped my trembling body as he helped me to bed and the way he held onto me until I finally fell asleep.

"Thank you."

His brows dip in confusion. "For what?"

"For taking care of me. I've been in one shootout before." His eyes widen in surprise, and I laugh. "Did you forget, I was with a *made man*? Anyway, he let me go through that experience entirely by myself. As a matter of fact, the bastard disappeared for nearly a week right after it happened,

instructing one of his men to keep watch over me and ordering me not to leave the house.”

“He sounds like a real bastard.”

“Yeah. I wish I’d never met him.”

“Been there.”

My eyes widen. There’s something in the way he responds that makes me want to dig deeper. Maybe it’s the creative in me, but King is the ultimate villain and I’d love to learn his backstory. What makes him tick? What made him become the man he is today? And most of all, what’s this attraction between us?

“Tell me…”

“Nope,” he says before I can even ask the question. “I’m not telling you shit about my past.”

“Oh, come on, Dylan! I want to learn more about you.”

He shakes his head, then rolls me over onto my back before settling in between my legs. “All you need to know is how much I love your body.”

He squeezes one of my breasts through the fabric of my shirt, capturing my lips in a brutal kiss. He tugs on my bottom lip, then dips his tongue inside my mouth. As our tongues tangle, I moan, wrapping my legs around his waist. He grinds his jean-clad hips against me making me forget about asking him any more questions about his past.

“You have too many clothes on.”

I reach for the button of his jeans. He presses his lips to mine, quickly pulls away, then scrambles off the bed so fast I giggle.

“Someone’s in a hurry.”

I lift my tank over my head and toss it on the floor with just as much enthusiasm, then push my skirt down over my hips and toss it to the floor.

He licks his lips as his eyes travel over my body. “Your damn right.”

When he slides his boxers off, his beautiful erection juts forward, the tip touching his stomach. My pussy flutters, arousal pooling between my thighs. I open my legs as he crawls onto the bed, then settles between them.

I cup his jaw and his intense stare on me remains as he slips inside me. He never takes his eyes off me, as he slowly moves in and out of me. With his forearm planted beside my head, he uses his other hand to move my hair away from my face.

I choose to ignore the look in his eyes, and I hope he chooses to ignore the one that mirrors his in mine. We don’t voice feelings we know are growing between us. We don’t voice what an utter disaster it will be to explore those feelings. We both just decide to live in the moment. Enjoy whatever this is, until we can’t anymore. Because it can’t continue.

His mouth crashes into mine and all thoughts disappear from my mind. Live in the moment, Alana because you may not be here tomorrow.

He pulls away from the kiss and buries his face in the crook of my neck. While we can't say how we feel, we can show each other with our bodies. And that's what we both choose to do.

I wrap my legs around his trim waist as he plunges deeper inside me. My nails dig into the muscular planes of his back as he takes me higher. Never have I had a connection with someone as strong as this. I can admit I don't truly know, Dylan. We haven't spent much time together other than fucking, but I can say something about him is different. Something I wish I'll have the chance to explore although I know that may not be possible. I may not survive. And if I do survive, his life is here in California, mine is in Las Vegas. How can that work? So, I only have this time, this day, to experience what it would be like to be his. I let it all go as he takes my body to new heights.

## Chapter Fifteen



*I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M fucking doing this.*

I slide into the back of the blacked-out Mercedes. I expect Matteo to be in the back with a gun aimed at me. However, he's not the one who's calmly gazing at me like this interaction is normal.

“It was you?” I ask shocked and a little disappointed.

When I was with Matteo, Emilio was the one who made me laugh, treated me with respect, and like a sister. I'm shocked he would threaten the only person he knows I consider my family.

“How could you threaten the only family I have.”

Emilio sighs. “I'm sorry Alana. I knew you wouldn't come unless I did something drastic. You know I would never hurt Amelia, but it was the only way I could get you to listen.”

“Your brother is trying to kill me!”

“I never agreed to that. You’re like a sister to me. Matteo’s lost his shit, and he blames you for everything.”

“Of course, he does.” I roll my eyes. “He never takes responsibility for anything he does. He’s fucking trafficking people, Emilio. Where’s he at?”

From the time Matteo let the façade drop anything and everything that went wrong in his life was always someone else’s fault. His brother, me, Alonzo Bianchi. Anybody other than himself. That should have been red flag number one, but I chose to ignore who he really was and clung to the man I fell in love with.

“I need your help.”

My brows bunch together. “How the hell do you expect me to help you? If Matteo sees me, he’ll kill me, and you know he will.”

“I’m sure the Sinners won’t let that happen,” he says as he knows for sure that’s what will happen.

My thoughts stray to King. He’s going to strangle me when they tell him I’m gone. It took me hours to convince him to even let me hang out at *Forbidden Ink* with Amelia while he handled some club business. After everything went down, King wanted me to stay in the clubhouse, twenty-four-seven. But I convinced him I needed space to come to terms with what happened. But it was a lie.

I got an email from an anonymous account with pictures of Amelia and a threat. The pictures show her entering and

leaving *Forbidden Ink*. Whoever sent the email knew that's where she spends most of her time. And these weren't pictures taken from far off either. So, I have no doubt they can harm her if they want to.

"What do you want me to do?" I ask even though I'm not sure at this point if I can do what he wants me to do.

"I need you to meet my brother," he says with a straight face like I wouldn't be risking my life. "I'm going to kill him."

My eyes widen and my mouth drops open. "You can't be serious?"

"I want to take the family in a different direction. I was never on board with all the human trafficking bullshit. With the Feds after Alonzo and Matteo, it's my chance to take over the family. We're weak and for the family to continue someone who's not vulnerable needs to lead."

"And you need to kill Matteo to do that?"

He smiles and it makes him look so innocent. While I don't think he's as bad as his brother he isn't a good man either.

"I do."

Emilio has always been handsome. He's younger than Matteo. His complexion is much fairer than his brother's. And although their hair is the same length, Emilio's is not quite blonde, but a beautiful wheat brown, whereas Matteo's is as dark as midnight. While I didn't get to meet their parents because they didn't agree with our relationship, I've seen plenty of family photos. Emilio looks more like their mother

with more delicate features, and Matteo has their father's chiseled, hard features.

"You come when I call and make sure your biker comes too. Then let me take care of the rest."

"Emilio..."

"Listen, Alana. I've always liked you. Did my best to protect you when I could. This is the only way you'll be able to live in peace. If he goes to prison, the bounty will still be on your head. Only if I'm in charge can it be lifted."

"What about Alonzo?"

Alonzo is the head of the Bianchi's. He holds the power, not Matteo. I don't see how if Matteo dies that frees me if Alonzo is alive too.

"Alonzo is nothing more than a figurehead, Alana. While to the outside it seems like he holds power, Matteo has been making a play for the top for a very long time, slowly taking Alonzo's power. The men follow Matteo now, not Alonzo. And once Matteo is out of the way, they'll follow me."

"That's a lot of trust you want me to put in you, Emilio. How do I know this isn't a trap?"

He laughs like I made the funniest joke he's ever heard although I'm dead serious. He might be setting this trap for Matteo, delivering me to him with open arms. Despite what he says he wants to do with my help, I'm not under any illusion Emilio doesn't love his brother and Matteo loves him just the same. So, what's this really about?

“We’ve been circling the block for the last fifteen minutes. If I wanted you dead, I would have done it by now, and delivered your body to the Sinners in pieces.”

A sliver of fear skirts down my spine. I didn’t even realize where we’ve been at this entire time. That’s what makes Emilio and Matteo so dangerous. They look like the boys next door, but they’re nothing short of cunning and ruthless. They can be slitting your throat while smiling in your face.

“But I wouldn’t do that to you,” he says, pulling me out of my thoughts. “You know he didn’t deserve you.”

“What?”

“You’re a very beautiful and intelligent woman, Alana, but you’ll never be a part of our world as much as Matteo led you to believe you could be. My father would’ve never allowed it. And for this reason, he was never going to marry you despite the life he appeared to build with you.”

“What do you mean?”

My chest tightens. We made so many plans throughout our relationship. We even talked about marriage on multiple occasions. He never tried to brush it off, and he often initiated the conversation. A few weeks before I made the decision to leave, he took me to the family jeweler to have my engagement ring designed even though I believe it might have been a last-ditch effort to save our relationship. I had been pulling away from him. The motherfucker even bought me a house as a gift. Who does that shit if they’re not invested?

“He’s already engaged, Alana.”

My eyes widen in shock. “You can’t be serious.”

“He was introduced to his future wife the day she turned eighteen.” A look of pity crosses his face. “The wedding was set for next month.”

I’m speechless. My entire life with him has been a lie. Nothing’s real.

Rather than feeling any kind of hurt he lied to me, anger is all I feel. We created a life together around a lie. Something that wasn’t even possible for us to have anyway. What the hell was the purpose? If he couldn’t spend his life with me, why the hell didn’t he just let me go?

“So, this entire time, I’m the other woman?” I ask with disbelief and embarrassment in my voice.

Emilio looks at me with pity and nods. “He spent most days with her whenever he wasn’t with you.”

“That son of a bitch. Did he really think he could leave me in the dark our entire lives together?”

“My brother loves you, Alana.” He grasps my hand and squeezes it before letting it go. “I’ve never questioned the love he has for you. That’s why he refused to let you go.”

“That isn’t love Emilio.” I rub my temples, hoping to stave off the impending headache. “That’s someone who wants absolute control over someone’s life. He knew I’d never play second to anyone, so he tried to have us both. I can’t fucking believe I wasted so much time of my life.”

“Can I trust you to help me?”

He ignores my comment about his brother. Emilio knows I'm right. Matteo doesn't know what love is. He's a fucking control freak and I can't believe I fell for all the shit he spewed all these years. I will never willingly be the side bitch in any relationship. He knew it was only a matter of time before I found out the truth and left his ass.

I look out the window thinking of the best way not to get involved in this. I hate Matteo for what he's done to me, but most of all what he's done to, I don't know how many women and children. But can I really usher him to his death?

“Make no mistake, Alana,” Emilio says when I don't answer quickly, “Matteo will die. It's up to you to decide whether you and Amelia want to be alive when it happens.”

My eyes widen. “That sounds like a threat, Emilio.”

The car pulls to a stop. I stare at him in silence while he gazes back at me with all the warmth in his eyes gone.

The back door opens.

“I'll be in touch with a time and place, Alana,” he says without saying anything about my comment which let me know that it is a threat.

I don't think it's a threat from him but a warning that he won't stop anything his brother does, like he's done in the past.

I step out of the car, close the door, then stand in shock as the red lights disappear into traffic. He took my silence as an

agreement. Even though I didn't accept his plan verbally, what else can I do? My time is running out. Emilio all but confirmed it. I have to do this, or I'll die along with Amelia.

What other choice do I have?

## Chapter Sixteen



I PACE INSIDE MY office while Alana sits on the couch with her long ass leg crossed over the other like she didn't do shit wrong. She just finished explaining to me what happened with Emilio Messina and his plans. I can't believe she'd do something so reckless.

When Saint called to let me know she disappeared after saying she had to take a piss, I lost it. Now I'm just beyond livid she lied to me and took a risk with her life. All she had to do was come to me. Of course, I would have told her fuck no, but we could have come up with a better plan other than her sacrificing herself for her friend's safety.

I like Grimm's little sister. She's funny as hell, a great tattoo artist, and although the little sister of a brother, she's not who's important to me. There's no fucking way I'll let Alana trade herself for her friend's life.

"There's no other way, Dylan." She sighs. "If I don't do this Amelia and I are both dead. Why not let Emilio handle his brother?"

“Because it’s fucking stupid for us to believe anything this motherfucker has to say, Alana. He’s his damn brother! You really think he’s gonna choose you over him?””

“I understand your caution. I really do. But I know Emilio and I believe him.”

The calmness in her voice irritates me even more. Like she’s not taking any of this shit seriously. She’s literally thinking about risking herself as bait, hoping that a damn *made man* will kill his own brother.

“Apparently you don’t understand shit about me if you think I’d go along with something like this.”

“See, you’re the reason I met Emilio on my own in the first place. If I had come to you, you would’ve tried to stop me, and Amelia would be dead.”

I stop pacing and pinch the bridge of my nose as I try to calm down. I want to strangle her for valuing someone else’s life over hers. While I don’t agree with the shit her ex is involved in, once again she’s putting someone else’s safety above her own just like when she went to Grimm with all the information, she had on the Bianchi Syndicate. All while knowing good and damn well, she might get killed in the process.

“You’re damn right I would have!” I cross my arms over my chest to keep from reaching out to her and shaking some common sense into her. “You could have been killed pulling the shit you did today. What the fuck don’t you understand about that!”

She leaps from the chair, and for the first time since she's been here, I believe I see the real Alana Robinson. Of course, she's beautiful. She's also one of those women whose personality isn't like anyone you could ever imagine existing. But there's something about the rage on her face that has me falling absolutely head over heels for her even more. Something about it is so intoxicating. So primal. She looks like a damn avenging angel. An angel I want to fuck into oblivion.

“Who the hell do you think you're talking to like that?” She points her finger at me. “I understand the danger. I understand the risk. I'd be damn if I let the only family I have left on this godforsaken planet, be killed because of some shit I did.”

“Alana...”

“Shut the hell up, Dylan! I don't know who the hell you think you are, but you are not my boyfriend, husband, or anything in between to be talking to me like you've lost your damn mind. You don't get to tell me what the hell to do just because you made me come! Get the fuck out of here.”

She storms towards the door.

“Alana! Where the fuck do you think you're going! We're not done!”

She throws her middle finger in the air. “Fuck you, King! We are done!” she shouts as she slams the door to my office on the way out.

“Goddamn, it!” I yell, swiping everything off my desk.

I pick up the heavy wooden chair sitting in front of my desk and toss it to the floor, not caring whether it breaks.

“HEY! Dylan!”

Saint’s voice breaks through the fog of rage. I toss the binder in my hand on the desk before I throw it against the wall, then drop in my chair ignoring the damage I’ve done to my office.

“What the hell is going on?” He picks up some of my papers from the floor and tosses them on the desk. “We can hear you two yelling through the whole damn clubhouse.”

“She’s driving me fucking nuts.” I run my hand through my hair. “She’s trying to get herself fucking killed.”

He sighs and sits in the only chair that isn’t broken. “This about her disappearing?”

“It’s more than that. She met with Messina’s brother.”

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding.”

“I wish I was.”

“What the hell was she thinking?”

“I have no fucking clue. He wants to use her as bait.”

“Bait?”

“So, he can kill his brother.”

“And she actually believes him?” He scoffs, shaking his head. “If it’s true, that’s one fucked up family.”

“Tell me about.” I sigh. “I’m so ready for all this shit to be over. I’m getting too old for all this bullshit.”

I lean back in my chair, then prop my feet up on my desk.

“We got to deal with Savage Order, possibly your woman’s ex, and the damn Bianchi’s. For once I’d like to have a day when we’re not dealing with bullshit. Anyway, I know you’re not here to listen to me bitch about shit that’s not going to change. What’s up?”

“Oya’s here.”

“Are you sure about this woman, little brother?”

He frowns and I already know he’s getting ready to argue. That’s his go-to any time I question him about anything. But I don’t want to argue. I want him to make sure this is the path he really wants to go down. Not only is she connected to one of the most crooked politicians, according to Reaper, but she also has an adult child close to Saint’s age. That’s more than likely going to cause problems. I just want him to be prepared for what’s to come because this relationship most definitely isn’t going to be rainbows and butterflies. And if he truly loves this woman, he’s going to have to work very hard against a lot of obstacles to keep their relationship healthy and happy.

I throw up my hand to stop him from saying anything. “I’m not questioning your decision, Gavin.” I heave a sigh. “I just want you to be prepared for what’s coming. If this woman is who you want, I’ll back you. But be sure because not only does this relationship affect you, it also affects this club whether you believe it or not.”

“I want her, Dylan.” He shrugs. “Of course, I don’t want to involve the club, but it is what it is. She’s mine and I’m a Sinner until I die. There’s no separating the two.”

“Well, then if she’s your woman, that’s all I need to hear. Go get her and let me meet her.”

The smile on his face, I haven’t seen for a long time. If this woman makes him happy, no matter the shit storm that comes with her, my brother has my support.

He nods and leaves my office.

## Chapter Seventeen



IT'S BEEN DAYS SINCE I've seen Dylan. I've avoided him at all costs. If he knocks on my door, I refuse to see him. I can't deal with him and do what I need to do to save mine and Amelia's lives.

Emilio has set up the meeting for tonight. While he insists I bring Dylan, it isn't possible. He doesn't trust me enough to do this and I know he'll try to stop me.

Sitting on the bed with my laptop in my lap, I've been trying to distract myself with work. Looking at the time passing on the clock is only making my anxiety worse. So, I've been working hard for the past hour getting some of the words of my story on paper.

***“I only need a few more months, Florian. Please.” The begging starts as soon as Alrick shuts the door behind him. It annoys me, but I expect it. It always happens. “And I will have your money.”***

***“Plus, interest?” I arched my brow, and he looks away.***

*Of course, he wouldn't. He's drowning in debt, and when I take over Williamson Holdings, I will acquire all his other debts, too. Nothing I couldn't manage, but the promises Arthur made he couldn't deliver. Arthur's business hasn't been producing for years and the man loves to gamble. A lot. Now everything has caught up with him. I knew it was just a matter of time before he came to me. I thought he'd come sooner than he did. All Olan's friends have. Either they were saved by my hand or destroyed.*

*Although this was the usual tactic when it was time for payment, it coming from him was different. Arthur wasn't himself. Huge dull dark eyes highlighted by dark circles emphasized the ashen skin of his sunken face.*

*Maybe he was sick?*

*Not your concern Florian.*

*I liked Arthur. Although I didn't know him all that well, he seemed fair. I never understood the connection between him and Olan or how they became friends. His reputation as an upstanding businessman preceded him. But if I take pity on him, I have to take pity on everyone I reminded myself.*

*"Arthur, the terms of our agreement haven't changed," I rubbed my temples, the pounding in my head increasing, "unless you have payment plus interest, today. Do you?"*

*Of course, he didn't have payment. Rarely do any of them. However, Arthur looked like a broken man. Like he'd lost everything. But his loss wasn't my concern. He understood the deal when he came begging for my money. They all do.*

*He agreed to the terms when he signed his name on the dotted line after I gave him out after out. Now he has to live with the consequences.*

*“I understand the terms of our agreement, Florian. But I’m out of options here. I need the money for Arabelle.”*

*Arabelle.*

*My cock twitched at the sound of her name, and I adjusted in my seat to get more comfortable. Even her name strikes something deep within me. Something primal.*

*Arabelle Williamson, better known as my obsession. The most beautiful woman I’d ever laid eyes on. She performed ‘Giselle, ou les Wilis’ the first time I saw her, I knew she had to be mine. The beast in me wanted to strip her bare and have her screaming my name until she couldn’t scream any longer. Her body slick and limp under me. But Florian, the sane side of me, stayed away to keep from ruining her, destroying her with my demons.*

*But I wouldn’t be distracted by my obsession with her. Arthur just lied. He didn’t need the money for Arabelle. She had her own and kept him and his other children afloat as her career soared. What he needed the money for really didn’t matter to me, but Arabelle didn’t need it.*

*“She will be named principal dancer soon Florian,” he continued, “and with that title comes money,”*

*The excitement gleaming in his eyes at the prospect of the money Arabelle would garner being named principal dancer,*

*caused my stomach to lurch. And at that moment, I understood why Arthur and Olan got along so well. He'd use her just as Olan uses all his children no matter the costs.*

*His smile dropped when I narrowed my eyes.*

*“So, you would use your daughter, your flesh and blood to repay your debts?” My temper and disgust rose. He'd make her work twice as hard, so he no longer owed money. “They are your debts to pay not hers.”*

*“I'm not using her.” His chin lifted defiantly and crossed his arms over his chest. He knew I was right but refused to acknowledge it. “She's a good girl. She will do what is necessary to help her family. To help me.”*

*Like always.*

*I sat back in my chair, interlacing my fingers, and eyeing the man who's now lost what little respect I held for him. “Arabelle doesn't need to work harder than she already is, Arthur.”*

*Hugo, one of my soldiers follows her whenever I'm not in New York and sends me a report every weekend detailing her movements. She practices, performs, attends the required parties for the dancers after the shows, and fulfills her obligation to photoshoots. That's it. She has no life outside of dance and Arthur would put more strain on her to pay his debts. Other than dance she had no contact with anyone except her attorney Dale Austin.*

*“You know nothing about my daughter Florian,” he growled. “She will do what is necessary for her family. She isn’t your concern.”*

*She will always be my concern.*

*Repulsed at the thought of her working harder than what she already is I shook my head. However, this could be my chance to have the only thing I ever wanted—her.*

*“I’ll tell you what, Arthur, since I’m in a good mood today maybe we can come to another agreement.” Hope blooms in his eyes. How long it lasts remains to be seen. “I will forgive your debt and pay off all your creditors on one condition.” He smiles before I can finish, and I hold up my finger before he can thank me. Before his hopeful attitude plummets. “If you give me Arabelle’s hand in marriage.”*

“Florian is definitely an asshole,” I mumble as I continue to type the first draft of my story. “But I absolutely love him.”

It seems I have a thing for assholes. I chuckle at the thought. What is it with men like Matteo and King, shit even my character Florian? Why can’t I find a banker or stockbroker? Someone safe. Why is Arabelle attracted to the Beast? Is it in a woman’s DNA to surround herself with these types of men?

I look at the clock, forty-five minutes until I need to leave. I still haven’t figured out how to exactly do that yet, but I have no other choice. If I can’t sneak out, then I’ll have no other choice but to walk out the front door.

A knock on the door sounds and I slam the laptop closed. I shut my eyes and take a deep breath in before letting it out. I know it's him but I'm not ready to see him. That's a lie. I am ready to see him, I'm just not ready for him to forbid me from doing what's necessary. If this is my last day on earth, I need to see him.

I jump off the bed and race to the door, then pull it open. He stares at me, a look of sadness in his eyes. My heart breaks knowing I'm probably the reason that look is there. I can't deny the connection between us. It's not love. We don't know each other well enough to call it that, but it's something.

He reaches out to me, but then quickly shoves his hands into the pockets of his jeans. I wish he'd touch me.

“Can we talk?”

I nod and step aside to let him enter then close the door behind him. I glance at my watch, keeping an eye on the time.

Thirty-five minutes.

I cross my arms over my chest, as he takes a seat on the end of the bed. I want to go to him, but I keep some distance between us because nothing is keeping me from leaving this place this evening. Not even him.

“What did you want to talk about?”

He taps the bed beside him. I roll my eyes, but I don't deny him. I walk to the bed and plop down beside him. He wraps his arm around my shoulder and pulls me into his embrace. It's like coming home.

“I’m sorry for acting like a dick.” He kisses the top of my head. “The thought of something happening to you scares the shit out of me.”

My chest tightens at his concern for me. That has to be hard for him to admit, but I know the risk. The danger. I’ve lived with Matteo for years surrounded by danger. It’s not a new thing to me.

“I know, Dylan.” I place my hand on his thigh and squeeze. “But you have to understand where I’m coming from. This will save my life and Amelia’s. I’m not happy about leading someone to their death, but it’s my life or his. I’m going to choose mine all day long.”

He deeply sighs. “Has Emilio been in touch?”

“Are you going to help me?”

I’m not giving him any information on this meeting unless he agrees to help me. If he’s not, he’ll not stop me from leaving. I will save Amelia’s life. I will save my life, with or without his help.

“Of course.”

I glance down at my watch, then look back at him. “We got twenty-five minutes.”

His eyes widen. “Are you fucking serious?”

I nod.

“How in the hell did you plan to do this? I know you have a plan even if I didn’t come around.”

I shrug. "I was going to walk out the front door."

He looks at me like I've lost my damn mind, but it's the truth, then shakes his head. "Well let's get going. We'll talk strategy in the car."

## Chapter Eighteen



OUTWARDLY, I'M AS COOL and calm as I can be. But on the inside... I'm fucking stressing. Twenty-five minutes to come up with a plan to keep Alana alive. It's not enough time. Reaper looks at me and I see the stress in his eyes too. The only one who isn't having a meltdown is Alana. And it's my belief the reason is because she's made peace with the fact she may not make it out alive. I don't believe she has any faith in Emilio Messina, but she's willing to give her trust to him to save her and Amelia.

“I can't believe I'm letting you do this.”

She laughs. “While I'm glad you're here, you're not letting me do shit, Dylan. This will be done with or without you.”

I groan and turn my attention back to the street as we travel deeper into one of the seedier neighborhoods in Oakland. It's one of the areas the Sinners do business, so I knew exactly the place when Alana rattled off the address. I'm not happy she's involved in any of this shit, but she's right. She would have

done it with or without me. I'm starting to see that's just her personality and it won't do me any good to try to change it.

We stop at the non-descript brick building and doom settles in my chest. "I don't like this," I say.

Reaper looks around the area. The sun is starting to set. Most of the three- and four-story buildings lining the street are abandoned. A sniper could be hiding in any of the empty rooms or even on the rooftops. It's the perfect place to ambush us.

"I don't either." Reaper looks over his shoulder at Alana and then back to me. "It's too easy for someone to gun her down as soon as she steps out of the car. There's no place to hide."

She's a sitting duck as soon as she steps out of the damn car.

"We got company," Reaper says just as soon as I start to call all this shit off.

When I look in the side mirror, a black Mercedes pulls to a stop behind us. The feeling of doom gets heavier. I can't shake it.

I face Alana as she sits in the backseat. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

She smiles but it isn't her usual chipper smile or even the mischievous one I've become fond of. This one I don't like. It's sad. It's small. It doesn't reach her eyes like usual.

"I don't have a choice."

I stare at her. It's the same line she's been giving me since she came back from meeting with Emilio. There's so much I want to say but I don't want to make this decision more difficult for her even though I want to scream she does have a fucking choice. She knows she may not make it out of this. And so do I, but I can't stop her no matter how much I want to. All I can do is try to protect her from the shadows.

I give her a curt nod. She opens the back door and steps out, but I make the quick decision to make sure I'm by her side so Emilio Messina knows she's not in this alone.

She reaches the sidewalk and I meet her, intertwining our fingers. She looks at me and I want so bad to pull her into my arms, to protect her. But I can't because if I do, I won't let her go. She squeezes my hand like she's trying to reassure me she'll be okay even though she knows she might not. I return the gesture even though I also know she might not. Then we start the short distance to the back passenger door of the Mercedes in nervous silence.

The dark-tinted window rolls down as soon as we stand next to the car, and I come face-to-face with Emilio Messina. I've only seen pictures of him. He looks much older than he did in those.

“Are you ready, Alana?” he asks.

Before she responds, I lean inside the window. “If anything happens to her, that's on you. I'm warning you now, I will come for you with the full force of the Sinners.”

He smirks. “I expect nothing less.”

I stand and face her. “I’ll be right behind you. Don’t do anything that’ll get you killed.”

She nods and kisses me on the lips. “Take care of yourself, Dylan.”

Before I can respond to her goodbye, she opens the door and slides into the backseat.



“How long are we going to sit and wait?” Reaper asks.

We’ve been parked down the street from Alana and Emilio. We’ve been waiting at least twenty minutes and they still haven’t exited the vehicle.

“I don’t know.” I run my hand down my beard. “Maybe they’re working out the details.”

“Or he’s offing her, himself,” Reaper mumbles.

“Shut the fuck up!”

I thought about that too, but I didn’t need him to voice my concerns out loud. I’m barely hanging on to my sanity now.

“What’s the plan?”

“Once they go in, we follow.”

“And if there are any lookouts, guards?”

“They die.”

My concern is Alana. I don't care who lives and who dies, as long as she makes it out alive.

Reaper nods as he screws the silencer onto his gun while I do the same. I'm so anxious just sitting here waiting. Anything can go wrong. And likely, everything will.

"They're moving," Reaper says.

Emilio exits the vehicle, walks around the back to the other side, then opens the door. He reaches out his hand, and then Alana exits the vehicle. My heart speeds up. I hate I can't stop this. I hate that she's taking it upon herself to save everyone.

Emilio whispers something to her, and she nods. He grips her by the upper arm, then ushers her across the street. She looks directly at me like she can see me even though I know she can't.

She smiles although it's barely detectable before returning her attention back to the building she's approaching.

"Let's go," I say as soon as they disappear inside.

## Chapter Nineteen



WHILE I'M NOT AFRAID to die because I've lived an extraordinary life coming from my background, I can't believe I'm doing this. I'm willingly walking into the lion's den praying to whoever will listen Emilio will kill his brother before he kills me.

As soon as I step foot in what looks like an abandoned building, the stench hits me. Bleach or ammonia, and blood. I wonder how many people have died in this place.

Will I be next?

Emilio's grip tightens on my arm. He explained in the car he might have to rough me up a little to make it believable for Matteo. I'm sure by tomorrow I'll have a bruise on my arm with how hard he's squeezing.

We reach an open area of the building, the space illuminated by the sunlight filtering through broken windows lining the ceilings. My steps almost falter when I spot him surrounded by a group of men.

His wide back faces away from me. His dark gorgeous hair is now barely touching his shoulders. His suits always fit him to perfection. I thought I'd never have to see him again and now I have to trust his blood to kill him before he kills me.

*I hope Dylan and Reaper are close.*

“Brother!” Emilio shouts with so much enthusiasm it almost has me wondering if I'm truly safe with him. All conversation stops. “Look who I've found.”

Matteo turns around and the smile slips off his face when he sees me. The anger, rage, and possibly hate in his eyes almost stops my heart.

We stop walking. Only ten, maybe twenty feet, separate me from the man I once loved. From the man, I thought I'd spend the rest of my life with. Only feet separate me from the Devil.

I struggle against Emilio's hold. This is the first time I can say with certainty Matteo scares me and my fight-or-flight instincts are kicking in.

“Well, well, well.” He crosses his arms over his chest. “If it isn't the traitorous bitch. I should have gotten rid of you when my father told me to.”

The anger in his voice sends rage surging through me. Traitorous? I'm the traitor? He's the one who built a life out of a lie and pulled me into it. There's so much I want to say to this prick but one way I've found to piss Matteo off is to respond to him with calmness. And that will bring him closer so Emilio can do what he needs to do, and I can live in peace.

“How’s your fiancé?”

His eyes widen then narrow.

“Oh yeah, I know about her. And I know I was the mistress when I thought I was going to be the fucking wife. And you call me traitorous?”

“Is this why you did this to me!” He steps closer to me, but I don’t cower to the fear I feel. “I fucking loved you, Alana.”

This will be the last time I get to say my peace to him.

“You loved me?” I swallow hard, trying not to reveal my anger. “You didn’t really love me, Matteo. You have a whole fiancé.”

“Marrying that bitch is my duty.” He waves his hand in the air nonchalantly. “She’s for show. You were the one I wanted to spend my life with, and you turned on me because of my duty to the family.”

“What about your duty to me, Matteo?” I point at my chest. “The woman you claim to love.”

“I do love you!”

“I’m sorry, Matteo. That’s not love.”

I shake my head, disappointed in myself for wasting my life on a man who couldn’t love me because he doesn’t know how to love anyone but himself.

“Don’t you fucking dare say that shit to me, Alana. I gave you a fucking life. Bought you a house, trips, and designer

clothes. I treated you like a fucking Queen. And what did I get out of it, huh? A lying, disloyal bitch!”

“If you think material shit is what love is, I feel really sorry for you. I never once asked you for any of that shit. All I asked you for was honesty and fidelity. And when you knew you couldn’t give me that, you should have just let me go. Why didn’t you just let me go so I could live my life, and you could live yours?”

He runs his hands through his hair. He knows it’s the truth. I’ve never been about material things throughout our entire relationship. Sure, it’s nice to get things but I would have rather had him than all that shit. And he knows it. Material things can’t return love.

“All I wanted was you, Matteo,” I say, my heart breaking all over again. “Not stuff. And you couldn’t even give me all of you.”

“I’m not sorry for doing the right thing,” I say, after a few moments of silence. “And if you need your revenge, here I am. Do what you got to do.”

He stares at me for a few moments like he’s trying to commit my face to memory. I see it in his eyes when he finally makes the decision whether to let me live or kill me. I’ve already made peace with whatever happens.

Good or bad.

I brace myself for the pain I know is coming because his eyes darken, and his jaw clenches. He’s made the decision.

“Close your eyes, Alana, and turn around,” he orders.

I refuse to look away. If he’s going to kill me, he’s going to look me in the eyes while he does it. Despite Emilio’s squeezing my arm, I try to take a step closer.

Matteo raises his gun. “Don’t move, Alana.”

I don’t listen and I take another step closer, then another, and another until I’m so close I can touch him.

Emilio moves so quickly, rushing his brother. I see the shock on Matteo’s face then I hear it. A single gunshot echoes through the building. I expect to see Matteo hit the ground but instead, an agonizing pain rips through my entire body.

Gunshots, shouts, and curses ring out but it’s hard to focus on anything but the pain covering my entire body. Instinctively my hand covers where most of the pain is radiating from—my chest. My hands are wet and warm. My vision blurs. This can’t be good. My body feels heavy. Too heavy to stay standing and my legs give out from beneath me.

And just like you see in the movies when someone’s about to die their life flashes before their eyes. Images of my childhood, Amelia, my life in Vegas before Matteo, when I fell in love with him, and when I knew I absolutely hated him. And finally, an image of King comes into view. I reach up, hoping to touch his face one more time, but I know it’s too late. I’ll never see him again.

“I love you,” I whisper before everything goes dark.

## Chapter Twenty



THE CONSTANT BEEPING OF machines is driving me insane. I've been here for hours just waiting for her to open her eyes. When she was wheeled in, and after her surgery to remove the bullet from her chest, I couldn't see her unless I was family.

Fuck that shit. I lied and told them I was her fiancé and Amelia, her only real family, backed me up. Nobody will keep me from her side. They will have to kill me first.

Now that's she stable, I've been able to come to terms that I'm going to be a father. Joy and anger move through me with the news. I want to put a bullet in Matteo's head after I've already done it, for almost taking away the two most important people in the world to me.

I grasp her hand tighter, afraid if I let it go, I might lose them. It's irrational at this point to think that way since the doctor expects her to make a full recovery.

That day replays in my head. Every moment. Emilio rushing Matteo and instead of shooting him, like he should have, he stuck him with a knife over and over again. I guess he wanted to make it more personal. But it also allowed Matteo to try to take out Alana. A single shot to the chest. All I could see was red. When I got close enough to end Matteo's life, I didn't hesitate. I put a bullet in his head.

Emilio should be grateful I didn't kill him too.

"Come on baby, open your eyes."

I don't know how many times I've pleaded for her just to look at me. While the doctor says she's out of the woods that fear remains because she hasn't woken up yet.

"How's she doing?"

Amelia Grace squeezes my shoulder, then sits in the chair sitting on the other side of the hospital bed, closest to the door. I lean back in my chair, never letting go of her hand.

"About the same which isn't a bad thing. They say she's out of the woods, they just don't know why she hasn't woken up."

"She's being a stubborn ass," Amelia says, chuckling. "She wants to make us sweat a little before she comes back to us."

I laugh. With the short amount of time I've known her, that sounds exactly like something she'd do.

"You love her, don't you?"

The question comes as a surprise. I haven't voiced my feelings about Alana to anyone. I think I'm scared people will

question if it's real since we just met. But after what happened to her, it's real. I love her.

Amelia chuckles. "You don't have to tell me but," she leans forward, "if you hurt my friend, I will cut your nuts off and shove them down your throat."

"Hey...no cutting any balls off."

I'm up out of my chair before I even know I move. Amelia Grace is up and beside her too.

I swipe her hair away from her forehead. "Here, drink."

I place the straw to her lips from the cup of water sitting on the table beside the bed until she waves me away.

"Thank you."

"Goddamn it, you scared the shit out of me," Amelia Grace says, tears pooling in her eyes. "Don't you ever do something like that again."

Tears gather in Alana's eyes too. "I missed you too."

"How do you feel?" I ask, returning the cup to the table.

Her watery gaze lands on me. She squeezes my hand. "Like I've been shot."

"I'm going to get the doctor," Amelia Grace says before she rushes out of the room.

"You scared me too," I admit.

Sadness clouds her eyes.

"Am I going to be okay?"

“You both are.”

I don't know how to tell her that she and I are going to be parents. She just woke up, but I want to be the one to tell her she's pregnant.

Her brows dip in confusion. I lay my hand on her stomach. She looks down at its placement, then looks back at me. Then after a few moments, her eyes widen.

“I'm pregnant?”

I nod.

Fear enters her eyes. “The baby's fine,” I say reassuring her.

She releases a breath. “I didn't know. How far along?”

I know why she asks. But there's no way this child is Matteo's.

“It's mine.”

She releases another breath and I squeeze her hand. “I'm so sorry, I didn't get there sooner. Everything happened so fast.”

“It's not your fault. He's dead, isn't he?”

“Yes. I killed him.”

“And Emilio?”

I shrug. “He's gone and your safe.”

Reaper had a conversation with Emilio a few hours ago to make sure the bounty has been lifted from both women. And he assured me once Alonzo was taken care of, we wouldn't have to worry about it anymore.

“I’m so tired.”

“Get some sleep. There’s no telling when the doctor will be in.”

She nods and I kiss her lips. Her eyes close and I take my seat back in the chair by her bedside, never letting go of her hand.

## Chapter Twenty-One

King

It’s been exactly three months since Matteo Messina shot Alana and I killed him. After a long two week stay in the hospital, I was so happy when she got released. Within this month we’ve been able to deal with Congressman Williams with the help of Emilio Messina, the new Don of the Bianchi Syndicate. With Matteo dead and Alonzo in custody the bounties have been lifted and the girls are safe.

Now we have to deal with the last issue that I haven’t been able to take care of while Alana was hurt. She’s on the mend now. Getting back to normal has been slow but we’re making progress.

“Eros.”

I stick out my hand and he grasps it.

“King. I’m sorry to hear about your Old Lady. How’s she doing?”

“Things are going good. She’s on the mend.”

“That’s good to hear. Well, let’s get down to business. Shall we?”

“After you.”

Reaper is the only person I allowed to come with me to meet Eros. Of course, some of the brothers are upset with the decision, since this involves club business, but I don’t want to put any more people in danger than need be. I don’t trust Eros, but I know he wants to be Prez of Savage Order and wants to ally with the Sinners, so I don’t believe this is a trap. But just in case it is, everyone has their orders just in case we don’t make it back.

We descend the steps to the lower level of a building in West Oakland. When we reach the bottom, the room is large, mostly empty, only containing a few boxes. Sitting in the center is Janie, tied to a chair.

She looks the same. Only her hair is much longer than it was when she was at the clubhouse.

“Crash?” I ask.

Eros looks over his shoulder. “Taken care of. I’m Prez now and this is my first peace offering to the Sinners.”

He continues to walk, and we follow until we’re only feet from her.

“She’s all yours,” Eros says then heads to a nearby wall and props up against it.

I focus on the bitch in front of me. She has tears in her eyes and duct tape over her mouth. She probably thinks I’m here to

save her when I'm here for the exact opposite.

She will not be alive when we leave here.

I snatch the duct tape from her mouth, and she screams, tears mixing with makeup streaking her pale skin.

"King, baby." She sounds so relieved and all I want to do is shove my gun down her throat and pull the trigger. "Thank God you're here."

I laugh. I'm right. She thinks I'm here to save her.

"Why are you laughing. Untie me. These bastards have been holding me hostage. Trying to get me to turn on you and the Sinners."

"That's your story?" Reaper asks.

She looks at him and then back to me. "It's not a story. They kidnapped me because I'm your Old Lady."

"Fucking crazy, I told you," Reaper mumbles, "she really thinks she's your Old Lady, brother."

*Crazy bitch.*

"I heard from a little birdie before they croaked you gave information to Savage Order about Alana."

She shakes her head profusely. "I didn't! I swear, King! Whoever told you that is lying!"

"You're the one lying, bitch," Eros says. "I was there when you waltzed your ass in the clubhouse promising Crash, to help take the Sinners down."

“He’s lying!” She struggles against her restraints which are nothing more than duct tape wrapped around her wrist and ankles tying her to the chair.

I pull out my gun from the waistband of my jeans. I know she’s lying and there’s no need to listen to her plead for mercy she’s not going to get from me. She almost got my family killed. And that’s a death sentence.

“Never turn on the Sinners.”

I pull the trigger and the bullet pierces her skull. Not only is that a lesson she needed to learn the hard way it’s also a lesson for the new leader of Savage Order. As long as you never turn on the Sinners, you’ll have an ally for life, but if you don’t keep your word, I have no mercy to give. And God himself will not save you from my wrath.

Eros pushes himself off the wall and walks over to us. “I’ll deal with the body.

I nod. “Call me when you’re ready to talk.”

“Will do,” Eros says.

## Chapter Twenty-One



I'M STANDING BESIDE DYLAN, and Saint is standing beside Oya. We're only a few feet behind their mother as Logan tries to comfort her the best he can. No one is here but us because according to Dylan his dad was an asshole, and nobody liked him let alone loved him enough to be at his funeral. While none of the sons want to be here either, they know their mother needs them.

I shift my weight as we watch his mother say her final goodbyes to his father and her husband. The last few weeks of my pregnancy have been brutal, but I feel it's important for Dylan to be here at his father's funeral. It took some convincing to even get him to come today but I'm glad he did. I don't want him to regret his decision later.

Once Saint finally told the truth about why he spent seven years in prison for a crime his father committed, Dylan and Logan had a hard time not killing their father. Saint convinced them to just let it go. He'd done the time and now it was time to move on. Neither brother agreed and wanted to make their

father suffer just like he had caused their little brother to suffer. But they decided to let Saint have some peace. However, they did cut off all contact with him even though he had been diagnosed with lung cancer.

It was sad to see the realization on their faces when Saint finally told his truth. The entire ordeal was heartbreaking, but I think it brought them closer. Dylan now understands his brother more. And that for me is an amazing thing to witness.

“Are you all right?” he whispers in my ear, rubbing my stomach.

It took me a while to decide to stay in Oakland instead of returning to Las Vegas. Not only had I made a life there, but Dylan’s life in Oakland was also something I had to come to terms with.

The Sinners are a one-percenter motorcycle club. Although they do give back to the community, they are criminals. I had to decide if it was possible to make a life with him if he remains a part of that lifestyle.

He gave me his side and pleaded his case to be a part of my life as well as our child’s. I understand he’s always going to be a Sinner and the child I carry wouldn’t change that, but he wanted to see his child grow up and he also wanted the chance to have a relationship with me.

“My feet are hurting, but I’m good.” I squeeze his hand.  
“How are you holding up?”

“I’m just ready to be done with all this bullshit. I’m sad for Ma because she loves him, but as for Da,” he shakes his head, “I’m glad he’s fucking dead, and may his corpse rot in hell.”

He turns his attention back to his father’s shiny black casket sitting graveside. His mother tosses a red rose on it, then Logan escorts her towards the side. He nor Saint move forward to say goodbye. I can’t say I blame them. I don’t even think their mother does.

We watch as they start to lower the casket slowly into the ground.

“Let’s get out of here,” he says, as soon as the first shovel full of dirt is thrown on the casket.



“Can I ask you something?”

We’ve been back from the funeral for about two or three hours. Dylan skipped going to his mother’s house. He thought that she’d probably want time to herself. I don’t believe that excuse, but I didn’t call him out on it.

It’s hard to tell if this is a somber day. Most children mourn the loss of their parents. I’m not sure Dylan, Saint, or Reaper mourn the death of their father.

We haven’t talked much about the baby since we found out. I know he’s scared shitless about being a father even though I

think he'd make a good one despite being a hard ass.

With my feet in his lap, we're sitting on the couch at his house. Well, I guess now it's my house too. His thumb is pressing into the sole of my swollen foot, and it feels like fucking heaven.

“Did you ever want to be a father?”

His foot massage stops, and I groan. I just want to talk, not stop the amazing work of his hands. He rubs up my calf, then back down to my foot, and resumes his magic.

Thank God.

“I hadn't thought much about being a father before you.”

My heart squeezes in my chest.

“After I had a bad breakup, I just decided to live life in the moment. Kids, a family were never a part of that because I kept my distance from women.”

I wiggle my toes, and he picks up my foot and kisses the bottom of it, then each toe before he switches to the other foot.

“Are you happy?” I ask.

“More than you can ever know,” he says without hesitation. “Don't get me wrong. I'm scared. And she's a fucking girl on top of that, but I'm so damn happy.”

A smile crosses my face. King is a rough, no non-sense type of guy. At first, it worried me how he'd handle having a girl, but I think he's gonna do fine.

He runs his hand through his hair, pushing the thick strands out of his face. Everything he does these days sends me into a sexual frenzy.

“Do you know how sexy you are?”

Pregnancy has made me a nympho. I swear I can't get enough of him.

He chuckles. “You didn't come enough this morning, sweetheart?”

*Apparently not.*

“Do you want my fingers, tongue, or dick?” he asks.

I tap my finger against my chin like I really have to think about this. “Can I have all three?” I ask, batting my eyes.

He tosses his head back, and laughs, sending joy moving through me, warming my heart.

“I love you.”

“I love you, too sweetheart. Now lay back and let Daddy show you how much.”

There's a quote by Mark Twain that says *the fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.*

I've experienced what I thought was true love and lost a lot along the way. I feared what would happen to me. But when Dylan came into my life that fear disappeared. And if I happen to die no matter the circumstances, I can say that I've lived a wonderful life because I have King's love.

## Epilogue One



FIVE YEARS LATER...

“Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!”

I open my arms as my little girl barrels straight toward me. I pick her up and twirl her around. She’s got on this frilly pink dress wearing her little leather coat that has Sinners Princess across the back, black patent leather shoes, and a rhinestone headband she calls her tiara that she doesn’t leave home without. Of course, because all the brothers have her spoiled like she’s one.

“How’s my little princess?”

My daughter Grace is the best thing to ever happen to me. Along with her mother of course. Four years ago, when I found out I was going to be a father after Alana was shot, I panicked, and that panic increased when we found out she was going to be a girl.

I’m not the best man, I can admit. I let go of a lot of my pride before Alana agreed to even give me a chance to have

any of this. I'm lucky she stayed in Oakland to give our relationship a chance. It's amazing how the birth of a child can change your perspective on life. A lot of things I changed about myself was to make sure I kept my family. A very difficult journey but I made it. By no means will I be the perfect father or husband, but I will always put them first.

“Good,” she says.

I tickle her. “Just good?”

Her laugh is like music to my ears. It's one of the most wonderful sounds I've ever heard, and I don't think I'll ever get used to not hearing it.

“Daddy!” She laughs. “Stop tickling me!”

I stop and kiss her on her head full of dark curls. “I love you, Princess.”

“I love you too, Daddy.”

“Uncle Gavin!” she yells, as she squirms to get out of my arms. “Uncle Logan!”

I put her down and she runs full speed into Logan's arms. His hard exterior softens as she kisses him on the cheek. Gavin ruffles her curls, and she giggles.

My brothers absolutely love my daughter and like the rest of us, she has them wrapped around her fingers.

Today we're supporting, my wife, at her book signing for her latest book that just hit the NYT Bestsellers list. I was shocked when I found out she's a very popular author. When I

did find out, I remember her being vague about what she did for a living. I didn't know why back then, but I understand it now.

I'm not much for romance but when some of the Old Ladies found out who she was, they treated her like a celebrity. It made her uncomfortable at first, but now once a month at the clubhouse, all the women hold a book club. It's been funny as hell to see some of my hardcore brothers join in sometimes especially if they are discussing mc romances which also happens to be a thing. Go figure. She doesn't like the attention, but she deserves everything she receives. She's an amazing woman. I'm not biased, I'm just calling it like I see it.

“Hey, husband.”

That sultry voice moves my attention away from my daughter and her uncles to my drop-dead gorgeous wife and I can't help the smile that comes to my face.

Like always she looks amazing. She's in an all-black jumpsuit and red stilettos that match her crimson-stained lips.

I pull her into my embrace, then kiss her soft lips. “Hey, wife. How's it going?”

“We have a few more books to sign, then I'm all yours,” she says as her thumb wipes away lipstick from my mouth.

I kiss her lips, then move down to her jawline, ignoring everyone else in the room. It has been hours since I've seen her, and I miss her.

“Good. I want to fuck you so bad.”

She pulls away, giggling. “We’re in public, Dylan.”

“When have you known me to give a fuck what people think, sweetheart.”

If I want to kiss my wife, then that’s what I’ll do. Everyone else be damn. I will never not show this woman how much I want her. How much I need her.

She places her hand on my chest and gazes in my eyes. “You’re crazy, but I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

My life has come full circle. First, I found a family with my blood brothers, then the Sinners, and now with Alana and my daughter.

I am who I am.

I’m a husband, a father, a brother, and a Sinner until the day I die. I wouldn’t change any of that for the world because I’m not King if I’m not any of those things.

## Epilogue Two



Ten years later...

I watch as my husband and his brothers grill this kid like they're the FBI. They're questioning him like he stole something and it's hilarious to watch. However, it isn't to Grace. She's not quite on the verge of tears but if her father and uncles continue that's where it's headed.

"Mama," Grace whines, stomping her foot. "Can't you get them to stop? He looks so scared."

I shove down the laughter, then hug my daughter. "That's what fathers and uncles do, sweetheart. They're never going to like any man that wants to date their princess. However, they just want to make sure he's a good man even if they don't like him."

"He's sixteen!" She tosses her hands in the air. "What are they expecting him to do? Kidnap me and force me into marriage."

*They're definitely not thinking that. Other stuff of course. They were his age once.*

This time I can't stop the laugh from bubbling up. Ambrose, while I think he's a good kid and will do anything to make my daughter happy, he just so happens to be the son of Eros, the President of Savage Order. Which is a huge problem for the three men in the den currently interrogating the boy.

It took me months to get Dylan to even allow Grace to talk to him on the phone. While Savage Order and the Sinners are allies now, Dylan is absolutely against this relationship happening. I've tried to get my daughter to understand her daddy and uncles will be this way with any boy she decides to date, but the connection to a one-percenter club that's not the Sinners, makes this harder.

"Mama, this is ridiculous and embarrassing. I'm fifteen. I get good grades and stay out of trouble. I should be able to date the boy I like."

"I agree. You do everything we ask of you. However, all I ask is that you give your daddy a little leeway, honey. You're his firstborn. His only daughter. He wants to protect you."

"He doesn't treat Rory this way," she mumbles.

She's right. Our son is thirteen months younger than Grace. My son is the spitting image of his father, in looks and attitude. Dylan does treat him like he's older than her, and he doesn't question him about what he's doing nearly as much as he should.

“I’m sorry, sweetheart. You’re right. He doesn’t and that’s not fair to you. I’ll make sure to have a talk with him. But he’s not going to change when it comes to boys and your safety. He’s always going to make sure anyone you decide to date is worthy.”

She rolls her eyes. “He’s worthy. Just because he’s not a Sinner doesn’t mean he’s not good enough. He’s smart, funny, and treats me really good. He treats me just like Daddy treats you.”

That makes me proud. I’m glad our kids have a healthy idea of what a relationship should look like. Her father treats me like a queen, and she knows she shouldn’t settle for anything less. I’m proud of her for recognizing that.

“How does his father and mother treat you?”

She sighs and takes a seat beside me. We’re supposed to be getting lunch together while my husband, Saint, and Reaper lay down the law with Ambrose. She’s met Eros and his Old Lady, Janea, who’s Ambrose’s stepmother, a few times.

“He wasn’t happy like Daddy, but he’s been nothing but respectful and nice to me.”

That’s good to hear. I’d hate for puppy love to cause a war.

“And you can expect the same from your father. I get it. Just give him some time to come to terms with his daughter growing up.”

She sighs. “Okay.”

“Now, let’s go save your boyfriend.”

She hops off the stool. “Thank God.”

I laugh as I grab the tray of drinks and she grabs the tray of sandwiches. We walk into the den where all the conversation suddenly stops as soon as we step over the threshold.

I arch my brow at my husband, and he looks at me with a stoic expression. I can tell he’s not particularly happy about this, but I know my husband, if Ambrose makes Grace happy, he’s going to agree to this relationship.

I sit the drinks on the coffee table beside the sandwiches then slide onto my husband’s lap.

He kisses my cheek and I hear our daughter’s groan. She hates when we’re affectionate, especially in front of company.

“So, did we get everything straight?” I ask.

Saint and Reaper groan.

“We did,” Dylan says, ignoring his brothers. “Ambrose understands what I expect from him and... I approve of the relationship.”

My daughter jumps up and runs to us, then envelopes us in a hug. “Thank you, Daddy! Mama!”

“Anything for you, Princess.”

Dylan kisses her on her head. I look at my husband and I know how hard it is to give a little leeway with our daughter, especially with Ambrose. I’m proud he put her happiness above his feelings.

“Thank you,” I whisper in his ear.

He gazes at me, and I see nothing but love in his eyes. “I love you, sweetheart.”

“I love you, too.”

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## Sneek Peak At Fubar:



THERE WAS A THIN line between intelligence and insanity. The idea that someone was too smart for their own good wasn't an allegory, it was a warning. For Daniel "Fubar" Coney, he tended to teeter a bit to the crazy. He wasn't stupid by any stretch of the imagination. *Hyper stimulated* is what they'd said when they suggested to ply him with drugs to tamp down the bells and whistles distracting him in class. What they never considered was the fact he was overstimulated because the questions, lectures, or activities bored him. Not because he didn't like the subject, he just didn't need the repetition to keep the information in his brain others tended to need. One and done, like most of the women he fucked. Been there, done that, got the T-shirt, and saw no reason for a second ride.

The Sin City MC he belonged to was going to call him Twitch, until the Prez, Grimm, saw him fighting with his father in the parking lot when he was just a Prospect, the hero cop Sean Coney telling him he was fucking up his life and it wouldn't be tolerated. Choices had to be made, and without a

second thought, Fubar had tossed his house key to his father and walked into the strip club as his dad called out, “You want to be a fuckup, be a fuckup! Just don’t ask me to use a hook to get you out of jail. Stay here and you’ll be locked up within a year.”

*“You think that’s a challenge to make it three hundred and sixty-six days?” Fubar said as he walked up to Ice at the bar and lifted a finger to get a beer brought over.*

*“Careful there,” Maxwell “Ice” Winter, the man who’d brought him into the MC, said. “He could get you on underage drinking.”*

*“He would too,” Fubar responded. “As if he didn’t pass me a shot of Jack when I was twelve saying some shit about becoming a man.”*

*“Did he bring you to the Bunny Ranch too?” Ice laughed.*

*“Not until I was thirteen. I think he was trying to get me to go to sleep with the whiskey. Guess it worked when I was teething,” he said before taking a swallow from the bottle set before him. “Bunny Ranch was for him, though, couldn’t go in the back. They just babysat me while he inspected—”*

*Reality smacked him in the face because he hadn’t ever revisited the memory of when he went out to the legal brothel in the county proper.*

*“That motherfucker, he was cheating on my mama.”*

*Ice narrowed his eyes at him. “How many times were you dropped on your head as a child?”*

No reason to explain he was a savant in many ways, but had tended to be slow on some uptakes. Social cues were something he had to learn the hard way. Shit, for years he didn't get that women were practically throwing themselves at him, until a bold one said directly she wanted to fuck him. He'd gotten better since joining the MC, hard not to with people pointing out the obvious to most with a "normal" brain. If nothing else, the man was a quick study.

From that moment on, he'd been Fubar, *fucked up beyond all recognition*. He let them think he was simple and slow with only the id part of his brain functioning. In some ways he had to admit he was very much driven by the primate part of himself, running into situations most would run away from. He had a survival instinct. Sadly he'd inherited the hero gene from his father and always wanted to make sure he rescued anyone in danger first. Here his dad was worried he'd be a firefighter. Now the man would love to have him riding on the back of a red truck working for the city instead of straddling a Black Denim Harley Breakout 117 running drugs for the Sin City MC.

For Fubar, triggers had always been strange things, as if every time one was pulled, you were shooting out of a starting block. Running, swimming, a bell goes off, and your horse bolts from the gate. In many ways he was trained to respond, run fast, turn left, and go until he exhausted himself. He learned early in life, when you hear bullets, run. Only he ran toward and not away. He'd blame it on being dyslexic, but that

was probably the only psych diagnosis he hadn't tested positive for.

There was a blanking out he disappeared into when he became the hero no one asked for. It was this void he was currently in, and he knew he should find a way to get out of the tunnel and back to the real world. Most times it was Ice's voice yanking him out of the oblivion. Maybe they should have called him Fido or Rex. He was basically a trained attack dog. Only problem, Ice was currently hitting Disneyland with the family.

*"Promise me you'll stay out of trouble while I'm in Cali," Ice warned as he was packing up his twins and Bree was loading up a cooler.*

*"Me? What trouble could I possibly get in without you for two days?" Fubar jested.*

*"Five, I'll be gone for five days," Ice said, his hardened features a warning as if he wasn't sure he could leave a teenager alone with a Black Card and an unlocked liquor cabinet.*

*"Oh, well in that case, all fire, flood, and general body damage is on you because we both know I can only control myself for seventy-two hours unsupervised."*

*"That's it. Bree, we can't—" Ice began, only to get the patient stare only an Ol' Lady with vetoing privileges around family shit could muster.*

*Dark eyes glared in a way both men caught a shiver as the normally cool and composed woman pointed one finger, and even Fubar knew a tick system had been implemented. The woman had taken to the MC life, but she still wanted an as-normal-as-possible childhood for Ice's twins. They'd already seen their mother murdered, and Bree was all about regular white-picket-fence-type experiences.*

*"Your babies have earned the highest marks in all of the first grade in school. You are taking them to Disney and will pose with princesses and action heroes."*

*"Wait, there'll be princesses?" Fubar teased, knowing at least Jane, Ice's girl twin, was excited to see that. "You didn't say there would be princesses. Now I have to go."*

*"No, Uncle Fubar," Jane whined. "If you're there, they won't talk to me."*

*"Oh heck to the no," Bree said, augmenting her language as if Jane and Aiden hadn't heard worse from the men of the club. "I'm pretty sure there is an order of protection to keep you at least a hundred miles from them."*

*"I think they forgot to renew it," he joked. "Please, how much trouble could I possibly get into in less than a week?"*

*"Nope, not taking the bait," Ice said, tossing the last of the luggage into the bed of his pickup. "You'd see it as a challenge."*

The challenge had not only been met, but Fubar had far exceeded even his own fucked-up record. At least he was

pretty sure he had once Grimm's voice broke through his fog.

"Fucking A, Fubar, heel," Grimm's gruff voice barked at him. "Shit, shit, shit."

"Yeah, that's not coming out with a stain treater," Caliber said. As if the man had ever actually washed his own clothes.

Both men were larger than Fubar, but neither had tried to pull him off the man he'd apparently killed. Sitting back on his heels, he poked at the man's lifeless body a few times and saw the thick silver rings he sported tarnished with blood. That he could clean off. It wouldn't be the first time he'd cleaned another's blood from his skin, rings, or clothes. It also wasn't the first time a man lay lifeless at his feet by his own hand. The fact his brothers from the MC had their panties in a twist caused him to pause.

"Fubar, do you know who the fuck that is?" Grimm asked as he ran his large hand over his face.

The world was a swirl around Fubar as he came back to the here and now. He couldn't even tell people where he went when his mind blanked and rage took over. Features were sharpening as he tried his best to locate the trigger. What had him barreling out of the Sin City Revue the way he had? A woman, crying out for help. One of their dancers maybe? Scanning the circle of men and women that had gathered, he could see Chardonnay, one of the newer girls, with a busted lip being consoled by Bullet, one of their members.

It was obvious she had gotten knocked around by the darkening under her left eye. Was it her scream? He'd been

going out for a moment of fresh air before taking a pull on a vape, a nasty habit, one that allowed him a stick to fidget with when too many thoughts were piling up in his head. Not like he could pull out one of those spinners or popping things in the bar. A vape with a little THC inside to quiet the voices appeared normal when he wasn't.

“You sure he's dead?” Fubar questioned, toeing at the man's stagnant body. He flipped his hand up and down a few times as if he were a puppeteer and could make the man dance again with the pull of a string.

“Yeah, that happens when you repeatedly slam a man's head into pavement,” Preacher said, his face tightening into a pinched expression.

Flexing and extending his fingers, Fubar could feel the ache that came from fists to a face, not body slamming. Maybe his hands had gotten in the way.

“Well, who the fuck is he?” Fubar finally asked, knowing knowledge was power, and right now he was basically a scolded puppy with Grimm holding a rolled-up newspaper set for his nose.

“Mario Mancinni, he's on the short list for the next round of made guys in the Brambilla family.”

“How the fuck was I supposed to know?” he snapped like it was Grimm's fault he'd attacked a fucking member of the mob, a group they had a tenuous relationship with in Vegas to begin with. Written and unwritten rules applied, but at least with the Sin City MC, there was a good chance they were

wearing a cut on their back saying *Hey, don't fuck with this guy*. Jesus, a cheap suit with good shoes wasn't a uniform claiming a set.

“Known or not,” Grimm said, his face becoming firm in a way Fubar understood.

“I'm leaving, aren't I?”

“That depends.” His Prez crouched by the man as others formed a wall for those rolling into the Sin City Revue for the show so they wouldn't see the man on the ground. Most in Vegas knew to look the other way when the Sinners gathered. True to form, not one head so much as glanced over to them as Grimm asked the fateful question: “You wanna live?”

\* \* \* \*

“All I'm saying, Pops, is you need to consider it.” Shelby Griffin did her best to not use the firm voice that had her labeled as *angry* in contrast to her male counterparts, who got the moniker *assertive and take-charge*. Three years in the corporate world had given her a look at how she didn't want business to be run.

Shelby had come back to the old neighborhood to help her grandfather. Bo Griffin was showing her the other side of business—the small, mismanaged side—and she wondered how the man had made enough to feed and clothe six children and send them all to college off of the profits from the garage he owned. He had a loyal following and probably even had a few he could show records of oil changes for since the early

eighties. That aside, none of her uncles, aunts, or cousins wanted to be mechanics.

It was hard work, backbreaking most days, and the electronics in cars now they were practically robots that moved you around. The trade he'd mastered was disappearing. Her grandfather's words, not hers because she knew mechanics would always be needed. He'd probably be disgusted by the fact when she shopped for a vehicle, it was about monthly payments and having AC and a decent Bluetooth connection. Sure, she'd bring him with when she shopped for a used vehicle, but that was years ago, before she could afford one with a warranty.

Now as she stared into the brown eyes that had faded a bit from cataracts leaving a misty aura in the iris, she couldn't force herself to strong-arm the man. While her father spoke of fearing him, Pops was the kind and gentle grandfather you wanted. Sure, his hair had turned snow white at this point, and wrinkles defined the corners of his eyes, but to her, he was the same vibrant man who'd let her air up tires at five. Calloused hands cleaned free of grease and dirt only when it was time to eat were now becoming swollen and gnarled a bit from arthritis.

“Let me see, they want to tear it down, leaving this place a car driver's nightmare.”

“No, that's 980,” she quipped, having always hated that strip of interstate.

“People in this neighborhood need someone they can trust to repair their car and keep them moving. Who’s gonna do that if I’m gone?”

“Oh, I’m sorry, Pops, I didn’t know you were immortal. Shoot, keep this place going until we’re all flying spaceships and taking transporters.”

“You know what I mean,” he admonished. “I would feel horrible seein’ my friends going to some janklegged place with corporate sales goals and fresh-pressed coveralls. Never trust a mechanic who ain’t dirty at the end of the day.”

“I know, Pops,” she said with a sigh. “But this money they are offering—”

“All money ain’t good money.” His voice was becoming stern, and even with the weight of a few slow months, she could tell this wasn’t the moment. “Now, if you don’t mind, I need to get back in there with Marvin and Tito so we can lower this engine back in the Buick.”

Shelby walked out of the office and gave Marvin a nod to step away from the register. Marvin Burk was in his midforties and had worked for her grandfather since she was a little kid. His smallish frame had added only a little pot to his belly, but he was still the same man she remembered passing her Dum-Dum suckers when she came to visit after school. Little had she considered at the time the fact Bo’s Fill-Up and Fix-Up was actually her after-school daycare.

Back then her grandmother ran the register, and Shelby would help with pushing buttons on it for those who weren’t in

a rush. She'd known how to turn on pumps and could be distracted for hours restocking shelves and organizing extra products in the back. It was twisted the way she could memorize barcodes and easily link them with the product. Who needed the description on the package when you knew the twelve-inch wiper blades ended in one, five, seven?

While she had loving memories of the Fill and Fix, it didn't change the fact the shop had barely broke even the last five years, and this year wasn't getting any better for them. Electric vehicles were becoming more and more popular, and those required extra certification to repair. Older cars were being tricked out and needed chop shop-type customization. Gone were the days of the minivans and sedans needing a blown gasket fixed.

At least her grandfather had allowed her to update his software a decade ago when she was in school learning about accounting. He no longer could pass a few bucks to day laborers, and every repair was now quoted, with the few mechanics he had on staff tracking their hours. All of it made her payroll run easier since her grandfather paid by the service, not by the hour.

The familiar ring of bells older than she was had her lifting her eyes enough to see a set of bikers coming into the front, where they had snacks, parts, and coffee she couldn't believe people actually drank from time to time. While the club that moved in a few decades ago had never threatened her grandparents, she couldn't help the unease each time they came to the shop. Much like her grandfather's garage, the men

of Sin City MC were a staple in the neighborhood. They had always made her feel on guard even though she'd watched many rise through the ranks over the years.

“Bo here?” a man with a squared jaw and deep tone asked.

She glanced at his cut and understood the group well enough to know Toad was a road name. Behind him, a smaller man with the presence of a giant was picking over the snack cakes. She knew him and his name of King, more importantly his rank of President.

“He’s in the shop. You here to pick up a vehicle?” she asked, trying to be courteous.

“Nah, dropping off,” he said, hitching his thumb over his shoulder. “My brother here blew a hose or something on the way into town. Needs his bike looked at.”

“I can get Marvin,” she offered, only to get a cold stare from Toad as if the idea of it was ludicrous.

“Bo’s on the sign, Bo is who we deal with,” Toad said as his friend set off a set of bells and so much more as he came into the building spinning his keys on his index finger.

The man didn’t wear a prospect patch, but she knew she’d never seen him before. This man was all sorts of sin wrapped up in a model-worthy body. If she worked in advertising, he would be her go-to man for any and all things she wanted to sell to women. His eyes were an icy blue, lips full, and skin a tawny suntan gold. Did his ass have a soundtrack playing as he walked in all slow-motion like a movie dream? She swore she

heard the song “Freak Me” playing as he strode in and cut his eyes at her with a smirk that nearly took out her knees.

*Stop it, Shelby, your ass knows better,* she scolded herself internally. At least she thought it was internally, until Toad’s brow furrowed and a low chuckle let her know she’d at least mouthed the words if not said them out loud.

“Jesus, Fubar, you could make a nun change religions.”

Fubar caught his keys in his hand from the quick spin, then looked dumbfounded at Toad. “What’d I do?” he questioned, completely oblivious to Shelby’s statement.

“Nothin’. So Bo?” Toad prodded.

“Right, I’ll get him.” Shelby opened the door to the shop as a mixture of whirring noises and the stagnant smell of oil and grease rushed her, setting her to rights for half a second as she moved around Marvin, who was doing checks on a newer-model Ford with the computer.

The pulley system her grandfather was overseeing with one of the younger mechanics, Tito, was lowering in a V-8 engine block in the third bay of the garage. She knew to stay back as he guided in the heavy chunk of steel so he could begin ratcheting it in place.

“Pops,” she called once he’d started the process. “There’s a biker out here who insists—”

“You don’t want to do that,” the key-twirling Adonis said as he moved around her, his hand gently touching her shoulder to make room, but all it did was set off a blaze of heat through

her shirt. A light smell of teak and leather made her head swim a bit as she did her best to brace herself.

What was wrong with her? He was a good-looking man. She'd seen attractive men before. Sure, most were on the other side of a screen, but damn, she was fangirling over a damn biker. She was closer to thirty than twenty and needed to act like a damn grown-up.

“What don't I want to do?” Pops replied. “Because I know a man who ain't my employee isn't back in an area where I have liability.”

“My bad,” the man said as she recalled Toad calling him Fubar. “Just wondering how long this car was sitting up waiting on an engine.”

“A week, why?” Pops stood back and began scanning the interior of the open hood.

“You need a cat.”

“Boy, do you like talking in riddles?”

Shelby's gaze shifted between the two men as Fubar motioned to Tito to winch up the engine again. The mechanic waited for the nod from Pops before making the chains lift the block.

“If I may,” Fubar said, waiting for approval before reaching down on the side where her grandfather was standing. She shifted, trying to see what his hands were doing, but the dangling engine was in her way.

A minute later he lifted out a cottony leaf-and-stick nest and set it outside the door. She leapt as a mouse took off first back into the garage, only to turn around when Fubar stomped his booted foot a few times, sending the rodent back across the road and into a grass patch.

“How the heck did I miss that?” Pops said, scratching the side of his head.

His cataracts were getting worse, but Tito didn’t even wear glasses. He should have caught that. Glancing over her shoulder, she wondered how Fubar could have seen it through the glass window behind the register. Three open bays and he figured out there was a nest in a car.

“I was lucky he stole some white fluff or I would have missed it to,” Fubar said. “Bright white was a harsh contrast. You must be Bo.”

“Yeah, you the one who wants to talk to me?”

“Yes, sir. I don’t have my tools here, so I need someone to fix a few hoses that had more damage than I thought before I left Vegas.”

“Vegas, that’s a decent ride,” Pops said. “You visiting from the mother chapter?”

“Something like that,” Fubar said as he gave a quick glance to Shelby before the two walked out to the parking lot. It took everything in her to not follow.

Jesus, the man had her practically mewling. She hoped Pops would get him fixed up and on his way quick, because she

wasn't sure she could control herself around him, and refused to be accountable for her actions. Thankfully the man was singularly focused on his bike.

“You need to borrow my Carmex?” Marvin held out the white glass container with the yellow lid.

“Why?” she questioned, coming out of her lust-filled gaze.

“You keep biting your lip like it's chapped.”

Shelby cut her eyes at him. “You need to mind your business.”

“I thought you gave up bad boys when that DB you dated in high school got a two hundred on his SATs.”

“That's not why I broke up with him,” she lied. “That would have been shallow.”

Shallow was the fact she was dating him because he had an eight-pack in high school, and she tried to delude herself into believing deep down he was intelligent. Brains were her turn-on for long-term guys. A minimum of a six-pack, killer smile, and swagger were for her one-and-dones, the ones she could look back on fondly because she knew the backbreaking orgasms were the one thing men like him excelled in. Sadly, spelling his name correctly on a standard test seemed to be a struggle.

“Young lady, I've known you from the time your hormones spiked,” he said. “Watched your mama, daddy, and grandparents make the sign of the cross more times than I can count.”

“Guess we know why I never went after you,” she countered even though the man was practically a young uncle to her.

“Whatever, youngblood. I know you, Shelby, and that man has you biting your bottom lip.”

“I am not,” she said, turning on her heel and heading back to the front, where King was waiting at the counter with three Swiss Rolls. “Got a sweet tooth today?”

“What can I say,” he said, pulling out a few bills and passing them to her. “Gotta keep my energy up. We tend to have long nights when friends come to town.”

This time Shelby recognized the bite to her lower lip and forced herself to release. Everything, including the man’s name, said he was a mistake. A fuckup beyond all recognition. He was a walking red flag, and she knew better. If only her brains would talk to other parts of her body.

When Fubar strode back in with her grandfather, he was wearing mirrored aviators, and she caught sight of herself. Had she completely forgotten she was wearing one of the shop’s starched button-down shirts with an embroidered name tag like all the men wore? The short-sleeve navy blue top was all about imagination since it didn’t show a single curve she might possess. Her hair was styled into a no-nonsense bitch bun, her normally curly dark locks smoothed back to the point you would assume they didn’t have so much as a body wave let alone the practical ringlets she had. Damn, she should go

take up Marvin's offer of Carmex. At least she'd have something on her face.

"Dang, I missed that crack starting," Fubar said as they approached the counter.

"The one on the side of your head?" Toad joked and set a bag of chips and an energy drink on the counter, reminding Shelby she was there to check out customers.

"Good thing you came in when you did," Pops said. "Good thing I can get the parts by this afternoon."

"Bad thing?" King questioned as he opened one of the packages and took out a roll.

"Bad thing is, I probably couldn't start working on it until the end of next week," Pops said. "I know y'all want me to do the work and not one of my men, but I've got vehicles ahead of you, and this one is making me take days off to go to the doctor."

"I'm nothing if not an inconvenience." Shelby passed Toad his change as Fubar leaned an arm on the counter and began playing with the battery-operated fans. They were a mix of superheroes and mythical creatures like mermaids and unicorns.

"How long does it take to go to the doctor?" King asked.

"A few days when you put it off for forty years," she countered, not about to be questioned when it came to her grandfather's health. "And I swear to God, if you try the whole sob story about a lost little boy needing his vroom-vroom

machine being more important, you will not like the end result.”

“Am I the little boy?” Fubar questioned, finally breaking the trance he had from the spinning foam fan blades. “I’m not in too much of a hurry. But I could fix it since you’re getting the parts, if you didn’t mind. I’ll do it in the driveway so I’m not in your liability space.”

“I don’t know.” Pops rubbed the side of his face the way he did when he was getting worried.

“How is it any different than me going to a parts store?” Fubar asked. “If you hadn’t made these guys codependent on you because you do good work, they would actually have the tools I need to fix it myself.”

“California has regulations, Nevada doesn’t, son.”

“Then you can inspect it before I take your beautiful granddaughter for a ride to make sure it’s running right.”

Shelby shifted, about to protest because how the hell had she been pulled into this negotiation, when Toad held up his hand. “Don’t even try, Shelby. Many tried, and all have failed.”

“Fine, I’ll pay you to have me fix it,” Fubar said, sweetening the deal. “I normally do my own maintenance.”

“And you missed that crack,” Pops asserted.

“That crack can’t be more than a few hundred miles old.” Fubar then turned his icy blue stare to Shelby, sending electricity across her skin to the point she feared electrocution.

“What do you think, darlin’? You think I can make my bike safe enough for a ride?”

“I filled out my organ donor card, doesn’t mean I want to become one this week, thank you.” The protest was more for Toad’s assumption she lacked the ability to say no to Fubar. As if she were one of the Angels down at the Sinners’ clubhouse down to fuck with little more than a glance from a man in a cut.

“Me too, we could save twenty-six lives, or just our own,” he said as his hand reached across the counter and gently lifted hers. The back of her fingers grazed his lips, and thank God her other hand was flat on the counter to keep her from completely collapsing. “I’m Daniel, by the way.”

“Thought your name was Fubar.” The words came out harsh because she had to force them over a hard lump making her throat scratchy.

“That’s only for people who’ve known me for more than twenty-four hours. Don’t worry, darlin’. I’m pretty sure you’ll kick my shiftless ass to the curb before then.”

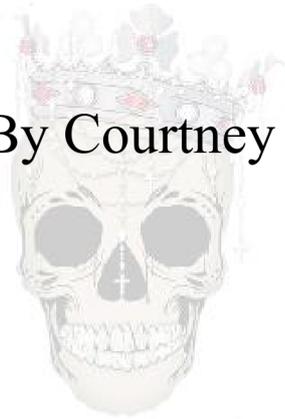
“It’s Shelby,” she said if for no other reason than she couldn’t help the panty-wetting way the man let *darlin’* roll over his tongue. She was sure she wasn’t the first and wouldn’t be the last woman he used the affectionate nickname on, but deep down she wanted to be special to him. “And you’ve already lost thirty minutes on that clock, Daniel.”



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