



KNIGHT'S BRIGHT EYES

PAGAN SOULS CHEROKEE MC BOOK THREE

CIARA ST. JAMES

Knight's Bright Eyes

Pagan Souls of Cherokee MC Book 3

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Blurb:

Knight's life completely changes once he finds out he has a daughter. The months he spends learning to be one and forming a relationship with her has been bumpy but good. He loves her and his club. The only thing his life is missing is female companionship. He has doubts he'll ever have anything permanent, but he's come to accept his daughter is his priority, not his love life.

A new club endeavor brings a woman to his notice. Only he gets the wrong idea about her and runs her off. When he finds out he's wrong, he insists on making it right. And making it right means protecting her, even if she won't tell him who he and his club need to protect her from.

Natalya seemingly has it all. She's the daughter of a very wealthy man. She can live a life of leisure and that's what Knight mistakenly thinks. If only her life was as rosy as everyone assumed. Her run-in with Knight leads to more interactions with him and his club, even though she tries to push them away. It's not safe for her or them if they continue to associate.

When the club finds her hurt and in danger, they insist she accept their help. This puts her in Knight's sights daily. As they get to know each other and she forgives him for their first encounter, they, along with Knight's daughter, Cara, become a family in the making.

Only there's more than one person who has their own agenda and wants Natalya for their own reasons. Knight and the Pagans have more than one battle to win in order to eliminate their enemies and let Natalya remain forever more Knight's Bright Eyes, so they can form a family.

Warning

This book is intended for adult readers. It contains foul language, adult situations, discusses events such as stalkers, assault, torture and murder that may trigger some readers. Sexual situations are graphic. There is no cheating, no cliffhangers and it has a HEA.

Pagan Souls of Cherokee Members/ Old Ladies

Cree Raven (Agony)- President w/ Eliana Grady

Marcus Worth (Dare)- VP w/ Joli Mason

Malachi Bardot (Hulk)- enforcer w/ TBD

Elijah Dalton (Knight)- Secretary w/ Natalya

Deacon Sharpe (Pope)- w/ TBD

Bowen Gryffon (Cyclone)- w/ TBD

Trey Baylor (Wire) It/ Hacker- w/ TBD

Jagger Phoenix (Bones)- Medic/ Doctor w/ TBD

Brody Granger (Twisted-) Treasurer w/ TBD

Tiergan Curran (Mace)- w/ TBD

Wesley Garrick (Nitro)- w/ TBD

Rory Kincaid- Prospect

Niko Costa- Prospect

Reading Order

For Dublin Falls Archangel's Warriors MC (DFAW), Hunters Creek Archangel's Warriors MC (HCAW), Iron Punishers MC (IPMC), Dark Patriots (DP), & Pagan Souls of Cherokee MC (PSCMC)

Terror's Temptress DFAW 1
Savage's Princess DFAW 2
Steel & Hammer's Hellcat DFAW 3
Menace's Siren DFAW 4
Ranger's Enchantress DFAW 5
Ghost's Beauty DFAW 6
Viper's Vixen DFAW 7
Devil Dog's Precious DFAW 8
Blaze's Spitfire DFAW 9
Smoke's Tigress DFAW 10
Hawk's Huntress DFAW 11
Bull's Duchess HCAW 1
Storm's Flame DFAW 12
Rebel's Firecracker HCAW 2
Ajax's Nymph HCAW 3
Razor's Wildcat DFAW 13
Capone's Wild Thing DFAW 14
Falcon's She Devil DFAW 15
Demon's Hellion HCAW 4
Torch's Tornado DFAW 16
Voodoo's Sorceress DFAW 17
Reaper's Banshee IPMC 1
Bear's Beloved HCAW 5
Outlaw's Jewel HVAW 6
Undertaker's Resurrection DP 1
Agony's Medicine Woman PSCMC 1
Ink's Whirlwind IP 2
Payne's Goddess HCAW 7
Maverick's Kitten HCAW 8

Tiger & Thorn's Tempest DFAW 18
Dare's Doll PSC 2
Maniac's Imp IP 3
Tank's Treasure HCAW 9
Blade's Boo DFAW 19
Law's Valkyrie DFAW 20
Gabriel's Retaliation DP 2
Knight's Bright Eyes PSC 3

For Ares Infidels MC

Sin's Enticement AIMC 1
Executioner's Enthrallment AIMC 2
Pitbull's Enslavement AIMC 3
Omen's Entrapment AIMC 4
Cuffs' Enchainment AIMC 5
Rampage's Enchantment AIMC 6
Wrecker's Ensnarement AIMC 7
Trident's Enjoyment AIMC 8
Fang's Enlightenment AIMC 9
Talon's Enamorment AIMC 10
Ares Infidels in NY AIMC 11
Phantom's Emblazonment AIMC 12
Saint's Enrapturement AIMC 13

For O'Sheerans Mafia

Darragh's Dilemma
Cian's Complication

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Knight: Prologue

I couldn't help but look at Dare and Joli's newborn son, Branson, and then look at my daughter Cara and marvel. She'd been that size, it seemed, only yesterday. It was hard to believe she was three years old already. The last eight months or so of getting to know each other as actual father and daughter and figuring out how to live together had been bumpy at times, but also fun. When she came to live with me, she knew me only as Knight, one of several men in the motorcycle club her mom would drag her to go see whenever Ciandra wanted or needed money.

Ciandra had been a club bunny several years back with our club. Almost all of us had been with her at one time or another. That's why she came around in the first place, to sleep with bikers. When she ended up pregnant and came to us, after Cara was a week old, to tell us she'd had a baby, she named Dare as the daddy. None of us bothered to push back on her to dispute it, even though we knew it could've been any of us or someone else altogether outside the club.

Thinking about it now, I knew it was because we were all fine with being fooled into believing Cara wasn't ours. Dare had denied her paternity but being the upstanding guy he was, whenever Ciandra needed money, he was the one who typically gave it to her, although the rest of us helped too.

Only after Dare met his wife, Joli, did it come to a head. Dare told Joli he wasn't really Cara's dad. One run-in was one too many for Joli, and a fight broke out between her and Ciandra. The fight almost cost Dare his woman and his unborn baby. It took that to wake us all up to the fact we needed to put a stop to Ciandra using us. In order to win Joli back, Dare got the whole club together to make much-needed changes.

First, we forced Ciandra to have a paternity test done. It was to reassure Joli that Dare wasn't Cara's dad and to find out the truth once and for all. Every one of us, even those who knew they couldn't possibly be Cara's dad, had stepped up and had our DNA taken to compare to hers. To be

honest, we thought it was likely she belonged to one of the other men Ciandra had been sleeping with while she was a bunny with us. She hadn't exactly been exclusive to the club. Plus, all of us had worn condoms whenever we were with her and hadn't ever had a pregnancy scare before her.

Imagine my shock when the test came back showing, without a doubt, I was Cara's dad. I'd been stunned, but even while trying to come to terms with the fact that I had a child, I was deep down secretly thrilled. I wasn't getting any younger and there was no special woman in sight. My chances of having children of my own were dwindling fast in my mind. Having Cara end up being mine seemed to be heaven sent.

After finding out the truth, I knew there was no way I'd let that sweet little girl stay with her user of a mom a second longer. With help from our club president, Agony, and a judge friend of his, we forced Ciandra to sign away her parental rights to Cara. She didn't waste time getting out of town like we ordered her to do. None of us had heard a peep from her and we'd be more than happy never to see or hear from that bitch again.

I worried about how Cara would adjust to not having her mom around. The funny thing was, after the first week or two, she stopped asking about her mom and when she was coming back. We simply told her that her mom wanted her to have a big family and knew we'd love and take care of her. It seemed to satisfy her. I knew when Cara got older, I'd have to tell her the truth about her mom and why she left. I hoped she'd understand it was out of concern and love that we did what we did. I'd grown from simply caring for her to loving her. I don't know what I would do without her now.

Those first few months were rocky, but we were fortunate to have the whole club helping us. On top of that, Dare and Joli had opened up their home to us. I only had a room in the clubhouse at first. It wasn't the place to raise a little girl. The club had put a rush on building us our own house. We moved in just over three months ago.

Cara adored her purple and teal room. She picked out the colors herself and, with help from Joli, Agony's wife Eliana, and his grandmother, Tanamara. They decked it out to be the bedroom any girl would kill for, they informed me. I had to take their word for it since I wasn't a girl.

My cut of the club's profits from our various businesses and investments allowed me to more than take care of my little girl. However, her numerous uncles and aunts contributed to her comfortable and loving life, too. They were always buying her stuff. I warned them all the time they were spoiling her. They waved my concerns away. I guess I couldn't object too much. All of us did the same with Agony and Eliana's twins, Zavian and Zoe, and now Branson.

As well as life was going for me, I still wished, occasionally, I had someone to share it with. Outside of the club, I didn't have any family to speak of. My mom was remarried and lived hours away, not that I'd want her around anyway. She hadn't been the best mom and was an alcoholic my whole life. I left home at eighteen.

My dad, he was even worse, if you could imagine that. He was in prison serving two consecutive life sentences without the chance of parole for second degree murder. He held up a gas station and during the robbery, he killed the clerk and a customer. He'd been looking for money to pay for more drugs for himself and probably alcohol for my mom. I was ten years old. I had thought good riddance when I heard he was going away. I made the mistake of saying it aloud and my mom got pissed at me and slapped the hell out of me. As worthless as my dad was, he at least gave her money sometimes for her alcohol.

We'd been the poster family for dysfunctional families. Their other kin wasn't much better. Looking back, I think it was the fear that I'd be as worthless as they had been as parents that kept me for those first two years of Cara's life from insisting on knowing for sure if I was her dad. I never wanted to fail her like my parents had failed me.

"Daddy, I wanna hold Bran," Cara said as she tugged on my shirt.

I crouched down to pick her up. "Oh, you do, do you, Buttercup? Well, let's go see if Aunt Joli will let you. You'll have to sit on the couch and let Daddy help you. Branson is still too little and we don't want to hurt him accidentally."

"Okay," she said happily.

She was an easy child to please and she rarely ever got out of sorts or threw any kind of tantrum. She most definitely didn't take after her mom in that way. Ciandra had thrived on drama and conflict. Whoever was putting up with her now had my sympathy. Walking over to the new parents, I got ready to help my little girl hold her newest cousin. Yeah, life was good.

Knight: Chapter 1

The celebration was well underway. We were all amazed at the turnout. We'd decided to promote Eliana's new business, Pagan Promises. It was a combination of many services that were provided to the community of Cherokee and its nearby neighbors if they needed them.

When Agony met Eliana, she was a nurse practitioner, helping folks with their various health issues using herbal remedies. She had studied them and knew how to compound creams and elixirs. She believed in a holistic approach to health was what she explained to us. All I knew was it worked. All you had to do was look at Agony's grandmother Tanamara, to believe it. Her arthritis had been getting steadily worse until she started seeing Eliana. Her days of being stooped over and moving slowly were a thing of the past.

It was Tanamara's visits to Elaina that brought her to Agony's attention. At first, he'd thought she was a fake who was bilking old people out of their money. He discovered how wrong he was. As his relationship with Eliana grew, they met a couple of young men in need of changing their worthless lives. They found a way to do it, although it took threats from us to make them follow through. The idea for Pagan Promises was born out of that.

Not only did Promises provide Eliana's holistic medical care but also other things people needed, for example handyman services, lawn care, caregiver, and so on. It was starting to take off, and the hope was this open house we were holding at the compound would help it grow even more.

We knew some of the people were here just because they were curious about us and our compound. Usually it was secured behind a fence and gate. No one entered unless we gave approval. That was enough mystery to bring out people today. In addition, there were those I considered thrill seekers.

The thrill seekers thought it was dangerous to be associated with bikers. They believed we were outlaws. They would go back home and tell

people how they had been with us. Among those were another type of seekers. There were women here looking to have a good time and hook up with a biker. It might be for the night or longer, as some of them hoped.

Now, we were all healthy men and single except for Agony and Dare. We enjoyed sex, and it was always available, whether it was the bunnies we had or other women, ones we called hang arounds. They came from town and nearby on the weekends, mainly to party with us and fuck. In the past, I'd availed myself of many of their offers. However, since Cara came into my life, those had been few and far between. I didn't like leaving her with someone just so I could go fuck a woman. It felt wrong.

Although the way I was feeling lately, I knew it was time to find a woman to blow off mutual steam with. There wasn't a lack of candidates wandering around here. I saw my brothers checking out the ladies. They were thinking the same thing. Of course, we would wait until the event was winding down before we took off with one of them. Agony and Eliana would kill us if we didn't.

Laughter drew my attention to the children's playground we'd finished not long ago. The club was making changes and adding more things to the compound. It was all based on designs that Joli had drawn up not long after she came here. She was an architect and had jumped in to do it. At first, it was just something to keep her busy while she was kept safe behind our fence. Then when we saw what she'd come up with, we couldn't say no to actually making the changes.

A lot of the ideas were inspired by our visits to Dublin Falls and Hunters Creek in Tennessee. We had friends in a club there called the Archangel's Warriors. They were much more settled with families than we were, and they had created many things to accommodate their kids into a biker club. Seeing as we now had four kids of our own and likely more in the future, we thought it was a smart idea to do the same.

Cara was having a blast with the kids who'd come with their parents to our open house. We'd advertised it was a family friendly event and kids were welcome. The play area was huge. In order to ensure the kids were less likely to get hurt if they fell or anything, we had what was called a pour-in-

place rubber compound laid on the ground. It was better than wood chips or grass.

There was a big jungle gym made up of covered buildings, slides, short bridges, swings and more, all connected into one big structure. The twins and Branson were too young to enjoy it yet, but Cara loved it. She insisted on playing on it daily. Most of the time, I let her. I loved seeing her happy. Right now, she was going down one of the slides over and over again while another little girl chased behind her. They were laughing like crazy.

A jar to my arm made me turn around. There stood my club brother, Hulk. He was our enforcer. He came by his name due to his appearance. He was a big, ripped hulk of a man. As scary as he could be, he was a gentle guy, too. Only when it came to defending the club or those who needed it did you get to see the hulk in action. He didn't turn green, but in all other ways, he lived up to his road name.

“You watchin’ to make sure none of those little snout-nosed boys get any ideas about our Cara?” He had his gaze narrowed on the kids on the playground.

“What? No, I was just watching her have fun. Why? Did I miss something?”

“Not yet, but I don’t want any of them to get ideas that they can swoop in and date our buttercup when she gets older. She’s going to remain with us forever and never date, right?”

I couldn’t help but laugh. He was worse than me. In fact, all my brothers were the same way. They didn’t want any guys coming around when Cara was older. She was a beautiful child, and I knew she’d grow up to be a drop-dead gorgeous woman. The one thing I couldn’t dispute was that Ciandra had been a sexy and very attractive woman. Cara got her coloring from her. Those sky-blue eyes and white, blond hair of hers were striking. People commented all the time about her looks and how beautiful she was. As her dad, I might be biased, but I had to agree.

“She’s only three. I think we have time before we have to worry about

that, don't you think?" I reminded him.

He shook his head. "Nope, we don't. This stuff can start young. We have to be alert and nip it in the bud. If she does end up with someone, it better be a guy we know and approve of. Only the best for the Pagans' daughters. Give it a couple of years and we'll be doing the same for Zoe."

"Well hell, why wait? She's already nine months old," I joked.

"Go ahead, make fun of me, but you'll thank me later. Look, see that little boy in the green shirt. He's checking Cara out. He needs to go on the suspect list," he said as he narrowed his eyes even more.

I saw the boy he was talking about. He was staring at Cara and not moving. I couldn't tell by his expression what he was thinking, but he did seem awfully captivated by her. Maybe Hulk was right. Maybe I should be paying more attention. Jesus, being a dad never ended. I kept learning things I should be doing. Would I ever get it all down?

"Hey, don't stress about it. You're doing great with her. You can't do it all yourself. We're here to help. Of course, when you get an old lady, you'll have more help with her," he added.

"Get real. When do I have time to look for a woman, Hulk? Between work and Cara, I haven't gotten my cock wet in months. And I'd never consider one of the women who hangs around here as an old lady candidate. I don't think we should count on me finding a woman. I'll happily raise her with your guys' help. I can't thank you enough."

"You don't need to thank us. We're happy to do it. You and that little sweetheart are our family. One day, I hope I'll have a family, and I know you'll do the same for me."

I clasped his shoulder. "Damn right I will. So, I know it's not family oriented, but have you seen any likely companions for later?"

"There's a few who I wouldn't mind spending some time with. What about you? Sounds like it's time for you to break your celibacy streak. You

know, we're glad to watch Cara so you can have some me time."

"I know. It just feels weird to me to think of doing that. However, I think tonight, I might just have to consider it. Eliana and Joli told me earlier they're willing to take Cara for the night. I think they suspected I might be looking."

"Nothing gets by those two. Well, happy hunting. Be careful what you catch. You don't want to get more than you bargained for," he said, laughing.

I grinned back. "Same to you. I'll see you later."

He nodded as he wandered off. Deciding Cara was safe where she was, I began to roam around myself. It was time to do the rounds anyway and act like a host. All of us were doing it. It would be too much just for Eliana to do. She had her hands full with Zavian and Zoe, although Tana was here helping with them.

To my surprise, it was a good two hours or more that was taken up by my wandering and checking in with people. Overall, it seemed like almost everyone was having a good time and was happy. I heard a lot of positive comments about Promises and hoped that would equate to funds and physical help. They were always looking for people who were willing to do the various services they offered. The customer paid the workers' wages, but we helped to put them in contact with people who wouldn't rip them off. On top of it, we made sure they were appropriately bonded and insured if the task warranted it.

Wire had volunteered to do background checks on anyone who wanted to offer their services through Promises. As our hacker, it made sense. He did the same for anyone we hired at our businesses or who wanted to join the club. We couldn't be too careful with who we brought into our lives.

I made my way over to Cara. I'd made sure to check on her on and off. She'd been happy to continue to play and spend time with my club family. Now it was time to make sure she ate something again. Evening was fast approaching. I found her entertaining our prospect, Niko. Until a few

months ago, he'd been our only one since we voted in Nitro. However, we lucked out and found another guy who was eager to join and seemed to have the right motivation. His name was Atticus. It was a good thing he had, because Niko was due anytime to be voted in or out. I think we all agreed he would make the cut. Agony should be bringing up the vote soon.

“Hey, Buttercup, are you driving Niko crazy?”

“No, Daddy, I'm not. I was showing him the pretty flowers the nice lady gave me. Aren't they pretty?”

She held up a handful of mixed flowers. They looked like the kind you'd get at a florist, not something you just picked along the road or out of a garden.

“They are pretty. Which lady, honey? Did she say why she was giving them to you?”

“She said that they were almost as pretty as me,” she said with a smile.

I glanced around, curious and a little concerned about a stranger giving my daughter anything. There were still a bunch of people here and I didn't personally know a lot of them.

“Do you see the lady who gave them to you? I'd like to tell her thank you.”

She looked around. I was about to tell her never mind when she pointed. All I could see was the back of a woman's head. She had long hair. I would call it caramel colored. It was eye-catching.

“That's her. Isn't she pretty, Daddy? She told me that I had my daddy's eyes.”

Instantly, warning bells went off in my head. Anyone talking to my daughter and mentioning me made me cautious. What was her angle? Did she think she could use Cara to get something out of me? The club? Did she

know Ciandra?

“Honey, I need you to stay here with Niko. I’ll be back soon. Why don’t you let him take you over to the food tables and you get something to eat? You’ve been running around all day. You need fuel to keep your motor running,” I teased her.

She giggled. “Alright, Daddy. Come on, Niko. Let’s go get something yummy for our motors.” She started making adorable motor sounds.

She held out her hand. He quickly took it and gave me a chin lift as he let himself be led off to the food. Doing anything you were told without complaint was a must for a prospect. The majority of their prospecting was doing that. Plus, we often gave them the jobs none of us wanted to do.

I didn’t waste time making my way through the crowd to get to the woman. I didn’t want to lose her. As I approached, I got a better look at her. She still had her back to me. She was alone and standing there with a can of soda in her hand. She seemed to be watching a few of my brothers who were gathered together.

She was tall, I would guess, somewhere around five foot eight to five foot ten. She was dressed like most people, in shorts and a t-shirt. It was still warm even though it was September. I noticed she had shapely legs that seemed to go on forever. She was lithe, with gentle curves in all the right places. Why I noticed that I don’t know. I was here to find out what she was up to, not to hook up with her.

When I got close enough, I tapped her on the shoulder. She startled and swung around swiftly. As I took in her slightly alarmed expression, the rest of her appearance registered. As it did, I thought how wrong it was that she wasn’t looking for a fun time. I’d be more than glad to give it to her.

Her face was perfection. Her ivory skin with her hair was striking. It allowed her amber-colored eyes to pop. They didn’t need the help. They were upturned in a way which made her look exotic. A slender petite nose, high striking cheekbones and full dark pink ripe lips completed her look. That mouth of hers was so damn kissable. *Shit, stop it. You're not here for that, I*

chided myself.

“Oh, you startled me,” she said softly.

“Sorry. I need to talk to you. Can you step over here with me?” I pointed to a spot further away that was more private. I didn’t want to draw attention to our conversation.

She hesitated, then started walking that way. “Sure. What do you want to talk about?”

I waited until we were alone before I spoke. “I want to know why you gave my daughter flowers. Who are you? What do you want? How did you know she was my daughter?” I quickly fired off at her.

She slightly reared back from me and her earlier alarmed look was back. “Whoa, stop. I don’t know why you’re coming at me like this. All I did was give flowers to an adorable little girl. I thought she’d like them. I don’t want anything. I knew she was your daughter because I saw you with her earlier. The way you acted and the fact you have the same eyes made me think she was yours. I didn’t know it was a capital offense to be nice.” Her voice sounded a little pissed.

I wasn’t ready to drop it. She might be telling the truth, but then again, she might not. More than one person over the years had tried different things to get close to us for mostly unfriendly reasons.

“It is when you’re trying to get something else. Why’re you here?”

“The same reason everyone else is. I was curious about Pagan Promises. I think what is being done there is wonderful. It’s something we desperately need around here, and I’m hoping it will grow.”

“Do you know Eliana?”

“No, I just met her today. She’s a delightful woman. I can see why people go to her for their care.”

“That’s it? You just came to check it out? Why hang around if your

curiosity is satisfied?”

“Listen, I obviously upset you and I apologize. I’ll leave. I don’t want any problems.”

She tried to walk off, but I grabbed her arm and held her still. Despite being suspicious, I didn’t want her to go. I knew I was coming on strong, but I wanted to make sure she didn’t have an ulterior motive. She glanced down at my hand on her arm. I dropped it.

“I’m not done yet. You never told me your name. I do want to know why you hung around so long.”

“I hung around because I’m considering donating money to Promises. I think it’s too worthy of an endeavor not to. My name is Natalya LeBlanc. You might have heard of my family.”

Immediately, I recognized her last name. LeBlanc was the last name of a prominent businessman near Cherokee, by the name of Fabian LeBlanc. He owned a huge amount of property in town, plus land outside of Cherokee and in the surrounding towns. He was some kind of investor or something. Why he chose to live in a small quiet town like Cherokee, I couldn’t imagine. He struck me as the kind to live in a big city that never slept. You know, the life of the rich and famous. Whatever it was he invested in, it made him loads of cash.

Finding out she was a rich girl made my hackles rise. I’d never found rich girls to be anything but manipulative bitches who’d use you and then throw you aside like garbage. As I was coming to terms with who she was, I saw her glance again at the group of my brothers she’d been staring at when I came up to her. Then her gaze darted over to two others, Bones and Cyclone. An ugly idea dawned. I should’ve known. She wasn’t dressed for the part, but I was confident I knew why she was here now.

“Oh, I get it. I know what you’re really here for. You couldn’t help but come to appease your curiosity. I bet you can’t wait to go running back to your rich girlfriends and tell them all about us and how you fucked an outlaw biker. Well, babe, if you wanna fuck, why don’t we go over here and get it

done? A woman like you shouldn't mind if people see us, right?"

I took a hold of her arm and tugged her toward the clubhouse. I was going to take her behind it. As pissed as I was, I wasn't stupid enough to actually have sex with her, nor would I be a dick and do it in front of people, even if I was. Being an exhibitionist wasn't my thing. However, I was angry and disappointed that she was one of those women. I had my share of those in my past. I swore a long time ago never to let one of them use me again.

She tried to get loose, but I held onto her. She needed to learn a lesson. Coming here, no one would hurt her, but if she pulled this shit somewhere else, it might get ugly, and she'd get more than she bargained for.

"Let go of me! If you don't, I'm going to scream," she hissed.

"Go ahead. It'll just add to your fun, won't it? Come on, don't act shy. I bet you go slumming all the time. That's what you rich, bored brats like to do. Play with the lower ranks, but only get serious about your own kind. Too bad your rich lovers can't give you what you want and you have to resort to fucking one of us."

I knew it sounded hateful. I couldn't seem to keep myself from saying it. Disappointment was crushing me. Her gorgeous face and body had me wanting to sleep with her, but knowing her background and what she was doing here angered me. Who knew? If she hadn't been a rich bitch and here to fuck whichever guy she could get, she might have been worth getting to know. A hard jerk had her arm coming out of my hand. She was red in the face and breathing fast. She moved away from me.

"You're a goddamn asshole! You don't know shit about me. I'm not here to fuck one of you, as you so elegantly put it. I told you the truth. I'm considering donating to Promises. However, if that means I have to put up with being anywhere near you or guys like you, then the hell with that. Go to hell," she snarled.

I had to give it to her. She was a good actress. I was almost convinced she was telling the truth. I pushed her more. I wanted to see how far she took her irate act. I'd also found that women like her wanted men who treated

them like shit. Why? I had no clue. If I was really considering even sleeping with her, let alone more, I'd never treat her like this.

“Ah, come on, don't back out now. I can give you the fucking of your life. I promise you'll walk away satisfied and I hope I will too. As long as you're not a frosty, frigid fuck. I'd hate to waste my first screw of the night on someone who was like a board in my bed,” I said acidly. I reached for my zipper, like I was about to undo my jeans.

She feigned horror and took off, almost running.

“Come back, baby. You need something to tell your girlfriends about,” I shouted.

People glanced at me curiously. She gave me a disgusted look as she pushed her way through the crowds around us. A pang of disappointment swept through me as I watched her go. If she was the type of woman out there in the dating world, I'd never find someone to share my life and daughter with. But if her kind was the only option, I'd gladly spend the rest of my life alone.

Wanting to forget her and the awful taste our encounter left in my mouth, I turned around and went to find a beer. It was time to unwind, and I was even more determined after this run-in to find someone to have fun with tonight. It was overdue. All she had to be was not rich.

Knight: Chapter 2

God, the past almost two weeks since the open house event for Promises had been busy for all of us. Thankfully, it seemed that the event was a hit. People had been coming in and donating money, and others offered up their services. Those ones Wire was busy checking out before they were allowed to work for anyone.

Thinking about the open house made me recall Natalya LeBlanc. Despite my efforts to forget her and say good riddance, she kept popping into my head at the oddest times. That was especially true at night. When I lay down to go to sleep, she'd come to me. I wouldn't admit it to anyone, if they even knew to ask, that I'd pleased myself several times to thoughts of her. Yeah, she was a rich bitch, but she was a stunning one. I kind of wished I'd been nicer long enough to have fucked her then sent her on her way.

My hatred of women like her was deeply rooted in my past. I'd had two women in my younger days who I thought I might be able to have a relationship with. Both of them had come from families that were considerably richer than me. In both cases, I found out they weren't interested in anything long-term. All they wanted to do was fuck me for a while then brag to their snooty friends they'd been with a bad-boy biker. Once I found that out, they were kicked to the curb.

The chatter around me died down as Agony took his seat at the head of the long table. It was time for church and he was the one to lead it. He didn't even have to bang his gavel on the table to get our attention.

“Alright, it's time. Thanks for being on time. We have a lot to talk about tonight. Let's go over anything to do with the businesses, then we can move on to other things. There's something I want to talk to all of you about.”

The serious look on his face and the tone of his voice told us it was something he was disturbed about. I wondered what it was. We quickly ran

through the businesses. Right now, things were going pretty good for them. The usual staffing issues and stuff, but nothing we couldn't handle or that required the club to intervene.

Agony was good about allowing those he put in charge of the various businesses to run them as they saw fit. It was rare he or the whole club had to jump in. When it happened, it was due to a colossal issue. I had a lot of fights and shit since I managed Pagan's Watering Hole, our bar. That was to be expected when you had alcohol involved. Those on a rare occasion might require more than me to handle them.

Right now, I was looking for another bouncer. My current ones needed more help. The bar was hopping, especially on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. If it kept up, we might have to think about expanding the size of the bar. We had room to build onto the existing building. That would make Joli happy. She'd insist on designing it. I mentioned the possibility to the guys.

"You know she'll be all over that," Dare said with a grin.

"I know. I don't think we're quite there yet, but it'll probably be something we need to seriously consider sometime next year. I'll let you know if I think it should be earlier or later in the year," I informed them.

"Sounds good to me. I know you've got it handled. Has anyone else got anything?" Agony asked.

When everyone shook their heads no, he went to the next item on his agenda. Any of us could put items on the agenda. All we had to do was tell him what we wanted to talk about. If we didn't have stuff, then he had a few standard things to review each meeting. It was like sitting in any office, having a meeting with your executives. An MC was more like a business than most people knew.

"Okay, I know you'll hate it but we have to talk about this next one. First, we need to find another prospect. Atticus is doing okay, but I think if this next part goes the way I think it will, he'll soon be the only prospect. That's more than he can handle. So, you know what to do. Shake those trees

and find us someone. Hell, I'm open to customers you know well enough to think they'll fit and won't stab us in the back. If you have any of those, talk to them and see if they have any interest. I know it's not a glamorous job, but it doesn't last forever."

He was right. It wasn't glamorous. Many times, it was downright disgusting and somewhat demanding, but it was meant to be that way. It was a true test of a man's character to see how he dealt with the situations and orders thrown at him from all sides. We'd weeded out several potential members over the years. The last thing we wanted was to patch them in and then find out they didn't fit or were toxic. All of us groaned and muttered. Agony gave us his best *shut up and do it* look. He hated this as much as we did.

"Does anyone have someone they think they might want to ask?" Dare asked. We shook our heads no.

"Well, think about it. Next week, come in prepared to talk about at least someone. Which leads me to the second part of this subject. Let's talk about Niko. He's been prospecting for thirteen months. I think it's time we make our decision. We can't keep him hanging forever. What do you think? Has he proven he's got what it takes to be a Pagan?" Agony asked the table.

From my perspective he had. His attitude toward taking time to do stuff with Cara had shown me a lot. On top of that, I hadn't heard or seen him balk at anything asked of him. The rest of my brothers were muttering the same. When no one voiced an objection, Agony called for the vote.

"Okay, since no one has any objections, let's vote this shit. All in favor of Niko becoming a Pagan, raise your hands."

Quickly all eleven hands went up. He grinned. "Good. I figured it would go that way. Now, we need to decide what his road name is going to be. Any suggestions?"

Sometimes, Agony would have one already in mind, although he always gave us the option to veto it. Pope's hand went flying in the air.

“Pope, what is your suggestion?” Agony asked.

“I think we should call him Pyro. The guy loves anything that has fire involved. Whether he’s burning something or it explodes and burns, he loves it.” That was true.

“No shit. It’s because he was EOD, explosive ordnance disposal, in the Army. Those fuckers are all crazy in my experience,” Cyclone added.

There was no argument about that either. I liked it. The chatter around the table said the others did too. Agony grinned. “Then it’s official. His road name is Pyro. Knight, go ahead and order his cut. It shouldn’t take us long to get it. Hell, we might be able to give it to him at next week’s church.”

“I’ll do it tonight, Pres,” I told him. As club secretary, I did a lot of the ordering and getting member cuts and property cuts for the old ladies fell into that. I made a note to myself on my phone to do it as soon as we were done. I knew from his prospect cut what size to get Niko... I mean, Pyro.

As I noted it, then glanced back up. I saw the grin fall from Agony’s face. He got serious fast. I sat up straighter. Something was definitely not good.

“Brothers, this last one is shit. I warn you. And I wouldn’t usually bring it to the club to interfere, except Eliana asked me to check into it. Since it might come back on the club somehow, I had to tell you about it and make sure no one has a problem with it.”

“What does Eliana want?” Dare asked first.

As Agony’s old lady and our queen, we’d do anything for Eliana. We loved her not just because Agony did, but because of who she was. She was the sister many of us never had. Also, she did a lot for us, in so many ways.

Agony sighed. “She’s upset because she had a patient come to her at Promises today. It was a young woman, someone she met at our open house, in fact. After the open house, she came to see Eliana and donated money. Eliana really likes her, so when she came back today, she was initially happy

to see her. That is until she explained why she was there.” He paused.

“Why was she there?” Bones asked.

“She came for treatment. She made Eliana promise not to document that she was there. After she promised, the woman went to an exam room and undressed. Jesus Christ, from what Eliana told me, the poor woman had been beaten savagely. She had bruises all over her body. The only place she didn’t was her face. Eliana said she had some that looked like shoe prints on her back and ribs. She wouldn’t go to the hospital. She begged Eliana to give her some of her creams to help with the pain and to fade the bruises.” Curses came pouring out of all our mouths. We hated to hear of people being hurt, especially when it was a woman or child.

“What did Eliana do?” I asked.

“She gave her some creams and made her promise to come back in a couple of days so she could check on her again.”

“Who did it?” Hulk asked gruffly.

“She wouldn’t say for sure, but after questioning her, Eliana thinks she might know who did it. Before we get into that, I need to know if you think we should get involved. El wants us to go see her and offer protection. I told her we don’t do that, but she’s worried this woman will be killed, eventually.”

“You know how we all feel about abusing women and kids. True, we usually don’t get involved with outsiders, but since El asked, I think we should,” Twisted said.

“You might change your mind once you know who she is. We could bring a shitstorm down on us,” Agony said ominously.

“It shouldn’t matter, should it? Who is she?” Wire asked.

“Her name is Natalya LeBlanc and her father is Fabian LeBlanc. You’ve all heard of him.” He dropped it like a bomb on us.

Or maybe it was just a bomb to me. I jerked in shock, and, without thinking, I opened my mouth. Why the hell was she asking for our help? If she had been beaten, she probably hooked up with the wrong man and he took exception to being used. Not that it made it right, but her behavior would open her up to this happening again.

“Natalya LeBlanc probably fucked the wrong guy. She’s a rich bitch who gets off on playing with the lower elements, if you know what I mean. If she’s been hurt, why come to Eliana? Why do we need to protect her? Her daddy can hire bodyguards to protect his precious little girl,” I said sarcastically, even while my stomach clenched. I wondered how badly she was hurt. I saw the shock on my brothers’ faces. I’d never spoken about a woman like that.

“Why the hell would you think that, let alone say that, Knight? She’s a goddamn woman who was beaten. Whether she’s rich or not has nothing to do with it. As for her fucking the wrong guy, what makes you say that?” Agony growled.

I cursed myself for saying anything. I knew I couldn’t avoid explaining now that I opened my big mouth.

“I met her at the open house. She was on the prowl. I went to confront her because she gave Cara a bunch of flowers and told her she had beautiful eyes like her daddy. I wanted to know who she was and what her angle was. While I talked to her, I saw her checking most of you out. When she told me who she was, I knew what she was really up to. It wasn’t about donating like she said. She was looking to hook up with one of us. You know, the rich girl slumming with the outlaw biker.”

There was stunned silence for several moments before Dare swore. “Jesus, you got all that from her just looking at your brothers. Did she admit it was what she wanted? Did you offer to have sex with her?”

“She denied it of course and yes, I told her I’d give her a ride if she wanted. She got mad and stormed off. I thought that would be the last we heard from her. I don’t know what prompted her to actually donate. Maybe she wanted to make me think I was wrong about her.”

Bones whistled low and long. “Fuck, she really got to you, brother. I hate to say this but I think you let shit from your past cloud your judgment. I didn’t meet her, but to jump to that conclusion seems hasty and totally unlike you. Plenty of people stare at us and it isn’t because they want to sleep with us.”

My past wasn’t a secret from my brothers. Those who had been around knew my stories. I’d shared them as cautionary tales for all of them. Although, the way the guys were reacting had me thinking maybe I was hasty. Had I let my past blind me to the truth?

“You asked why we’d have to protect her when her daddy can more than afford to hire a dozen bodyguards for her?” Agony asked gruffly. I could tell he wasn’t happy with me.

“Yeah, why is she refusing to go to a hospital, hiding that she went anywhere and making Eliana think she needs help? Did she ask for help?”

“She didn’t ask for help. The reason Eliana thinks she wants to stay off the radar and won’t go to her dad for protection is because El’s convinced either Natalya’s dad might have had something to do with it or whoever did it could cause him trouble,” Agony told me softly.

“What did you just say?” I asked him, unable to believe what I was hearing.

Surely, a man like Fabian LeBlanc wouldn’t beat his daughter. Why would he do it? If he had been the one to do it or sanction it, what had she done to warrant that in his mind? No matter my dislike of rich girls, I couldn’t truly excuse her being beaten by anyone. No woman deserved it. I was acting like an asshole. What I needed to do was think of her like anyone else.

“You fucking heard me. Eliana’s convinced it was her father, or someone very dangerous. Why, she has no idea. When she questioned her and brought up going to her father and the police, Natalya got agitated and scared. She told Eliana she couldn’t do that and made her swear she wouldn’t call the cops or her dad.”

The more I heard the sicker I felt. Images of what she might look like was moving through my brain. No matter my personal thoughts, we needed to make sure she was alright.

“I think we should go meet her and see if we can get her to tell us more. At the very least, offer our protection,” I stated quickly.

“Well, I’m glad you’re at least okay with us doing that. Although, based on your earlier remarks, I think it might be a good idea if you stayed here. That way your dislike of her won’t cloud the issue. I doubt she likes you if you acted like an asshole to her,” Agony added with a censorious frown at me.

“I can keep my thoughts to myself, Pres. I want to go. If I wronged her, I owe her an apology. I’ll stay back and let you guys take the lead. Do you know where we can find her?”

He didn’t say anything for several seconds as he studied me then he sighed. “Yeah, I know where she lives. She gave Eliana her home address. Wire, I need you to do a quick check and see if you can find out if she lives alone or with her dad. I’d hate to roll up and find him there and get him asking questions, especially if he’s responsible for her condition.”

While we’d been talking, Wire had been softly typing away on his tablet. He always brought it into church in case we needed him to check something out right away. He was nodding. He raised his head and reached for the remote next to him. We had a projector he hooked into that would allow him to show us the information on a big screen. Immediately, Natalya’s face appeared. A jolt went through me. She was as gorgeous as I remembered. My brothers began whistling right away.

“Goddamn! I’ll stand guard duty every night if you want,” Mace offered after whistling. He had a smirk on his face.

“Fuck that, I’ll do it,” Nitro offered.

More guys offered to watch over her. As they did, I grew pissed. They weren’t going to do any such damn thing. Before I could tell them that,

Agony called them back to order.

“Settle down, you horny bastards. No one will be guarding her with the intent to sleep with her. She might need our help, not a bunch of slobbering manwhores trying to get in her pants. Wire, anything?”

“Yeah, it was easy. Her address and the one belonging to her father aren’t the same. In fact, she lives the furthest point she can away from him. He lives out of town by the Smoky Mountain Country Club on a big piece of land. She lives on Pioneer Ridge Road in a little house. I think it’s safe to say, he shouldn’t be there.”

“Good. I say we should go first thing tomorrow. It’s late and us rolling up on her this time of evening will scare her. Also, I think we should take Eliana with us, since she has a rapport with her. All of us don’t have to go.”

I raised my hand. When he gave me a chin lift, I spoke up. “I want to be one of the ones going. I need to see if I was wrong about her and offer my apologies if I was.”

“Fine, but stay in the background. Okay, it’s me, Eliana, Knight, Bones, and Hulk. Bones, if she lets you examine her, I’d like you to see what you think. Eliana said there was no way to know for sure if she had any cracked or broken bones or internal injuries. The bruises are fresh. She admitted it happened last night.”

“I’ll bring my bag,” Bones confirmed.

“Alright, everyone who’s going needs to meet here at the clubhouse at eight. We’ll ride out together. Now, let’s get the hell out of here. I want to spend time with my family and not you ugly dogs.”

We all laughed and teased him as he ended the meeting. Dare agreed he felt the same. As much time as I spent with Cara, I did love seeing her little face light up every time she saw me. It was her innocence I needed to keep my dark thoughts at bay. I knew tonight would be a rough, sleepless night. I wouldn’t rest until I knew whether I’d been drastically wrong about

Natalya. If I had been, then I'd do whatever it took to make it up to her.



I was up early. I hadn't slept worth a damn. Last night, before I took Cara to our house for the night, Joli had caught me and told me that she'd keep Cara for me while we went to see Natalya. I thanked her. It was still a weekday and most everyone else would be at work. She only worked part time for the architect office who employed her. It worked out with her now having Branson. At the moment, she was still on maternity leave.

I got Cara up and dressed and fed her breakfast. She was used to me going to work, so she didn't say anything. If one of the old ladies or Tana wasn't available to watch her, then we had one lady I found who I trusted to babysit her. It was Micah's aunt. We knew Micah because he was the boyfriend of Eliana's physical therapist friend, Austin.

Mercy was in her early fifties. She had no kids of her own but she adored them. When Micah offered her up as a babysitter for the club, we'd been thrilled to find someone we could trust. Of course, we still checked her out, but her being his aunt went a long way. She didn't work since she had money from her late husband. She was available almost any time we asked, day or night.

Cara happily skipped into Joli and Dare's house, greeting them with smiles and a demand to hold Branson. They laughed. I reminded her to behave and to listen. She gave me a sweet smile and a kiss. "I will, Daddy. Love you."

"I love you too, Buttercup. I'll see you later. Daddy will be back and we'll play and stuff until I have to go to work."

I gave Joli a hug. "Thank you. We should be back in a couple of hours."

"Take your time. She'll be fine. If she doesn't behave, I'll hang her by her toes from the fence," she said louder.

Cara giggled. That was Joli's favorite threat to make to Cara, and she

thought it was hilarious. Giving Dare a fist bump, I left and went to the clubhouse to wait on the others. It wasn't long before Agony, Eliana, Bones, and Hulk joined me. I figured Tana was watching the twins with help from Niko or Atticus if she needed it.

It was a nice day, so we decided to ride our bikes. Eliana was elated that she was going to get to ride. She didn't get to do it much with the babies. The ride out to where Wire said Natalya lived was a short ride. As we got closer, I saw a variety of small log cabins. I liked them. My new house was a large log cabin. Shortly after noticing them, Agony slowed down then pulled into one of the driveways. I realized we were there, and that she lived in one of those cabins.

From the outside, it looked like any other quaint log cabin. The leaves were starting to turn colors but there were still colorful flowers planted in flower beds and baskets hanging from her small porch. There were trees scattered around her lawn. As our bikes came to a halt and we shut them off, I watched to see if she would come out the door. There was always a chance she wouldn't be here, but it was still early. I hoped we had caught her before she left for the day. I didn't know if she worked or not.

I hung back and let Agony and Eliana take the lead. I was the last one in the group as we approached the steps to her porch. Suddenly, her front door cracked open, and she peeked out.

"What do you want?" she called out. I could hear fear in her tone which I didn't like.

"Natalya, it's me, Eliana. Don't be afraid. It's just me, my husband, and some of his brothers. I think you met them at the open house a couple of weeks ago," Eliana said pleasantly. She was smiling.

The door opened more, and she took a step out onto the porch. As she did, I saw how stiffly she held herself and how slowly she moved. She kept her face blank, but I knew she had to be hurting, especially if she was as bruised as Eliana had told Agony.

"Oh, hi, Eliana. I didn't realize it was you. What can I do for you?"

How did you know this was my place? Are you lost?”

Elaina laughed and shook her head. “No, we’re not lost. I knew this was your place because you gave me your address when you came to see me yesterday, remember? We’d like to talk to you if you have a few minutes. It’s important.”

She let her surprise show. “Oh, alright. Why don’t you all have a seat here on the porch? I’m afraid the inside is too small for more than four people. Can I get you anything?”

“No, we’re fine. A talk is all we want,” Agony told her with a smile.

I stayed behind Hulk. He was a few inches taller than my six foot three and he was wider. She hadn’t seen me yet. We all moved up onto the porch and settled. There was a swing and a couple of chairs around a small table. Natalya sat down on the swing and Eliana joined her. Agony and Bones sat at the table. I hung out on the steps behind Hulk. I noticed Natalya was busy looking at Agony.

“Thank you for talking to us. I recall we spoke at the open house. I wish it was under better circumstances that we were meeting again,” Agony said to her softly.

“Whatever do you mean? Is something wrong with Promises? Is that why you’re here? I heard you were getting a bunch of new sponsorships and people wanting to help. Do you need more money?” she asked anxiously.

Hearing her say that and knowing she was about to offer more money, I knew instantly that I had been wrong about her. I had let my past mistakes prejudice me against her simply because of her money. No one could see her face or hear her voice and not feel the sincerity dripping off her. I wanted to groan in disgust.

“Oh no, that’s not it. Promises is doing very well and your money will help a lot, like I told you. We appreciate it more than you know. The reason we’re here has nothing to do with Promises,” El told her quickly.

Natalya frowned and got a puzzled look on her face. “Then why are you here? I doubt it’s a social call, if you brought your husband and some of his friends with you. Oh Lord, that sounded rude. I’m sorry. Forgive me. I don’t mean it like that.”

Eliana took her hand and squeezed it. “I know you didn’t, and I didn’t take it that way. We’re here because we want to offer you our help.”

“Help? Help with what?” She still looked like she didn’t have a clue why we’d be here.

“We want to help protect you from whomever beat you. Don’t get mad at Eliana, but she told us you came to see her yesterday and why. She’s worried about you. After what I heard, so are we. My club and I want to offer you our protection,” Agony explained.

Her face went deadly white. She was pale naturally, but this color was a sickly white. She tore her hand out of Eliana’s and stood up in a flash. I could see she was shaking.

“You need to go. I’m sorry you came all the way out here, but I don’t need any help. Please, go.”

She headed for the door. Before she got to it, I stepped out from behind Hulk. Her eyes collided with mine. When she recognized me, she flushed red.

“Please, don’t go. We want to help, Natalya,” I promised her.

“Oh, so you don’t think I’m just a rich whore looking for a bad-boy biker to fuck, so I can tell all my friends anymore? Maybe this is just an elaborate scheme to make you think that isn’t my plan. Get out. I don’t need or want help, especially from you,” she hissed at me.

I knew I deserved her anger and hate, but it didn’t change the fact that she was hurt and she needed help. Quickly, before she made it inside, I rushed toward her and took a hold of her arm. I did it gently, but even though I did, she flinched and the breath hissed out of her. I finally registered that

she had on long sleeves and leggings and it was hot outside. Only her hands and face were bare. Not stopping to ask permission because I knew she wouldn't give it, I shoved up her sleeve then swore.

Her arm was covered in dark purple bruises. She tried to yank her sleeve back down, but I held on to it. The anger coming off the guys was palpable as they saw them. I wanted to curse and beat the hell out of someone. If this was what her arms looked like, what did the rest of her look like? She tugged on her arm which only made her flinch more.

“Stop, before you hurt yourself more. I know Eliana checked you over, but you should let Bones. He's a doctor. He might find something she didn't,” I told her sternly, as I gestured to Bones.

“I don't need a doctor. I'm fine. I should've never gone to Promises. Thank you for coming but you can go.”

“Who hurt you, sweetness? We need to know. We can help protect you from whoever it was?” Hulk said to her sweetly.

“You can't protect me,” she whispered as she jerked out of my grip.

“Like hell we can't. I'm not leaving until you let Bones look you over. Call the cops if you want. I'll be glad to tell them why we're here,” I said stubbornly.

If that was the only way to get her to accept Bones examining her then I'd do it. It had been a long time since my ass had been in a jail cell. She looked at me and must've realized I was dead serious, because she sighed then hung her head in defeat.

“Fine, he can check me over, but as soon as he's done, you have to leave. Nothing good will come of anyone knowing about this. Trust me. Your club doesn't need this kind of problem.”

I wanted to argue with her, but the desire to have her examined outweighed it, so I kept my mouth shut.

“I’ll come in with you, if that makes you feel better,” Eliana offered kindly.

“Thank you, it would. Come on then. Right this way.”

After they went into the house, I faced Hulk and Agony. They didn’t look happy either.

“Did you see those bruises? Jesus Christ, I hope the rest of her is better than her arm. We can’t just walk away from this, Agony,” I protested.

He held up his hand. “I agree, brother, but we can’t force her to tell us who did it. If we asked outright whether it was her dad or someone associated with him, I think she’d deny it and probably run. All we can do is make sure she doesn’t need a hospital and then we’ll sit down with the rest of the guys to figure out what we can do. Even if she doesn’t want our help, she’s gonna get it.”

Hulk grunted his agreement. Feeling better about things, I paced as we waited for the verdict. It was almost fifteen minutes before Bones and Eliana came back outside. I could tell by the expression on his face and the fire in his eyes that the bruising was as bad on the rest of her body. Eliana appeared stressed. Agony gathered her in his arms and hugged her close. I glanced to see if Natalya was coming out. I didn’t see her.

“Where is she? Does she need a hospital, Bones?”

“She should get some x-rays and shit to make sure, but she’s still refusing to do it. We’ll talk at home. The exam was too much, I think. She asked us to tell everyone thank you for coming and for our concern. She’s still denying she needs our help and said for us to forget it. No way is she gonna tell us who did this to her.”

I wanted to barge into her house and demand she tell me and let me take her to the damn hospital, but I knew it wouldn’t do any good. I’d totally misunderstood the kind of person she was. This second meeting showed me she was a fighter and not one to take advantage of people. I’d have to figure out a way to get close to her and protect her despite her resolve for us not to.

Reluctantly, I gave him a chin lift. We called out goodbye through the screen door. Faintly, I heard her call it back to us then we got on our bikes. The ride back was filled with my thoughts on what to do to take care of her and make sure something like this didn't happen again. If I ever found out who did it, I'd be paying them a visit, and they'd find out the meaning of pain.

Natalya: Chapter 3

As the roar of the motorcycles faded away, I sank down onto my bed. I couldn't believe what had just happened. When I woke up this morning, I never imagined I'd be paid a visit by several bikers and Eliana. Once they told me why they were here, I was appalled and terrified.

If it was discovered anyone knew what happened to me, there would be hell to pay. I should've never gone to see Eliana yesterday. The only reason I did was I hurt so badly that I needed something to help with the pain.

Even before the open house, I'd heard rumors about what a lifesaver she was when it came to treating people's various ailments. Pain and decreased mobility because of diseases like arthritis were two of the top things she helped with. At the open house, I heard it firsthand from several people she'd helped. She used natural herbal remedies to treat them.

I knew that I couldn't go to my doctor, the ER, or regular clinic to get pain pills. There would've been too many questions raised, and I knew in no time it would've been all over Cherokee. I couldn't afford for that to happen. So, I thought of her and took a chance. She'd been very concerned and helpful and gave me a couple of creams. I'll admit, they had helped with the pain and I got some sleep last night. It was amazing what relief I got without taking prescribed narcotics.

She tried then to get me to go to the ER to have x-rays and other tests run. I refused point blank to do it. In addition, she kept trying to find out who'd hurt me. I could tell it wasn't out of mere curiosity. She genuinely wanted to help me. It hurt to turn down her offer. I could've seen us becoming friends before this disaster. Now, I didn't think that would be a good idea.

To say I was shocked then pissed to see Knight with them was the understatement of the year. After his hateful words to me at their compound, I'd hoped to never lay eyes on him again. Which was truly a shame because

he was a delight to look at. Before he'd approached me and told me what he thought of me that day, I'd seen him several times over the afternoon. I made myself stay away from him, but I couldn't help but stare at him every time I saw him and he wasn't looking my way. What warm-blooded straight woman wouldn't? He was an honest-to-God dreamboat.

He was tall, standing a few inches taller than six feet. I could tell that when he came over to me. He had piercing sky-blue eyes, just like his daughter. I hadn't lied about those. It was a dead giveaway they were related. He was in his late thirties, I guessed, making him ten or so years my senior. His skin was a golden tan color, making me wonder if he had any Italian ancestry.

His hair was a dark-chocolate brown almost black color that was longer on top and cut short on the sides. There was a slight wave to it and it was thick. It matched the light beard and mustache he had. It was more than scruff but less than a thick full beard. It suited him. People would consider him to be built. I wouldn't call him hefty or bulky, but he had muscles and they showed. He was definitely a man who worked out and took care of his body. All those were enough to get my attention and keep it.

I didn't know why. His fellow club members were attractive too. I'd been curious about them and watched them. I'd never been around bikers before and I wanted to find out what they were truly like. You heard so many stories and I wanted to know what was true and what was fiction. Although they all fascinated me from a purely intellectual standpoint, Knight had gone past that to something physical.

Or he had until he came up to me and opened his big mouth. The ugliness that came pouring out from someone who didn't know me had stunned then angered me. It was bad enough to hear derogatory and hateful things from someone who knew you. To get it from someone who didn't know a thing about me, it hurt worse. I got out of there as fast as I could while hoping to never see him again.

Although, I hadn't been able to forget about him despite his hatefulness. It was those memories and how he acted that almost made me reconsider making the donation to Promises, but I refused to allow him to

change me. A few days later, I walked into Pagan Promises and spoke to Eliana again and wrote out a check. I happily told her that I would be making more than a onetime contribution.

There were many things I hated about being Fabian LeBlanc's daughter. Aspects of the money were part of it, but not when I could use it to do good. When that happened, I was happy to have it. It was really the only time I used the trust fund he had set aside for me. One my mother had insisted he create when I was born. The rest of the time it was my hard-earned money that paid for everything in my life.

Most people looked at him and saw a rich, successful, intelligent, congenial man who owned a lot of land and was known at times to be generous. He was all those things except I would never call him congenial and his generosity was for other reasons. The rest was all an act for the masses. Those who knew him well, knew he was far from that. My father had an ugly side, and you didn't want to see it. That's what happened to me and I had the bruises to show for it.

I shied away from remembering the other night. I didn't want that horrible memory or what led to my bruises constantly in my head. Call me a coward, but sometimes ignoring something was better than dwelling on it. What I needed to focus on was finding a way to fix the disaster my life was becoming. If I didn't do something quick, I would be lost.

The offer to help had been so tempting to accept, but I knew anyone who helped me would be crushed by my father. He was counting on the fact I wouldn't tell anyone what happened. I didn't plan to tell anyone because it would paint a target on them.

I didn't know how long I sat there lost in my thoughts and fears before I came back to my senses. As soon as I did, I got up and went to my small spare bedroom. My cabin wasn't huge, but it provided everything I needed. It had two bedrooms and a bathroom. A small living room and kitchen finished it off. It was more than enough room for me.

I used the second bedroom as an office. It had a futon in there just in case anyone ever needed to spend the night, although I had no idea who

would do that. My work was over the internet mainly, so I didn't have work friends. Those in my father's world I steered clear of. You couldn't ever be sure they were your actual friends or just lying to get close to my father or to spy on me for him.

I learned that lesson the hard way years ago. My first and only serious boyfriend had shown me that ugly truth. I thought he was with me because he loved me. I found out after it was too late that he was merely doing what my father ordered and paid him to do. He was ordered to make me fall in love with him then marry him. Once we were married, my boyfriend would get a high-paying position in my father's company.

When I found out the truth, not only did I dump his ass, but I confronted my father. He shrugged it off and didn't bother to deny it. He claimed he couldn't trust me to make the right choice, so he made it for me. I moved out of his house, despite his threats, a month later. Even though that was six years ago, he still tried to find ways to make me move back to his house to be under his thumb. I'd live on the streets first before I did that.

Sitting down at my desk, I opened up my email and programs. It was time for me to get to work. A lot of people were surprised to find out that I did actually work. And I was proud of the work I did. It wasn't some fluff job that required no brains or that my father had given me. It was stimulating and hard work. I was a translator. I mainly did translation and transcription of written documents, but occasionally I was asked to be an interpreter slash translator for an important businessperson or a diplomat. There aren't a lot of people learning to read, speak and write the Russian language these days in the US. My current project was translating a big company contract, and a manual written in Russian that a company wanted translated into English.

As my first name suggested, I did have Russian ancestry. My mother had been from Russia and came to the States when she married my father. I never got a clear story on how they met and got married. My mom died when I was ten years old. I could recall her cuddling me and telling me she loved me. She would talk to me in Russian and made sure I learned to read and write it from an early age. We had fun speaking in Russian and my father didn't know what we were saying.

She spent as much time as she could with me, but my father had insisted on her accompanying him on most of his trips and to a lot of his business functions. I hated when she had to leave me to go with him. She died in a terrible car crash. She ran off the road in the rain and hit a tree. I'd been devastated when I lost her.

After that, the nanny who had helped to take care of me when my mom was away was let go. A month after my mom's death, I was sent to boarding school. I'd hated it. I never actually fit in with the other rich girls who went there. All they seemed to care about was who had the better clothes, jewelry, and vacations, and later it became who had the best car and sexiest boyfriend. One good thing about it was I was able to continue my study of the Russian language. I'd been ecstatic to get out of there when I was eighteen and to go to college. In between, I was only home for short bouts. My father insisted I stay over the summer and study.

Even before her death, my father hadn't been an affectionate man. I couldn't recall him hugging or kissing me or telling me he loved me. As I grew, it didn't change. I stopped telling him I loved him when I was twelve or so. I had to still carry out the charade that I cared about him and had to greet him with a hug and a kiss on the cheek whenever others outside his inner circle of bodyguards were present. No one was allowed to think Fabian LeBlanc was anything but a loving and beloved father. What a crock of shit.

Some days I wished I could run away and disappear. Go somewhere where he couldn't find me and I could live my life totally the way I wanted. However, I knew that was a pipe dream. He would never allow me to do it. After this last visit with him, that was made crystal and painfully clear to me.

No, you aren't going to go there. Not now. You have work to do. Focus, I sternly told myself. Focusing on my work, eventually, I got lost in it. It was hours later when I finally lifted my head and looked at the clock. Wow, no wonder I was starving. I'd been sitting here for six hours. My breakfast had been disturbed by the Pagans and I hadn't eaten lunch.

Standing up, I groaned at how stiff and in pain I was. First thing before food had to be more of that wonderful cream. It even smelled good, like flowers and mint. Why didn't over-the-counter creams like Ben Gay

smell like that?

In my bedroom, I stripped off my clothes. I didn't bother to look in the mirror. I didn't need another visual reminder of my stupidity or how terrible I looked. I'd been embarrassed to let Bones see me, but Eliana had helped to ease my anxiety about taking off most of my clothes for a man I didn't know. As for Bones, he'd been completely professional.

It still seemed crazy to me that an actual doctor was in a motorcycle club. I wondered why. Whatever. It wasn't my business. After today, I had to make sure I didn't go near them or Eliana. I wasn't going to bring trouble down on their heads. I should've never gone to Promises asking for her help. *God, don't let this come back on her.*



It has been a week since the Pagans showed up on my doorstep. I'd been worried they would come back, but so far they hadn't. That's not to say I hadn't seen some of them. They seemed to be all over town these days. Every time I ventured out to go somewhere, I'd end up seeing at least one or more of them riding by or parked outside a business.

They didn't pretend to not know me either. They would wave. I had to wave back. I wasn't that much of a bitch, no matter what Knight thought of me. A few times, they had been close enough to speak. They said hello and asked if I was doing alright. Those times I'd been quick to reassure them I was fine and then I walked on.

As for Knight, I'd seen him around too. I ignored him as much as I could. A couple of times, I saw him with his adorable daughter, Cara. I didn't know what the deal was with her living with him. Where was her mother? She had gotten my attention at the open house and I couldn't resist giving her flowers. I'd brought a few bouquets to the event for Eliana. I didn't think it would be a big deal. Obviously, I was wrong.

When Knight did see me, I could feel his eyes drilling into me like a laser. His intense looks made me squirm. I wondered if he was still thinking I was out for a walk on the wild side with a biker or any other commoner as

he'd put it.

I didn't live my life looking down on people. I didn't consider myself better than anyone just because of the amount of money they had or where they lived. They had to do something to prove to me they weren't worth my time or effort. My father, on the other hand, was exactly like that. He thought he was king and everyone else were his subjects, including me. No princess complex for me.

Today, I had to go to town to pick up more groceries. The fridge was bare. I'd been busy and hadn't gotten to the store. Other things always seemed to take priority, however, now, I had no choice. It was that or eating crackers and canned soup.

I could cook well enough, but cooking for one wasn't any fun. The cook at my father's house over the years had worked with me whenever I was home and there were actual classes which I took on my own after I got out of boarding school. I enjoyed them but they weren't as nice as working with someone one-on-one.

Generally, I liked to keep my food free of a lot of preservatives. I tended to buy fresh produce and stuff. Canned and boxed foods I would get a few for emergencies, but they didn't ever taste right to me. Call it being spoiled from years of home-cooked meals. Between home and the boarding school, that had been one good constant. I was bagging up apples and pears when a tiny voice grabbed my attention.

“There she is, Daddy. It's the beautiful lady who gave me flowers.”

I swung around to find Knight and his daughter. She was running toward me. I dropped the fruit in my basket and crouched down. I hated when adults loomed over me as a kid, so I tried not to do that. She stopped in front of me and smiled. As I smiled back, she threw her arms around my neck and hugged me. Automatically, I hugged her back. I realized what I was doing when Knight reached us. Quickly, I disengaged her arms and stood up. I made sure to keep smiling at her though. I avoided his gaze.

“Hello, Cara.”

“Hello, beautiful lady,” she chirped back.

“Her name is Natalya, Buttercup. You shouldn't just attack people in the store, sweetheart,” he gently admonished her.

“She didn't attack me. The hug was a lovely surprise. What're you here to get, Cara?”

I kept my eyes on her, although every cell in my body wanted to look into his blue eyes. Something about him made me feel off center and jittery.

“I want apples and grapes and strawberries. Daddy said he'd make me something with all of them. Do you like those too?”

“I love fruit. I just got apples and pears and I was about to look at the others. I eat a lot of fruit. They're good for you.”

She took my hand. “Okay, you come with me. Help me get my fruit.”

I had to look at Knight then. I didn't want to tell her no, but I didn't want to anger him either. I was surprised. He was looking at her with an indulgent look on his face. When he saw I was looking at him, he gave me a smile and a slight nod. I took that to be his permission. It wouldn't hurt to spend a few minutes with her in the store. No one would see it.

I led her over to where the other fruits were. I went through them and she picked which ones she wanted. I did the same. In no time, we both had several different ones in our shopping carts.

“Well, I think we cleaned them out, Cara. If your daddy puts them all together, then they will make a yummy fruit salad. I do that sometimes. If your daddy is okay with it, maybe put a little whipped cream on them too,” I told her with a wink.

Finally, Knight said something. He'd been silent the whole time we shopped for our fruit. “Daddy loves whipped cream, and not just on fruit and pie,” he said softly.

His expression and the tone of his voice told me he was hinting at

something sexual. I fought not to blush. The thought of him using whipped cream on me flashed through my mind. Immediately, I felt my nipples harden and my pussy pulsed. Oh hell no, I wasn't going to let him affect me. Not here and now. At night, in the privacy of my bedroom, was enough.

“Well, it was nice to see you again, Cara. I'm sorry. I have to go. Have fun shopping with your daddy.”

I gave her a quick hug then grabbed my cart and took off. I couldn't say anything to him. I didn't get more than a few steps away before a hand landed on my arm and I was stopped. The bruising had faded a lot, but it still hurt sometimes. His grip was gentle. He stepped up until I had no choice but to look at him. I gave him my best blank stare.

“There's no need to run off. If I made you uncomfortable, I'm sorry. I've been wanting to see you and find out how you're doing.”

“I'm fine, thank you for asking. I really should go.”

“Natalya, I want to apologize for how I acted the first time we met. I shouldn't have ever acted like that toward you. I'm sorry. I let past experiences cloud my head.”

He sounded sincere. I decided it was easier to say I accepted his apology than argue. I had to get out of here. The longer I was here, the greater the chance of someone seeing us and saying something to my father. After the beating, I couldn't afford that.

“Knight, I accept your apology. I appreciate you wanting to make sure I'm alright. I am, however, I do need to go.”

“I know you're scared. We want to help you. I want to help you. Just tell us who hurt you and why. We'll take care of it,” he said gruffly.

If only it were true. I'd never had anyone I could truly rely on that I could recall. As much as I wanted someone, it wasn't possible. Namely, because I wouldn't expose anyone to that part of my life. Also, I wouldn't be able to trust whoever I let in would remain with me and on my side. No

matter how much I tried to put it in the past, I couldn't forget my old boyfriend and his betrayal. Plus, as sincere as Knight sounded and acted right now, his underlying prejudice against rich women wouldn't just disappear.

"There's nothing you can do for me, Knight. Please, forget you ever knew about my bruises. Nothing will come of you and your club getting involved with me and my life except to cause you problems. I'm fine. I've handled my life for a long time." This time he let go and I was able to get away. It hurt to do it, but it had to be done. The last thing the Pagan Souls needed was Fabian LeBlanc messing with their lives.

The drive home was filled with regret and disappointment. After I got home and inside, I put away my groceries and sat down at my desk to get back to work. I'd only been working about a half hour when my cell phone rang. Picking it up, I instantly felt sick. It was my father. I knew ignoring his call wouldn't end well for me, so I took a deep breath and answered it.

"Hello, Father. How're you doing?"

I made my voice sound as pleasant and unconcerned as possible. However, my brain was working a mile a second, trying to figure out why he was calling. He'd been silent since our last disastrous encounter.

"Natalya, don't act like you don't know why I'm calling. I want to know why you're hanging with the Pagan Souls MC. Who are they to you and why are you with them?" His tone was angry.

"I'm not hanging with the Pagan Souls MC. I attended a community event a few weeks ago. They opened a business in town. I thought it might be a good idea to donate to it, that's all. I know how important it is for us as a family to support our community."

"Don't lie to me. I know you went to that thing. That doesn't explain why they came to your house a week later or why you were in the store talking to one of them today. I hope you're not telling tales. That would get people in trouble, including you," he stated, his voice cold.

I shivered. I knew he was threatening not only me but the MC. I

couldn't allow that. "Father, they came to my house to thank me for the donation I made. I guess it's something they like to do. As for today, I accidentally ran into one of them while he was shopping with his daughter. She talked to me since she remembered me from the open house. That's all. There are no tales being told. I would never do that."

He was silent for several terse moments then he responded. "That better be all it was. I don't want to hear of you hanging around them again. Also, I expect you to be at the house next Saturday night at five. I expect you to be here. Come dressed appropriately and be on your best behavior. I'd hate to have another conversation like we had last time."

I felt sick. Yeah, the last conversation was with fists and feet. All because I dared to speak out about someone who was an associate of his. He thought I was less than nice to the man. I didn't say what I thought about him to his face, just to my father, which I should've known was a mistake. I hadn't gotten the impression he was particularly close to the guy.

"There won't be a need for another conversation."

"Good. See you then and don't be late. Remember, don't be around the Souls. They're not the kind of people my daughter should be associated with. No more donations to their businesses either. Understand?"

"Understood."

He didn't bother to say goodbye. He just hung up. As I clicked the call off, I got up and ran to the bathroom. I barely made it before I threw up what little I had from breakfast. *Oh my God, what was I to do?* If I went to dinner at his house, I was terrified of what would happen. If I didn't, the repercussions would be as bad or worse than last time. I couldn't do that again. I had no choice. I had to go and pray it was just a harmless dinner. Although, the way my father had been acting lately, I didn't think it was. He was up to something and it didn't bode well for me.

Knight: Chapter 4

Yesterday's run-in with Natalya hadn't gone the way I'd hoped. She'd been more than nice to Cara, and my daughter enjoyed talking to her. I knew it by how much she talked about her afterward. The problem was I could barely get her to acknowledge me. She was stiff and uncomfortable.

I knew a big part of it was because of how I acted like a giant asshole and bastard to her that day here at the compound. I heartily regretted it. I wanted to make up for acting like that. One of those ways was to help her. I needed to know who had hurt her so badly.

The day Bones examined her, when we got back to the compound, Agony and I took him aside. It still angered me to recall what he told us.

"Okay, we're alone. Now tell us, was it as bad as Eliana indicated?" Agony asked him.

The pissed-off look still on Bones face told me it was, but I had to hear it.

"It was fucking worse. That poor woman was beaten black and blue all over. Her front and back torso are the worst, although she does have them on her arms and legs. I don't know how the hell she's up moving at all. It's a miracle she doesn't have any broken bones. I can't say if any are cracked and I still worry she could have some kind of internal injuries I can't see. Whoever did that to her is an animal."

"Fuck!" I snarled before I shoved one of the chairs at the table away from me. We were in church.

"Calm down. I know how much it pisses you off. I hate it too. I want to help her, but as long as she won't tell us who did it, there's not much we can do."

"Can we watch over her? Have eyes on her as much as possible to

see if anyone comes around her? We might be able to figure out who did it. I'm warning you, if I find out who it is, I'm gonna beat him twice as bad as he did her," I growled.

"Knight, if you do that, you might kill him. I mean it. It was brutal. There was anger and hate behind that beating. I know you're sorry for how you acted and you want to help her because of it. I can't stand the thought of a woman being hurt like that either. If Agony agrees, I'm willing to watch over her too," Bones added.

The way he said it made me wonder if he was attracted to Natalya. My brain instantly rejected the possibility. I didn't want any man to want her, let alone one of my brothers. From there our conversation continued about watching her. Agony agreed to have whoever was willing to do it. The others were gathered later, and we laid out the request for volunteers. We couldn't watch her twenty-four seven but we would do as much as we could. Every single one of them volunteered to help.

Since then, we'd all taken turns watching out for her. She mainly stayed at home a lot, which was easy to cover. When she left, we tried to be visible. I hoped it would give her a sense of security. At night, I couldn't watch her since I had Cara. I worried the most then. What if whoever hurt her came back in the middle of the night?

Yesterday, seeing her and being able to talk to her was great. I was happy Cara had sought her out when she saw her. There was something about Natalya that Cara adored. I couldn't blame her. After we found out about her beating, I'd asked Wire to dig into her. I was hoping to figure out who did it. If nothing else, it would tell me about her background. I wanted to form my opinions of her based on the real her and not past bullshit.

There weren't any clues in the information he found on her, unfortunately. I don't know how he found some of the stuff that he did, but he was thorough. She was twenty-six, which made her eleven years younger than me. She had lived on her own since she was twenty. She'd been sent to boarding school when she was ten and left when she was eighteen.

There wasn't much about her growing up. She was Fabian LeBlanc's

only child. Her mother died in a car crash when she was ten. She ran into a tree during a rainstorm. Her dad never remarried.

Natalya had gone to college and got her degree in languages. She worked as a Russian translator, which I found fascinating. That fact told me she was more than an empty-headed rich girl. She had brains. You'd have to, in order to do that kind of important and intense work.

Wire did find something I found more interesting than her job. She was single and had been for a long time. The only boyfriend he could find was a guy back when she was twenty. They'd been together for about six months then poof, they broke up and he moved away. The fact she didn't have a boyfriend in her life now made me wonder. Did she still love the guy or had he hurt her and she didn't trust guys?

I was concerned because I was fucking interested in her myself. I might not say it aloud, but I was. Even when I was being a total bastard to her, deep down, I was pissed off because she was a rich woman who captured my interest just by looking at her.

Sure, she was gorgeous and any guy would be attracted to her. It was something else, a vibe she put off, that made me want more. Since then, after finding out who she really was and what happened to her, the need to know her had only grown. I had no idea if she'd ever give me the time of day after what I said to her, but I wasn't gonna give up until she shot me down totally.

I had been trying to be a gentleman and let her heal and get comfortable with my apology. After today, standing back and doing nothing was off the table. I was gonna get her to spend time with me or else.

With this in mind, I took out my cell phone. Among the information Wire had, I had found her phone number. I'd put it in my phone. She was identified as Bright Eyes. It was what came to mind whenever I looked at her face. Her amber eyes just sucked you in deep. I hit send and waited to see if she'd pick up. After three rings, she answered. I could tell she was hesitant since she didn't know who was calling.

“Hello? This is Natalya. Who's this?”

“Natalya, it’s Knight. I hope I’m not disturbing your work.”

“N-no, you’re not. Knight, how did you get my number?”

“It’s not that hard to do these days, babe.”

“Oh, well, why’re you calling me?”

“I want you to come to a party tonight. We’re having one at the compound. One of our prospects is going to be patched in. He doesn’t know it. We told him we just wanted to have a party for the hell of it. I think you’ll have a fun time and it’ll let you get to know Eliana and Joli better. They’ve been talking about you and how much they like you. And, for part of it, Cara will be here. She’ll love to see you again in case you couldn’t tell earlier.”

She didn’t say anything for a couple of seconds then she answered me. “Knight, that’s very sweet of you all to invite me and I appreciate it more than you know, but I can’t. I have plans tonight. I’m sorry.”

I doubted she did. She hadn’t gone anywhere for the past week at night. I pushed back. “Oh yeah, where are you going? Anywhere interesting? Having a girls’ night out with your girlfriends?” I knew from Wire she didn’t seem to have any girlfriends. She was very isolated as far as I could tell.

“Yes, I am having a night out with my friends. Again, thank you and tell Eliana, Joli, and Cara I said hello and to have fun. I’ll be thinking of them. I’ve got to go. I have work to finish before tonight.”

“Okay, you go do that. Although, if you change your mind, call me. We’ll start around seven. Talk to you later. Goodbye, darlin’.”

“Goodbye,” she said softly before she hung up.

There was no way I was accepting her lie. I had shit to do then I was gonna head over to her house. See if I could get her to change her mind if we were face-to-face. Was it pushy, yeah, but I wasn’t a guy to sit back and do nothing.

I went to join the others. The fruit I got at the store wasn’t just for

Cara. It was for a fruit salad the ladies were making. I'd volunteered to go get the stuff they needed. The ladies along with Tana were busy with the food prep. The guys were helping by watching the kids and doing whatever they were told to do by the women. The clubhouse had been cleaned. and we always kept the alcohol stocked.

At first, the party would be family friendly. Later in the evening, the bunnies and other women from town would be coming. My single brothers and the prospects would be getting their cocks wet, while Dare and Agony went home with their wives. Some might think they were missing out, but they weren't. They were more than happy to be home with their beautiful wives. They loved and adored them. No other woman even registered for them.

I'd always wondered about how that could be. Now, I was starting to see how it could happen. Since I saw Natalya, not a single woman had registered. Sure, I hadn't had sex in a while, but plenty of women had gotten my interest up. It was purely the fact I didn't want to leave Cara to go fuck for the hell of it which kept me from partaking. After meeting Natalya, more than a few women who'd come to the clubhouse as well as the bunnies—Toni, Fiona, and Natalie, had tried to get me to sleep with them and I wasn't even tempted.

My sexual desires had been all for her and I satisfied them, not by sleeping with another woman, but by pleasuring myself. The thought of fucking another woman and imagining it was Natalya was abhorrent to me. Whatever this was about her that interested me, it was growing. I had secret hopes I might not end up spending the rest of my life alone, raising my daughter. Maybe I was nuts to think Natalya was that woman. The one I thought didn't exist but had hoped did. Time would tell. The only way to find out was to spend time with her. Watching her from afar wasn't gonna help me decide if she was.

Cara helped me with my chores, which I loved. She had totally captured my heart since she came to live with me. I still hated the fact I took so long to find out she was mine. I hoped I'd be able to make up for that over the years.

By late afternoon, everything was done, and we were ready. I went to Agony. Not because he was our president, but because he and I had been together in the club since forever. We both prospected together and were the only ones still here who prospected at that time. Dare was the next oldest member. He came two years after us.

Agony was at home with Eliana. The twins were napping. I texted first to see if he had a couple of minutes. He'd responded, telling me to come to the house. We could talk in his office there. When I tapped on the door, since I didn't want to ring the doorbell and wake up the babies, he answered it immediately.

"Come on in."

I followed him to his office. I was waiting until he shut the door and took his seat before saying anything. He beat me to it.

"Can I get you something to drink?" He pointed to the mini fridge he had in his office. He was taking out a bottle of water.

I shook my head no. "Nah, I'm good, thanks."

"Tell me what's bothering you, Knight. I can see it. You've been off for the past couple of weeks, well, longer than that, now that I think about it."

"You're right, I have been. Having Cara come to live with me has been an adjustment. You know that. It's made me think about things I never seriously thought about before."

"Like hooking up with women?"

"Like that. It seems damn strange to leave my kid to go do it. I know the guys have been talking about why I don't hang out and party with the bunnies and the other women anymore. I just can't, Agony."

"I get it. I can only imagine what you're going through. For me, I have Eliana and she's the reason I stopped, as you know. I love her and I would never cheat on her, but you're not involved with anyone, Knight. You

can't ignore your needs. You're taking excellent care of Cara and we're here to help. Send her to stay with us, so you can blow off steam. Tonight, why don't you let her stay all night with us? This party is a perfect time for you to break your dry spell."

I shook my head. That wasn't why I was here. "I appreciate the offer, but that's not why I'm here. I want to talk to you about Natalya LeBlanc."

"What about her? So far, no one has bothered her as far as I know."

"I know. It's not that. I ran into her at the store. A little bit ago, I called her to ask her to come to the party tonight. She said no and made up some lie about going out with friends. I know from Wire she doesn't have girlfriends. I wanted to know if I could leave Cara with you for a while, so I could go visit Natalya and see if I can change her mind."

"Why the sudden interest in her? Are you still feeling bad about what you said to her that first time? If so, you apologized. You don't have to beat yourself up or do penance."

"Of course I still feel awful, but that's not why I want her to come tonight. Goddamn it, I like her, okay? There's something about her that I can't shake. I want to get to know her better. I want to spend time with her," I admitted.

An interested and slightly amused look came over his face. He leaned toward me. "Are you saying you want to fuck her or do more?"

"The answer is both. It's more than just the desire to get her naked, although I do have that urge, believe me. I want to spend time with her fully clothed too, Agony."

"Are you thinking she might be a woman you could spend significant time with, as in maybe the next fifty or so years?"

"I think it might be very likely."

He laughed then slapped the top of his desk. "Hot damn, I knew it. I

knew it as soon as I saw the way you looked at her that day at her house and how you've been so insistent we watch her. I thought you were gonna punch Bones when he was talking about protecting her."

"I thought about it. Honestly, the thought of any guy wanting her makes me mad. A brother would be worse. Am I losing my mind? She's a rich girl, Agony. Why the hell would she look twice at a lowly biker like me?"

"You're more than a biker and you're not lowly. Sure, her daddy has more money than all of us put together, but the little I saw tells me money isn't a big thing to her. Is that what has you worried? That you're not good enough?"

"Partly, and the rest is, what if I'm wrong? What if it ends up petering out to nothing? Even if I'm right, she might not see me that way or, if she does, can she handle taking on me and my daughter? I'm a package deal."

"It might happen she doesn't want you and Cara, but I don't think it will. I watched the security tapes of the day we had the open house. I wanted to see how everyone behaved. I saw her and Cara's first meeting. She was more than sweet and interested in Cara. And I saw the way she tried not to look at you the day we went to her house. She was mad at you, yeah, but she was also attracted. If you don't take a chance on her, then you might regret it. Let me ask you something."

"Sure, shoot."

"Do you find yourself thinking about her all the time, no matter what you're doing? Does she invade your dreams? Do you find yourself having sexual thoughts and having to yank one out because you're so fucking turned on you can't stand it? Do you want to go sit outside her house and wait for a glimpse of her to make sure she's okay? If another man were to take her out, would you want to beat his ass and run him off?"

It was like he was reading my mind. "Goddamn, how do you know all that? Yes, to all the above. It's driving me insane. What does it mean?"

“It means you need to get your ass over to her house and get her to go out with you and spend time with you and your daughter. This party is a good start, as long as the later activities of the evening are skipped. I don’t recommend you let her stay for those. I’m ninety-five percent sure I’m looking at the next Pagan to lose his heart to a woman and make her his queen.”

His grin made me grin back. My heart was pounding and my palms were sweaty. I’d been thinking the same thing, but it was a relief to hear someone else say it, especially a man who had his soulmate and would recognize that potential in others. I got to my feet. He did too and came around the desk and gave me a man hug.

“Just bring Cara over when you’re ready. I’ll tell Eliana. Go get that woman to say yes. If you need help to convince her, I’ll send in the big guns. Eliana and Joli could convince anyone.”

I laughed. He was right about that. “Thanks, brother. I’ll think about it. See you later. I’ll bring Cara around four thirty. It might take a little while to convince Natalya to join us. I’ll be back in time for the big reveal with Niko. He has no clue what’s going on.”

“Sounds good.” He walked me to the door. As I was leaving, he hollered, “Later.” I waved back in acknowledgment.

I whistled as I went back to the clubhouse to get Cara. I had an hour to get myself ready. I needed to shower and change into better clothes.



As I pulled my bike into her driveway behind her car, I waved at Atticus. He’d been on her security watch detail this afternoon. I gestured, indicating he could leave. He would be needed back at the clubhouse for the party. He nodded and got on his bike. He was parked down the road and back in the trees so he wasn’t as noticeable. Turning off my bike, I walked up to her door. I didn’t get a chance to knock before it was swinging open. A surprised Natalya faced me.

“Knight, what in the world are you doing here? I thought you had a party tonight to get ready for?”

She was dressed in shorts and a tank. It wasn't anything fancy, but she still looked like a million bucks to me. Her hair was back in a ponytail, allowing her beautiful and exotic face to shine. She didn't have an ounce of makeup on either. Those eyes pierced me while her mouth begged me to kiss it. I held myself in control, but I didn't want to.

“The party is all set. It hasn't started yet. I figured you'd be ready for your girls' night out by now. What time are you going?”

The flash of guilt I saw on her face before she masked it told me I was right. She didn't have any plans tonight. “Oh, that's later. What did you need?”

“What I need is for you to get changed into whatever your party clothes are and come with me. I'd like you to ride my bike, so if you do that, wear jeans and boots. A jacket for later is a good idea. It'll be chilly.”

“I can't go with you. I told you, I have plans.”

“I know what you told me, but I also know that's a bunch of crap. You aren't going anywhere. Why lie? If you don't want anything to do with me, just tell me,” I challenged.

She appeared to be stunned and speechless for several moments. “K-Knight, please, I can't. Nothing good will come of us being seen together. You shouldn't be here now.” I watched her look around nervously.

Alarms started to go off. I placed my hand behind my back, so it was closer to my gun which I had hidden underneath my shirt. I carried it in the small of my back rather than in front. I quickly scanned the area around us. I didn't see anyone spying on us, although I couldn't see into nearby houses or through the dense thicket of trees. I stepped closer to her.

“Move back inside the house, Natalya,” I urged her.

To my surprise, she did as I ordered. I got her back far enough to close the front door. As soon as it was shut, I flipped the lock. I needed to question her. Something was very wrong here, and I wasn't leaving until I found out what it was.

“You're gonna tell me why the hell you're so scared to be seen with me. You were scanning the neighborhood, Bright Eyes. Is whoever hurt you watching you? Is he threatening you? You need to let me help you.”

Tears sparkled in her eyes. She shook her head. “Knight, there's nothing you can do. I'm fine. Please, I need you and the rest of the club to stay away from here and me. I don't want anything to happen to you.”

“So, you are being threatened and so are we. What did he say? Why is he doing this to you?” I fired back.

I was losing patience with this whole fucked-up scenario. It seemed things were worse than we knew. She was in danger and us not being able to keep an eye on her at all times wasn't gonna work, not for me. She was backing up and looking more scared. I didn't know if it was of me or whoever was threatening her. I hoped to God it wasn't me.

“Baby, please, I'm not here to hurt you or get you hurt. You're scaring me. Those bruises weren't child's play.

“Knight, I can't. You don't understand. Just leave it alone. Please,” she begged me as she collapsed on her couch. I sat down right next to her.

“You don't know me yet or my club, but once you do, you'll know we don't like seeing innocent people hurt. And when we can do something about it, we do. I know we got off on the wrong foot and that was all my fault. I can't tell you how sorry I am. Please, you've gotta accept our help. You can't deal with this threat alone.”

“He'll come after you guys. He won't like you knowing about him. If I tell, it's not just me he's gonna hurt again. And next time, it'll be worse than last time,” she whispered.

I stood up and held out my hand. She took it in a daze and let me help her stand up. “Go pack a bag. You’re coming with me. No arguing. I’m not going to leave you here. Not after what you just said. You’ve been warned to stay away from us, haven’t you?”

She nodded.

“Well, fuck him. Let’s go.”

“Knight, I can’t. Even if I wanted to, I have to be able to work,” she cried out.

“Let’s get something out of the way first, then I’ll address your work comment. I want you to call me Elijah when we’re alone. To everyone else and my club, I go by my road name, Knight. With you, I don’t want you to call me that when it’s just us.”

“Why would you give me permission to use your real name and not your club one like everyone else?”

“The use of our real names is reserved for special people. You’re special, Natalya. Now, as far as your work goes, you’re a translator, right?” She nodded again. “Well, I assume you use a laptop. If not, we can take your computer tower to the compound. Wire will get you set up so you can do your work there.”

“I can’t just show up at your club and expect them to put me up. They’ll wonder what’s going on and why you’re insisting on me being there.”

“They’ll know why. Honey, we’ve been watching you as much as we can for the last week or so. We knew you were in trouble. This conversation just told me it’s worse than we thought. They won’t care if you stay or not. And I have room for you at the house, so that’s not an issue.”

“At the house? You want me to stay with you? Won’t that raise questions? Even if I stayed at your compound, I can’t stay with you. I don’t want to cramp your style if you know what I mean.” She looked uncomfortable. I had to chuckle at the idea, which got me an outraged look.

“Babe, you won't be cramping anything because I don't bring women back to my house or around my daughter.”

“So you go to their place to have sex then?” she asked with a curl of her lip. She didn't appear to like the idea.

“I used to go to their place or to my old room at the clubhouse. However, I won't be doing that.”

“Why not? You just said I wouldn't be cramping your style. If you're not, you know, then that's cramping in my book.”

“Will staying with me cramp your style? What about the men you're sleeping with?”

I said it to get a rise out of her, but I detested the thought of her sleeping with anyone if it wasn't me. I was going down for the count. This woman had me in knots.

“I'm not sleeping with anyone, so it doesn't matter!”

“Well, thank God for that. It means we're both free and clear.”

“Free and clear of what?”

“Free and clear to put all our energy into figuring out us. I'm glad to know I'm not alone with this need to get to know you. I want that to be in every way possible.”

She gasped then gave me an angry look. “Are you offering to fuck me so I can enjoy the wild side again? You know, do a biker and brag to my friends later? Go to hell.” She went to walk off.

I caught her arm and twirled her around so she was facing me. I pulled her flush against my chest. I was obviously explaining myself wrong, and she'd probably slap me for this next part, but what the hell? I was a biker. I liked to live dangerously. I laid my mouth against hers and let my lips do the talking in a different way. A much more pleasurable way.

At first, she was frozen, but I didn't give up. Instead, I increased the pressure. As she gave a tiny gasp, I slipped my tongue between her lush lips. Wiggling it inside, I was able to meet her tongue and then I enticed it to play. It didn't take long to have her tongue responding.

Her hands were molded to my chest. She didn't shove me away or bite my tongue. All good signs to me. I kissed her long enough to get a good taste of her and to set up the need to taste her more and longer than I let go. She stared at me, stunned. I held her face between both of my hands.

"I'm not offering to fuck you for a walk on the wild side. I am offering to get to know you and let you get to know me, so we can decide if we could have something between us that will include you and I sleeping together. I'm not looking for a onetime wham bam and then gone ride, Natalya. Do you understand?"

"You want a relationship?" she whispered. The question and disbelief was evident in her tone and expression. Nowhere did I see distaste on her part for the idea.

"I want a relationship, whatever that ends up meaning to us. I haven't had one in so long, I don't know what they are anymore. What about you? You said you're not sleeping with anyone. Is there someone you want to be in a relationship with and you're not?"

"No, there isn't, not that it matters. I told you, I can't see you or your club."

"I'm not afraid of anyone, darlin'. You need to know that about me."

"You should be. He'll kill you and not think twice about it. I can't have that on my conscience. Please, you have to stop saying all this."

"Be honest with me. Even after the bastard I was to you, if you weren't worried about what this mystery guy would do to me and the club, would you consider getting involved with me? Or is the biker life not one you approve of? I know you can do much better than a guy like me, but would you at least give me a chance?"

She didn't say anything for almost a full minute. It was the longest minute of my life. Finally, she answered me. "If I didn't have him to worry about, then yes, I'd go out with you and see where it went, even after your asshole comments. Which says I must be insane, but that's not how it is, Knight."

I raised an eyebrow at her use of my road name. I wanted to hear my name on her lips so damn badly. She caught what I was meaning. "Elijah," she corrected softly.

To hear my name said like that from her mouth, heat flashed through me. I could only try to imagine what it would sound like when she was in the throes of passion. One day, I promised myself in that instant, I'd hear her scream my name as she came on my cock and mouth.

"It's gonna be that way, Bright Eyes. I'm not gonna take no for an answer. Get in there and pack what you need. We'll take your car with us. Bring your clothes and work stuff."

She tried to argue, but I refused to listen. I pushed her toward the hallway where her bedroom had to be. Eventually, she stormed off. As soon as she was out of sight, I took out my phone and I dialed Agony. He needed to know I was most likely bringing shit to the club. I knew he'd be alright with it. He'd just want to know about it ASAP. He answered after two rings.

"What happened? Did she call the law and have your ass thrown in jail already?" he asked with a chuckle.

"Nope, my ass is free and at her place. I want to warn you she's coming back with me and she's gonna be staying for a while. It's worse than we thought, Pres."

"Tell me," his deep, authoritative voice commanded. He was in president mode now.

"She hasn't said who she's afraid of, but she more or less confirmed she's been ordered to stay away from us. If she doesn't, not only is she in danger of getting worse than what she got last time, but so are we. She said

I'd get killed if I didn't stay away from her."

He swore long and hard. I waited for him to get it out of his system. When he did, he started talking. "Like hell he will. You get her here as soon as you can. I'll send Hulk and Nitro to escort you just in case you run into trouble. I'll let the others know. After the party tonight, in the morning, we'll sit down and discuss it with the club. Maybe by then, you'll know who we should be afraid of, but I think we both know who it is."

"Yeah, I think we do." I was putting my money on her dad.

"They'll be there in twenty. Stay inside until they get there. Tell her not to argue. We're not taking no for an answer. Unless she wants to call the law, she's coming here."

"I'll tell her. See you soon and thanks."

"Not a problem. See you soon."

As he hung up, she came back into the living room. "Who was that?"

"It was Agony. I called him to tell him you were coming back with me. He said pack as much as you want. Hulk and Nitro are coming to ride back with us. How's your packing coming along?"

"I still say you shouldn't get involved in this."

Taking her by the arm, I marched her to her bedroom. Inside, I saw a suitcase and it had some stuff in it, but it wasn't full. I went to her dresser, opened the top drawer and started to haul stuff out. That one was full of sexy underwear and bras. I held up a pink thong. She tried to snatch it out of my hands, but I held onto it.

"Baby, please bring all these. I wanna see you in this and the others I see here," I begged her.

"Shut up. No one said you'd see me in those."

"But a man can pray, can't he?" I teased her.

My attempt to pack for her energized her to go back to doing it herself. She didn't see me slip her pink thong in the pocket of my jeans. I saw another suitcase in her open closet. I grabbed it and put it on the bed.

"Fill this one up too. Do you want me to get your computer tower?"

"No, I have a laptop, but don't touch it. I don't want anything to get messed up. Has anyone ever told you that you're bossy and nothing like a knight?"

"I never said I was a knight who was all courtly and shit. I'm one who will come to the rescue and fight dragons though. I think you need that kind more than the other kind."

By the time she had both suitcases packed and was putting her laptop and work stuff into a rolling computer case, I heard the roar of a couple of bikes. I went to the front windows to make sure it was my brothers. Relief filled me when I saw it was. I hadn't realized how tense I was while waiting for them. They got off their bikes and moseyed up to the door. I opened it and waved them inside.

"Ready to go?" Hulk asked.

"Almost. Did you see anyone when you rolled up?"

"Nah, but that doesn't mean someone wasn't there," Nitro answered.

Hulk was busy looking out various windows. They both turned around when Natalya came into the room. She was pushing her computer case on its wheels. I took it and placed it with her suitcases.

"Anything else you think you'll need? If you forget something, we can always come back to get it," I explained.

"Knight, are you positive you want to do this?"

"I'm one hundred percent positive and so is Agony. He's waiting for us back at the compound. Ready?"

She made a quick walk-through then nodded. I knew she was worried, but I hoped to soon remove that worry. As we left, each of us took a bag but left our dominant hands free to get to our guns if necessary. We packed them in her backseat and I waited until she was buckled in and ready before I got on my bike. The roar of our combined engines no doubt had her neighbors looking out their windows again. Hulk took the lead with me. Nitro fell behind her car which we kept in the middle. It wasn't a long drive to the compound. We kept our heads on swivel as we rode. I breathed a sigh of relief when we made it there and through the gates without incident. Now I had her here and I could work on gaining her trust and so much more, I hoped.

Natalya: Chapter 5

Pulling in behind Knight, after Hulk and Nitro stopped at the clubhouse, added another shock to the several I'd had since he showed up at my house. I was staring at a log cabin. Not a small one like mine, but a big, brand-new beautiful one. The honey-colored logs were stunning. I wanted to go inside and explore it from top to bottom, but that wasn't why I was here.

It was two stories unlike my one story and it had a large porch that ran almost the entire length of the front and a short distance down one side of it. I got out of my car and stood staring at it. The garage was separate, but right next to the house, and it was covered in logs to match the house. As he parked his bike in it, I saw he had a pickup in there too. Made sense, he couldn't haul Cara around on his bike. He walked over to me.

"Natalya, you can put your car in the garage. There's more than enough room for it, too."

"Oh, okay. I didn't think you'd want me to do that. I'll do it after we get out my bags."

"You're staying, which means make yourself at home. We have a little while until the party starts. Let me give you a quick tour of the house then I'll grab your bags, move the car and you can get ready if you want to change. If not, what you're wearing is more than fine."

He took my hand and walked me over to the stairs then up them. I noticed he didn't unlock the door. It was already unlocked. Did he leave it like that all the time? I guess inside the compound was safer than out in town. Inside, my awe grew. My father never understood my love of log cabins. He found them ugly and plebeian as he called them.

The foyer opened right into a massive great room that ran the entire length of the left side of the house and was open to the second floor. It had a big fireplace, something I didn't have. French doors opened to the backyard and a patio. Next to the front door was a bathroom. Around to the right was a

large kitchen and dining area. The cabinetry and countertops complemented the log walls and the hardwood floors.

We continued through the kitchen to a hallway. Down the longer part of the hall I found a bedroom and full bath along with a mudroom that ended in a breezeway to a side door. It would lead to the garage I bet. On the shorter end of the hallway was the master suite. It had sloped ceilings like the great room. His huge king-sized bed easily fit in there along with the other furniture. It had a walk-in closet, and the bathroom had two sinks and a separate shower and tub. I could've spent hours just in the master.

Once I looked my fill downstairs, he took me up the stairs. There were three big bedrooms and two full bathrooms up there plus a loft. He showed me there were several storage areas tucked away too. I stared at him in shock.

“Knight, your...” I stopped when he stared hard at me.

“I mean, Elijah, your house is so amazing. It looks brand new. You and Cara have so much room. Don't you ever get lost in here?”

He chuckled. “Not so far, although she does have a lot of places to hide and room to do it. She enjoys playing hide and seek in here. It's less than a year old. We moved in five months ago. We love it. I thought you might like it after seeing you live in a log cabin too. I only have this one bedroom up here furnished, so it's yours. As you saw, Cara is in the other one downstairs.”

“This is more than enough, thank you. I'd expect her to be close to your room in case she needs you at night.”

“Give me your keys and I'll get your bags and move your car.”

I was still too busy admiring the house to object. I handed him the keys and he went downstairs. I went to the bedroom that was mine. It had a queen bed, nightstand, and dresser in it, as well as a small desk. The bed was tucked in the recessed part of the room where the window was. The dresser and desk were in the larger main part of it. It made it seem cozy while still

having ample room. His return made me snap to attention. He was easily carrying both suitcases and my computer bag. I felt instantly bad for him.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t think about how much you’d have to carry.” I reached for the smallest suitcase.

“They’re not that heavy. I’m gonna leave you here to settle in. When you’re ready, come downstairs. The bathroom has towels and stuff in the linen closet. Yell if you need anything. I’m gonna go get Cara and bring her home. Be prepared to get mobbed when she sees you’re here. She’s been talking about nothing but you since yesterday.”

“Thank you, I’ll be prepared. I won’t be long.”

“Take your time and like I said, if you want to change, go ahead. It’s warm now, but later it’ll cool off. You might want your jeans on even though we’ll mostly be inside.”

I watched him walk out with my heart pounding. It was going to be hard to be in this house with him. Here I was, in my dream house, and in that house was a man who made my body come alive. Add to it, he had a daughter who was adorable. He’d have a hard time getting rid of me if he wasn’t careful. I intentionally didn’t think of why I was here or the ramifications of it once my father found out. Maybe later, I could talk to Knight again and get him to see this wasn’t a good idea. For now, I was going to enjoy it.

Heeding his hint about changing, I quickly washed my face and brushed my hair. I left it down. I didn’t want to look like I was trying to attract attention, so other than some mascara, tinted lip gloss and a hint of blush to my cheeks to give me some color, I left my face bare. I exchanged my shorts and tank for jeans, a pair of cute ankle boots and a long-sleeved top. It was a babydoll style one in a bronze color. I liked the way the color looked against my hair and eyes.

It was maybe ten or so minutes before I was ready to head downstairs. I could hear the murmuring of voices, so I knew Knight was back with his daughter. I was looking forward to seeing her again. In general, I liked

children. I always hated that I was an only child. Growing up would've been a lot easier if I'd had just one person to share it with.

In Cara's case, there was something about her which drew me unlike any other child and I didn't know why. She made my heart feel light and made me feel like I could laugh. Those feelings weren't normal for me. I was always rather a quiet, somber person. It came from not trusting people.

I shouldn't trust Knight or his club. After the way he talked to me the first time we met, I should run as far away from him as possible. Or at least still be angry with him and want to castrate him. Those had been my first thoughts. However, I'd learned to let things go, because staying angry never worked out in my favor. I wouldn't say I was someone you could walk all over, but I did try to maintain the peace. It was the only way to survive in my father's world.

I found them in the kitchen. She was sitting at the island eating something. When she saw me, she got down and ran over to me. I crouched down and opened my arms to receive her hug. For such a tiny person, she sure could hug hard. I saw Knight watching us. I wondered what he was thinking.

"I'm so happy you're here. Daddy said you're staying with us."

"I'm glad I was invited to stay and yes, I'll be here at least for tonight. I love your house, Cara. It's beautiful. You're a lucky little girl. Your room is perfect and in two of my favorite colors too."

She let go of me then took my hand. I stood up and let her lead me to the island. I took a seat beside her, as she got back up on her stool to eat. I saw she was eating yogurt and a bowl of fruit.

"I love my room too. Aunty Joli and Aunty Eliana helped me do it. Daddy wanted to put motorcycles on the walls." She curled up her little nose at that thought. I couldn't help but laugh.

"Hey, I'll have you know that motorcycles would look great in a bedroom," he protested.

“I’m not a boy, Daddy. When we get my brother, then he can have those in his room,” she said without adding the unspoken duh on it.

I looked at Knight. He was watching me. He grinned before he answered her. His answer almost knocked me off my stool with the amount of intensity coming off him.

“Well then, I’d better get to courting then shouldn’t I? I need a lady if I’m gonna give you brothers and sisters, Buttercup. How soon do you want one?”

“I want one for Christmas,” was her immediate answer.

“I can’t get you one this Christmas, but I’ll work on having one by next Christmas, okay? Now, finish up your snack because we need to get over to the clubhouse. While you do that, I’ll take Natalya outside to see the backyard. She didn’t see it earlier.”

Not knowing what else to do, I got up and let him come around the island and take my hand. He led me to the doors going outside. The backyard was mostly grass with a barbeque area set up off to the side.

“I haven’t done much with this yet. I think I’ll put up a small playset out here. She makes me take her to the big one every day. She loves it.”

“You have plenty of room for it. You could even have some planters along the edges for bushes and flowers if she likes to garden. That might be fun for her to do.” In my mind, I could see the whole yard and out front full of color from flowers.

“I don’t know anything about flowers, although seeing your place, I think you do. You’ll have to help her with that project.”

I glanced at him. He was watching me. I didn’t know why. “If I’m still around when you decide to do it, then I’d be happy to help. I love gardening.”

“Where else would you be other than in Cherokee?”

“You never know where life might end up taking you. I hope to stay here, but it might not be in the cards for me.”

In a blink, he had his arms around me and staring deeply into my eyes. I couldn't look away, although I wanted to. His staring into my eyes made me feel like he was seeing my soul. My secrets needed to stay that way.

“You're not going anywhere. Whoever is threatening you and putting those bruises on you won't ever touch you again, Natalya. Tell me who did it.”

“I can't. I told you, it's for your own good. I should really leave. Being here is putting all of you at risk. I don't want anyone else to get hurt.” I tried to get out of his arms, but he held me too tightly.

“Like hell you're leaving. We can handle whoever comes after you,” he growled.

“That's what you think. He has no soul and no remorse. He'll find a way to hurt you. If that doesn't work, he'll kill you. You have children here, Elijah,” I reminded him. I was happy I remembered to use his real name.

“Your father doesn't scare us. We have friends too and they'll back our play. He won't like what we have to bring to bear on him if he touches you or comes after any of us.”

I gasped when he named my father. How the hell did he know who beat me? A look of satisfaction spread across his face. Shit, I just confirmed it by my response. He'd been fishing and caught me so easily.

“I fucking knew it. Your father is a bastard and he'll pay for touching you. Why did he do it?” His tone got angrier.

“Please, don't do anything, Elijah. You can't touch him. He'll destroy you and everything you love. He has no conscience or soul. I'm leaving. Thank you for wanting to help, but it's impossible.”

This time I was able to jerk free. I whipped around and headed for the

door. I needed to get my shit and leave. It was time I made the effort to get away from my father for good. Most likely he'd find me, but I was going to try. Living in his shadow was killing me. Life wasn't worth living like this. I'd get away from him or die trying.

Suddenly, my feet were in the air. Steely arms were around my upper chest, trapping my arms at my sides. My entire backside was against a rock-hard wall. A shiver ran through me as warm breath touched my neck and ear right before Knight spoke. His voice was a low growl.

“You're not going anywhere. If I have to chain your gorgeous ass to my bed to keep you safe, I will. No one will let you leave. I have your car keys and no one will give you a vehicle. As for calling the cops, well, you can, but they won't do much. They've been friends with the Pagans for years. They know we'd never really hurt you.”

“Oh yeah, and just why do you give such a damn about me and my predicament? You don't know me. Go ahead and imprison me. What're you gonna do? Starve me, beat me yourself or rape me to get to my father? He won't care,” I snapped back.

My heart was racing, and I was having trouble breathing. God, I'd walked into a fate as bad as being at the hands of my father. The Pagans didn't want to help me. They wanted to use me. Panicking, I kicked back and connected with his shins. He swore but didn't let go. I threw back my head, trying to hit him in the face, and I wiggled like a worm.

The door opened and out came Cara. She looked surprised. “Daddy, what're you doing to Natalya?”

“We're having a talk. I need you to go get Uncle Agony, will you? Hurry.”

She didn't ask why. She just took off running.

“Let go of me,” I yelled.

“Not until you settle the hell down. I don't know where you got those

fucking ideas of what we'll do to you, but they're bullshit. No one here is going to beat, starve, or rape you! Fuck! What kind of life do you lead?" He grunted as he backed up, taking me back into the house.

Next thing I knew, he was seated on the couch with me on his lap. I was able to wiggle around enough to see his face. He looked upset. Well, welcome to the club.

"I'll tell you what kind of world I live in. One where everyone wants me for their own purposes, not because they care about me or want me. I'm a means to an end. Whatever they think they can get from Fabian LeBlanc is their motivation. I'm merely the tool. However, the joke is on them and you. He doesn't give a damn about me. He won't give you a dime or shit to save me. So, if this is your plan, forget it. You're better off letting me go and forgetting you ever met me. I'm getting as far away from here as I can. Who knows? Maybe I'll get lucky for once and I can hide from him and have a damn life!" I shouted the last bit.

Knight's face deepened in color. I couldn't tell what he was thinking. Abruptly, I was jerked hard toward him. As my arms gave out, his mouth landed on mine. I tried to pull away but I couldn't. He held me by the back of my neck. His lips should've been hard, but they weren't. They were soft as he gently moved them over mine. He was teasing me to kiss him back.

If he'd been aggressive, I'd have resisted, but his gentleness disarmed me. Without thinking, I moved mine back. That was the sign he apparently needed. He opened his mouth and hungrily kissed me. The urgency increased, but he was still careful not to hurt me. I felt his tongue teasing my lips. Groaning in defeat and thinking I'd get another good kiss out of this, I opened up and let him invade my mouth. That's when the earth stood still and I truly found out what a real kiss felt like.

He took over and my brain stopped thinking. All I could do was kiss him back and let my tongue join the fun. I had no idea how long we kissed. We might've kept going forever if we weren't interrupted by someone deeply clearing his throat and hearing a hard knock. Slowly, Knight let go of me and we glanced around. Standing in the doorway from the front was Agony. I didn't see Cara with him. He had a half-amused, half-troubled look on his

face.

“Mind telling me why your daughter came running to my house, saying her daddy needed me and that you were fighting with Ms. Natalya? She said she thought you needed help. From what I just saw, I don’t think you need my help. If you want someone to kiss her with you, I’ll call one of the single brothers over.”

A growl came out of Knight. I gave him a startled look. He wasn’t smiling. “Like hell you will. If any of them even think of putting their mouths on her, I’ll castrate them. I don’t need you here to kiss her. I need you to help me convince her that we’re not gonna use her to get something from her daddy. She thinks we’ll beat, starve, or rape her, Agony. What the fuck kind of life is she living if she believes that? And to make it even better, she says her daddy won’t care what we do to her. He doesn’t care about her one bit.” Anger throbbed in his tone.

Agony was now frowning and looking like he was about to explode. I shrank back against Knight. It was better the enemy you knew than the one you didn’t. I didn’t know if Knight would protect me, but he was my only option.

“Relax, Bright Eyes. Agony won’t hurt you. He’s just pissed like I am at your daddy. We don’t understand people like him. He was the one who beat you. I know that. Tell us why. Give us something to go on here. As far as we know, Fabian is a rich man who has businesses and properties and who sometimes makes generous donations. It’s obvious we have no clue about the real man,” he softly said into my ear as he rubbed his hand soothingly up and down my back.

“Knight, I can’t. Walk away before it’s too late. I told you. Let me leave and act like you never met me. I’m gonna try to escape his reach. I’ve been planning. I think I might have a chance.”

Agony walked over and sat down in the chair next to the couch. He stared intently at me. “Sweetheart, there’s no way in hell we can do that. First of all, we don’t believe in letting bullies and evil people run free, causing hell and havoc. Secondly, there’s no way in hell my brother, Knight, is gonna be

able to forget you exist, let alone let you leave, never to be heard from again. That kiss he just gave you and the way he's looking at you and holding you means business. He's already staked his claim, darlin'." He smiled at me.

"Staked a claim? What does that mean?"

"It means that even when I was being an absolute bastard to you the first time we met, I was intrigued and attracted to you. That has only grown after meeting you again and talking to you. I'm hooked. I said I thought we might suit each other and should explore it. That's bullshit. I'm not wanting to try and see if we can be together. I know we can and I'm gonna do everything I can to show you that. You're gonna choose me to be your man, Natalya. And as your man, it's my duty and privilege to make you happy and safe. That means getting rid of the evil in your life, namely your daddy. Why did he beat you like that? Has he done it before?"

The first part was sweet and filled with a loving tone. The last part was filled with steel and grit. He wasn't gonna be put off any longer. It was time to come clean. I didn't see any way out. As for his declaration of him being my man, I'd deal with that later. After he heard what I had to say, I bet he'd run for the hills.

Knight:

My body was humming from the kiss, but I couldn't concentrate on it and possibly seeing if I could take it further right now. I needed to find out what exactly she'd been living with all her life and then decide how we were going to address it. However, as soon as we got done talking, I was going to get back to the topic of us.

Nothing I just told her about how she intrigued me and how I wanted to be her man was a lie. It was crystal clear to me. Why so soon and like this, I had no idea. All I knew was I had to find a way to make sure she ended up feeling the same way. Having never felt like this about a woman, I prayed I wasn't wrong. I did want what Agony and Dare had, more than I ever realized.

She gave both of us uncertain and nervous looks. I didn't know what to say or do to make her feel comfortable enough to confide in us. Maybe if she had another woman here, it might help. "Agony, can you see if Eliana, Joli, or even Tana might be able to come over for a little bit and talk with us to Natalya? I think she might be more comfortable that way."

He nodded and took out his cell phone. He tapped away on it as he talked. "I'll see if Eliana can do it. Natalya knows her the best and Tana is at the house. She can keep an eye on the twins and Cara."

"You don't need to pull her away from the kids. I'm fine," Natalya protested.

"No, you're not fine. I can see how uptight you are. You need to hear from someone who has experienced our help. Yes, she's Agony's old lady, but she's also been witness to what this club does. We have several friends in clubs who are the same way as we are. We don't go around hurting innocent people and we help them get out of sticky situations all the time. It's not the first time any of us have had a run-in with a wealthy asshole," Agony assured her.

“That may be so, but I don’t think any are like my father. His evil goes clear through him. He has connections that he won’t hesitate to use against you or anyone else who gets in his way,” she warned us.

A soft knock had Agony answering the door. He was back in no time with Eliana. She had a comforting smile on her face. I wondered what Agony told her in the text he sent. She came straight over to us and sat next to us on the couch. She patted Natalya’s knee. I hadn’t let her off my lap.

“Hello, Natalya, it’s good to see you again, although I didn’t expect it to be like this. Agony said you were worried about the club and needed someone to reassure you. I think I can do that. Let me start out by saying my first introduction to the club wasn’t a pleasant one. Agony was an utter asshole to me. He ruined my job potential here and got me fired from my job. I was all set to move to Virginia when he came to see me again and realized not only how wrong he was about me, but how much harm he did to me. He and the club jumped in right away to fix it. At the same time, he made sure to work on showing me how much he wanted me. I thought hell no.”

Natalya smiled a little. I could tell she was relaxing by how the tension was easing from her rigid body. Maybe this was a good idea.

“I had my issues along the way and there were some threats against me. Nothing like they’ve had to handle in the past when they helped out their buddies in other clubs. Some of those were doozies from what I hear. I’m telling you this and will tell you the dirty details of my life and Joli’s if that helps. All you’re gonna learn is this club is filled with rough-around-the-edges men who may be alpha assholes sometimes and they mess up. They don’t always know how to tell a woman what they feel or express it in a conventional way, but they’re one hundred percent the ones you want on your side. They’ll protect you no matter what. If that means they bring in their own personal cavalry, then they will. No one is going to hurt you like they did a few weeks ago. Whoever beat you was filled with hate. Tell us who did it and why?”

I found I was holding my breath, waiting for Natalya to tell us more. After a long minute, she sagged against me completely and nodded her head.

“Okay, I’m gonna take a chance. I hope to God that I’m not making a mistake in trusting you. But it’s more than trust at stake here. It’ll be your lives if you go up against my father, his men, and the people he has as his cavalry.”

“We’ll prepare for it. All we need to know is the whole truth,” Agony told her.

“I know you usually do things as a club, right?” she asked. Agony and I both nodded yes.

“I think it would be best if all your men were here to hear this. That way they can ask questions and everyone hears it together. There’s less chance of something being forgotten or changed up in retelling. You know, the old telephone game.”

“We can do that. Everyone is here for the party. I’ll get them to get their asses into church,” Agony said as he took out his phone again.

“I don’t want to ruin the party. I heard one of your guys is getting inducted into the club. We can wait and do this tomorrow.”

“Sweetness, it’s best not to wait. We’ll start the party a little later. That’s not a big deal. You getting this off your chest and us started thinking on a plan is priority,” he told her. He typed away. My phone chimed with his message a few seconds later. I took mine out to read what he wrote.

Agony: Need your asses all in church, ASAP. Be there in ten minutes. That means everyone. We’ve got a varmint to take care of.

I chuckled. Natalya gave me a puzzled look, so I held up my phone so she could read it. She laughed when she did.

“A varmint? That’s a first, but I do have to agree. I only hope you have a trap big enough to capture and hold him. He won’t go down without a bloody fight to the death.”

“That’s our favorite kind of varmint. Babe, go home and hang out

with the twins and Cara. As soon as we're done, we'll start the party. I'll fill you in later on all the details. Natalya, you come with us."

Eliana leaned over and hugged Natalya then got up and went to her man. They hugged and kissed before she waved and left. I lifted Natalya to her feet then I stood up. I kept a hand on her hip.

"Come on, we'll head over now and get something to drink and settle in church. You're being allowed into the inner sanctum of the club. Only members usually see this," I told her.

Since it was a decent distance and later it would be dark and cold and my ladies would be tired, I decided to take my truck. It had an extended cab so there was room for five. I backed it out of the garage. Agony opened the front passenger door and assisted Natalya inside before I could get out to do it. He winked at me. Once she was seated, he got in the back. It took only a few minutes to park out front by the bikes. I was more than ready to hear the whole story.

Natalya: Chapter 6

I was so nervous as we waited for the rest of the Pagans to come in and take a seat in the large room we were in. It had a huge wooden table with chairs all around it and more lining the wall. A big flag with their club emblem on it, a green and gold snake wrapped around a Pagan-looking triangle and circle, dominated the wall, however that wasn't all. In the middle of the table the same emblem was burned into the wood.

Knight pulled out a chair and gestured for me to sit. I did, then he took the seat next to me. He opened the can of soda I'd picked out in the common room when he stopped to get us something to drink. He was drinking water. I felt like I needed the caffeine and sugar. My blood sugar was low and when it got too low, I got funny. This was the last place and time I needed that to happen.

Agony sat down at the head of the table. He had a soda in his hand too. It struck me funny to see big bad bikers drinking soda. Beer would be more their speed I would think. Next through the door was Dare and Hulk. They greeted me with smiles and hellos then took their seats. Dare was on Agony's left and Hulk on his right. I wondered if everyone had assigned seating and if I had taken someone's chair.

"Should I move? Is this someone's spot?" I whispered to Knight.

"Pope usually sits there, but there's room for him to scoot down. When we have a guest, we all shuffle. It's alright. You're fine. I want you beside me, Bright Eyes," he said softly back.

"Why do you call me Bright Eyes?"

"Because when I saw your eyes for the first time, they sucked me in and they shone so much. It was what popped into my head. There's a poem I read once that some guy wrote called Bright Eyes. Your eyes made me think of his poem and how it made me feel."

His answer took me by surprise. I guess I was stereotyping him because he was a biker. Who would think of a tough biker reading poetry? He smiled at me then winked. “There’s more to me than you think, baby. I’ll read you that poem later. He must’ve been thinking of you when he wrote it.”

The rest of the guys came sauntering in and took their seats. Pope just smiled when he sat down beside me. He didn’t look upset. As soon as they were all seated and the door was closed, Agony banged on the table with a big hammer-looking thing. They all got quiet and faced him. You could feel the energy coming off them. They were ready for whatever their president had to tell them.

“I know we’re all anxious to start the party and welcome Niko into the club. We’ll get to it soon, I promise. However, first, I thought it was best and so did Knight, if we all sit down and hear what Natalya has to say. You’ve all met her and we’ve been watching her for a couple of weeks. She’s ready to tell us who beat her and why. She’s nervous, so make her feel at ease. She’s worried she’s endangering us and she wants to leave. Our brother Knight doesn’t want her to.”

As he said that last part, the guys all smirked and chuckled. They looked at me then Knight. He sat there looking determined. Did they all know his plans for me? What the hell? Agony gestured to me.

“Natalya, the floor is all yours, darlin’. You can sit there and talk or come up here to the front. It’s up to you. Know that you’re among friends and we’re here to help. All we want is for you to tell the truth and to tell us everything. Nothing should be held back, no matter how small or insignificant you might think it is.”

I had to glance at Knight. He was watching me. He took my hand and squeezed it. He didn’t let go when he was done. It gave me courage. I took a really deep breath and blew it out before I spilled my secrets.

“Thank you all for coming in to hear what I have to say. Agony, I’ll stay right here. I don’t think my legs would hold me if I stood up there. Anyway, you need to know that Knight has extended your compound as a place where I can stay and be safe. I came here with the intention of staying

here and hiding, only it's not fair to any of you. My whereabouts will be determined and, when they are, you'll be in the middle of a battle that's not yours. I want to be allowed to leave, so I can run and try to find a life somewhere else. It most likely won't work, but I have to try. Knight and Agony don't want that. They think your club and your friends can handle the fallout. I don't think you have any clue how bad it'll get."

They all shifted in their seats hearing this and looked around at each other. I saw concern and puzzlement on their faces but no fear. It was time to make them see what they had to fear.

"My father is Fabian LeBlanc, as you know. The majority of people know very little about him. They see his public persona. He's a very wealthy man who owns businesses and land all around here. His holdings aren't just here in North Carolina. He has them in several other states as well. He occasionally will make sizable donations to charities and other good causes which gets him accolades. To the world, he appears to be a man who gives back and cares. That's all a lie.

"I'm his only child. As such, you would think I'm his heir and that he loves me and would do anything to make sure I'm happy and safe. That's a lie too."

A mutter came from someone at the table. I kept going. Now that I was letting the words come out, I wasn't holding back a tidal wave of them anymore.

"Fabian LeBlanc is a heartless, cold-blooded monster who only cares about himself and his happiness. He will do anything to make sure his image isn't tarnished, and that everyone continues to believe the lies, while he goes about, running one of the biggest and most corrupt smuggling businesses in the States. That's what he loves. That and having complete control."

"We wanna know about his smuggling business, Bright Eyes, trust me, but first I need to know who beat you and why. Did your daddy have someone who works for him do it and why did they do it?" Knight growled.

"He does frequently have his men do his dirty work, but there are

times he likes to do it himself. Seeing people in pain and suffering gets him off. He didn't have one of his men beat me. He did it all himself. Although he had his two personal bodyguards hold me, so I couldn't get away while he did it."

"Motherfucker!" Knight cursed. He was almost vibrating with tension. I squeezed his hand in mine which had tightened to a painful point. He instantly eased up.

"Continue," Agony said gruffly. His eyes were burning like the rest of the men at the table. I had to look down at the emblem on the table to tell the next piece. Just remembering it made my whole body hurt.

"I had displeased my father that night and he wanted to make sure I knew it and that I wouldn't do it again. It all started when he insisted I join him for dinner at his house. When I got there, he had a guest join us. A man who I'd never met. As the evening went on, the man was overly familiar with me. I didn't like it, so I called him on it. He was touching me in inappropriate places and saying disgusting things. I did it, I thought discreetly, but he either told my father about it or I wasn't as discreet as I had thought. The man left in a foul mood. Once he was gone, I was called into my father's study. There, he informed me of his disappointment and that he had invited the man to dinner to meet me. He coldly explained he was trying to arrange an advantageous marriage for me.

"I argued that the man wasn't someone I would ever consider marrying. Not only was he at least two decades older than me, but he gave off this creepy, scary vibe on top of being a disgusting lech. I could see him chaining his wife up in the house and doing unspeakable things to her. When I told my father this, he laughed and said that as his wife, I would do as my husband commanded. I was appalled. I knew my father didn't love me, but I didn't think he totally had no regard for me at all.

"Stupidly, I informed him I wouldn't marry anyone who I didn't love and choose myself. Money isn't of importance to me like it is to my father. He wants me to bring more money, power, and prestige to our family name. He said I'd marry whoever he told me to marry and he would be continuing to present candidates to me. He said if I behaved and didn't act like I had that

night, he might allow me to choose from the candidates he presented to me. I was stunned.

“He went on to tell me that in order to ensure I understood how important this was and that I would be on my best behavior, he had to teach me a lesson. His two guards then grabbed my arms and threw me to the floor. They held me down. No matter how hard I fought, I couldn’t get away from them. My father proceeded to punch and kick me until he thought the message had been received. I couldn’t get off the floor when he was done. He had his men pick me up, drive me home, and dump me on my front lawn. His parting message was he’d see me soon with the next candidate.”

I had to stop. The pain of that whole horrible night crashed down on me. Tears ran down my face. *Thankfully, I have on waterproof mascara*, ran inanely through my mind. Next thing I knew, I was pulled out of my chair and onto Knight’s lap. He wrapped his arms around me and hugged me close. He whispered in my ear. I could hear the promise in it.

“Baby, don’t cry. I swear on everything that we’ll make sure he never touches you or threatens you again. I will protect you no matter what. Can you continue or do you wanna do this later?”

I sniffed back my tears and sat up. He didn’t let go of me. His secure arms gave me the strength to finish it. They had to know the rest.

“Besides his intentions for me and his total lack of fatherly affection, he will destroy anyone who gets in his way. If he knows I’m here and telling you about him or that I’m trying to hide from him, he’ll come after all of you. Your businesses and people will be targeted. He won’t stop until he makes you pay for helping me and I’m back under his control. Which is why, if I leave tonight, he is likely not to think much of me being here. He did warn me to stay away from you, but he’ll take this visit as an example of my defiance. I have been planning and I have papers for a new identity which will give me a whole new life if it works. I worked to have money moved around and hidden, so he doesn’t know and shouldn’t be able to track it to me. I figure Alaska is a good place to disappear. He’d never think of me living there in all the cold and snow.”

The protests came not only from Knight and Agony, but from every man at the table. They were all pissed and upset. They moved restlessly in their seats. Knight was tense and staring a hole through me. Finally, he said something.

“Your ass isn’t going anywhere, let alone to Alaska. You’ll stay here and we’ll take care of Fabian’s ass and all his little friends too.”

“Knight, he smuggles stuff. I don’t know exactly what he smuggles. I wasn’t supposed to know that much. He has no idea I know of his illegal activities. All I know is he has dangerous men who guard him. I’ve seen men before who make me question what they do. Anyone who tries to go against him has never succeeded and I know of two who disappeared. I did some checking on my own after he had complained about them. He kills people. I know it.”

“I don’t doubt he does make people suffer and disappear. Men like him get off on hurting and terrorizing others. No matter what he’s smuggling and who his people are, we can shut him down. Let me tell you a little about us and our friends. We’re not just bikers. Some of us have been in the military. Those who haven’t are skilled in protection and the use of weapons and strategy too. In addition, we have friends in those other clubs I mentioned, who have even more experience than us. Through them, we have a prior military group of friends who do a variety of things. Some of the assignments they take on help a variety of law enforcement agencies take down bad guys. However, they do some things that would be considered black ops and illegal.

“All are governed by one tenet. They will help the innocent and keep the world a safer place. The Dark Patriots is their name. They’re up in Virginia, along with our friends the Iron Punishers MC. In Tennessee, we have two chapters of Archangel’s Warriors and a Ruthless Marauders club. There’s another Pagan Souls chapter in Lake Oconee, Georgia and we can’t forget the chapter of the Horsemen of Wrath down in Florida. That’s close to one hundred men, and that doesn’t include the people they can bring if we need them. We handle dirtbags like your daddy more than we like to admit. The world is full of evil, ugly people, who need to be taught lessons and in some cases just taken out,” Knight said forcefully.

“You mean you’d go in and kill him? How? You’ll go to prison for that.”

“Not if we plan it out and make sure we cover all our bases. With your help and the research we’ll do, we can make sure your daddy and his associates don’t ever hurt anyone again. We’ll shut down whatever he’s smuggling as well. Will you help us do that, or are you unwilling to see him dead?” This came from Agony.

I was stunned by their confidence and the fact that they’d done such work before, including killing people. Did I want my father to live? The answer that came to my mind immediately was I couldn’t care less what happened to him. He never loved me and I stopped loving him years ago. I’d known for a long time he was a horrible man. I just learned more in the past few weeks. A world without him would be a safer one. My life would certainly be brighter. I looked Agony in the eyes.

“I don’t care what happens to my father, as long as he can never hurt me or anyone else again.”

Agony smiled. Around the table, the others did too. When I looked at Knight, he was smiling the widest. He looked almost happy.

“Well, Bright Eyes, we’ll get right to business, but it’ll have to wait until tomorrow. It’ll take hours and a lot of planning. You’ll be crucial in helping us do this. We typically try to keep our women out of this kind of thing, but in your case, you’re our source. We can’t do this thoroughly or quickly without you. The longer he’s out there, the more time he has to do damage. There will be no going back to your house. You’ll have to stay here within the compound. It’s the safest place for you around here,” Knight said.

“I don’t want to get you guys hurt. What about Eliana, Joli, Tana, and your kids? He won’t hesitate to strike at me and you through them. I can’t be responsible for them getting hurt or killed,” I protested.

“We’ll keep them under guard. Limit the trips outside the walls. In Eliana's case, she works, so it’ll be trickier for her. Same goes with Joli. She only works part time and her maternity leave will be up soon. When she goes

back to work, we'll have to have guys on her. I want us to get Wrath's guys over here if we can. They'll help. Wrath is the president of our Georgia chapter, Natalya," Agony explained.

As he talked, I saw Wire was busy tapping away on a tablet. He'd been doing it the whole time.

"What's he doing?" I pointed to Wire.

His head came up and he smiled. "Sorry, I've been listening to everything you said, I promise. I do all the background work. Anything that can be found in someone's history, phone records, emails, bank accounts, etc., I can find it. I can also plant things, change them and add to them. For example, right now, if I wanted, I could make a legal document appear in the County Recorder's office which shows that you and Knight got married three days ago. It would be valid and the only way to get rid of it without my help is to file for divorce. What do you say? Should I hitch you two up? It might help," he said with a grin.

"No!" I said at the same time Knight did.

"I wanna marry her the old-fashioned way, if you don't mind," Knight added.

"W-what? You can't marry me. You don't know me," I sputtered.

"I know enough to know being tied to you for the rest of my life wouldn't be a bad thing at all. However, I was hoping to ask you and do the whole engagement thing first. I bet you have a dream wedding all planned out in your head. I want you to have it."

I think, at those words, I fell in love with him. He was so sweet and sincere. I truly believed he wanted to be with me for the rest of our lives, which was insane.

"Knight, you're crazy. Although, I thank you for saying you want to marry me. I do have a dream wedding in mind. I think most women do. So, we'll have to pass on your kind offer, Wire. I'll wait and see if Knight can

woo me and get down on one knee to ask,” I teased. It was wild that in the middle of such a serious discussion, this was being discussed.

Wire winked at me and shrugged. “Hey, all you gotta do is say when and I’ll do it for you if you change your mind. Although, the thought of Knight wooing you and getting down on one knee is too good to pass up. Make sure he does it where we all can see.”

The others all laughed and cheered. It took Agony pounding his hammer on the table to get them to stop. “Okay, I think we’ve heard enough teasing. You can do more of that later. You bunch need to let off steam and have fun. Tomorrow, after everyone recovers, we’ll reconvene. Until then, Natalya, welcome to the Pagan Souls and have fun.”

He hit the table again with his hammer and the guys got up. Knight let me get up. As we filed out of the room, I wondered what I’d done. It was like I was living in an alternate universe. I hoped the outcome was a happy one and not tragic. Getting them hurt or killed would kill me faster than a bullet would.

Knight:

As much as I wanted to dive straight into planning to bring down Fabian, I knew that this time to relax was needed. Natalya was very emotional from the telling of her story, even though she was doing a great job hiding it. When she cried as she told how her dad beat her as his men held her down, it was all I could do not to come out of my seat and put my fist through the wall. If he'd been nearby, he'd be dead. I'd beat him to death, so he could feel the pain she did.

I made a silent vow to myself. When his time came, I was going to do everything in my power to be the one to end him. If it was me, I'd end him by beating him to death and I wasn't going to make it a quick death. He would suffer.

I had no doubt, as she talked about him, that he was a man who had made many people suffer and enjoyed every second of it. It was for them too that I made this vow. Bullies were always a sore point for me.

Growing up the way I did, with my father being who he was and my mom being what she was, I was picked on a lot. Until I grew in high school and added inches to my height and started to develop muscles, I'd been the target of many bullies. They'd made my life miserable. It was a great day when I was able to turn the tables on them and pay them back for all their taunts and beatings of me, plus others I'd witnessed over the years.

Out in the common room, the music was playing. It wasn't really loud because of the kids being here right now, but it would get much louder as the night wore on. Niko was behind the bar, working alongside Atticus. He had no idea what was about to happen. Looking at my brothers, I saw their looks of anger being morphed into ones of anticipation.

Joli and Eliana immediately went to their men and started talking earnestly. I didn't know what they told them, but when they were done, they both came over to me and Natalya. Joli took her hand. "Come on. Come sit

with us and let's chat. The guys have stuff they have to do. Believe me, you want to be where you have a good view."

Natalya gave me a startled look.

"Go with her. She doesn't bite, usually. If she does, just yell for Dare. He usually can handle her. If he can't, we'll help en masse."

Joli playfully shoved me and snapped her teeth at me, which made Natalya laugh. She walked off with Joli and sat down at the table where Eliana, Tana, and the kids were sitting, along with Mercy. She'd be taking over in a bit to watch the kids, so the old ladies could have a good time too. Since we didn't have our children's room built yet in our clubhouse, they'd all go to Agony and Eliana's house. The kids would be put down for the night. Cara would sleep in their guestroom. That's where we'd lived while our house was built and it was where she stayed when she spent the night with them.

If it had been a typical night, I'd go get her and take her home. However, tonight I was planning to stay longer and get to spend as much quality time as I could with Natalya. I went to the bar to see if we were ready to do the presentation now or wait longer. I made sure Niko was out of earshot.

"When do you wanna do this, Pres?"

"I thought we'd have a drink and get started on the party vibe, then I'll call for everyone's attention. You have the cut ready, right?" Agony asked me.

"I do. It's bagged up. I'll get it once you signal me to do it."

I had it hidden in what was my old room. Until we needed the space for other members or for something else, it was still considered mine. There was my old bed and stuff in there. Anything personal had long been taken to the house.

"I'll hold up two fingers when I want you to get it. I'll wait a minute

then call to get everyone's attention. For now, let's get your woman to relax. That was pretty intense in there for her. How're you holding up after hearing what happened and what her daddy is like?"

"Honestly, I want to go out and hunt his ass down tonight and spend the next week beating him slowly to death. However, I know I can't do that, so I'll wait."

"You do that. When the time is right, you'll get your chance with him. I'll call and talk to Wrath in the morning about sending some of his guys over. If they can't or aren't able to give us enough, I'll tap into Dublin Falls and Hunters Creek. If it gets too hot down here, we'll have to send the women and kids somewhere else for a while."

"Has that ever happened in one of the clubs?" Pope asked. He was standing with us.

"Not that I know of, but there's always a first time. We can't risk them. I'll hate being away from Eliana, *enisi*, and the twins, but I'll gladly do it to protect them."

For the next half hour, I kept an eye on Natalya while I hung out with my brothers. She seemed to be having a good time. She was smiling, holding babies, and laughing. Cara was right in the middle of it. She was mainly glued to Natalya's side. There was something about her my daughter adored. I hadn't lied when I told her that Cara had talked of almost nothing but her since our grocery trip.

"It looks like Cara likes her, so that's a good thing," Bones said, coming up to me.

I'd just taken a new soda and water to my girls then came back to stand by the pool table. Twisted and Mace were in the middle of a heated battle. Whoever won got a hundred bucks. It was close, and I had no idea who would win.

"She does. I can hardly get her to talk about anything else."

“Well, when you officially claim her as your old lady, you won’t have any drama from Buttercup.”

The whole club had started to call Cara *Buttercup* after they heard me use it. She loved her nickname, especially after she found out it was a flower. She was flower crazy. The bouquet Natalya gave her at the open house had made me have to get her a book which told all about different flowers. She couldn’t read it yet, but it had loads of pictures she could look at. She made me read about them to her. Natalya’s remarks about flowers in the backyard and out front of the house had been right on the nose. I could picture the two of them out there working together in the dirt.

“No, I shouldn’t, although you might wanna keep that quiet. I think talking about us makes her nervous. I still have to make up for being such a dick to her when we met.”

“You sure were. Hell, maybe she’ll hang here and realize some of us are much better choices than you,” Pope popped out of nowhere to say. I hadn’t seen him walk up.

“Don’t get any ideas. Brothers or not, if you try to steal her away, I’ll fucking hurt you,” I warned not only Pope, but the others who were now listening. The fuckers just grinned, gave me the finger, and laughed. Oh well, they’d been warned.

It was only a few minutes after that when I thought I should go see how she was doing again that Agony caught my attention and held up two fingers. I didn’t waste time getting my ass down the hall to my room. I unlocked the door and went inside to the closet. The bag was the only thing in there. Hurrying back out, I made it back to the common room as he called for everyone’s attention.

Agony reached over and rang the bell we had recently installed on a post at the bar. It was loud and easily got people’s attention. Whistling and yelling didn’t always do the trick. Atticus turned off the music. Everyone quieted down and looked at Agony. We knew what was happening. Only Atticus and Niko didn’t.

“Before we get too far into the party mood, I thought we should take care of some dirty work first. I don’t want to bring down the good vibes, but this can’t wait. Usually, I’d do this in church but with this happening, I decided to do it out here and in front of everyone, since we all should know this. Usually, when someone prospects for the club, they do it for a year or so and then a vote is taken. If the vote is a yes, the prospect is called into church and presented with his official cut. If the guy doesn’t make the grade, he’s called in and asked to leave on the spot. Well, we held a vote and made our decision on whether Niko has done enough to warrant a place with us permanently or should he be shown the door. Niko, come here,” Agony ordered.

His whole demeanor looked and sounded gruff like he wasn’t happy. None of us were sporting a smile. We worked to show nothing but dark expressions. I could tell Niko was instantly thinking the worst as he approached Agony. Was it mean to do this to him? Hell yeah, it was, but it was fun too. We’d all been hazed in similar ways. He stopped a foot or so away from Agony. He tried not to look anxious or upset.

“I need you to give me your prospect cut. Now,” Dare said.

He was beside Agony. He held out his hand. We could tell it was painful for Niko to take it off and give it to Dare. As he did, I slowly slithered over to Hulk and handed him the bag. He was close to Agony like Dare was. He gave me a subtle wink then slowly inched his hand over to bump Agony’s. He took it without turning his head. He had his steely eyes on Niko. The whole exchange was done behind our backs so Niko couldn’t see it.

Atticus was watching, entranced, and I could tell he was sweating even though it wasn’t his ass on the line. He knew this could be him at any time. He’d been with us for three months. We didn’t need to wait a year to ask someone to leave. Niko stood there staring at Agony.

“Can I go, or is there something else? I’ll have my stuff packed and I’ll be off the compound within the hour,” he said stoically.

“You wanna leave without this? What the hell, man? Shit, I guess we’ll have to return it,” Agony barked as he handed him the bag. For a couple

of seconds, Niko just stood there frozen. Finally, he reached over and took it.

“Well, don’t wait all damn day, open it,” Dare ordered.

Slowly, as if he thought it might bite him or explode, Niko opened the bag and reached inside. As he lifted the leather cut free and he realized this wasn’t a joke, a smile appeared. He held it up. Dare smacked him on the shoulder and took it out of his hand. He held it open so Niko could slip it on. As he did, the rest of us began to hoot and holler our congratulations.

Agony’s voice boomed out over the top of ours. “Welcome to the Pagan Souls as a fully patched member, Pyro.” He was now grinning.

Niko, or Pyro as he was now and forever to be called, laughed, and held his hand out to Agony to shake. Agony pulled him in for a man hug. From there, we all went up to hug him and welcome him as a brother. I saw the envy on Atticus’s face. He wanted that. All he had to do was work hard and prove himself. I was pleased to see Natalya even went up to congratulate him when the ladies did. I swooped in and latched onto her when she was done.

“Come on, I’m stealing you. I’ve shared you as long as I can tonight. You’re mine.”

She laughed. She went with me. As the hours sped by, we talked, hung out talking to the others, ate, entertained Cara, and even sat out around the fires outside. I was ready when Mercy took the kids to Agony’s house. It was closer to just me and Natalya time. I wasn’t expecting anything to happen, but if I got lucky and we were able to kiss, that would make my night.

Knight: Chapter 7

It was after ten o'clock and with the kids gone, I knew what was soon to happen. The bunnies and women from town would be coming through the door. As much as I didn't want to explain who they were to Natalya, I knew it would need to be done sometime and I might as well do it now. She had no idea about Ciandra. I didn't want that news to get out to her somehow. She should hear it from me. I wasn't ashamed of my daughter, although if I could change who her mother was, I would, for her sake.

I took her with me to sit on one of the couches. It was away from everyone else. We sat down and I cuddled her up against me. She snuggled into me. She'd had a couple of drinks and they helped her to relax. She wasn't drunk, just mellow.

“Bright Eyes, I need to talk to you about a couple of things.”

“Alright, what?”

“First, I need to warn you, any minute now, that door will open and women will come through it. They're gonna be scantily dressed and they probably won't act like ladies.”

She shifted so she could see my face. She was frowning. “Why would they be dressed like that and not be ladies?”

“They're gonna be here because they're looking to have a good time, which includes hooking up with one or more bikers and having sex. A few of them are our club's bunnies. The rest will be women from town and nearby who know they can have fun here.”

“Bunnies, you have bunnies? What does that mean?”

This was the more uncomfortable part. No old lady wanted to hear this. Even if she wasn't officially one yet, I saw her as if she was mine.

“Bunnies are women the club has extended favoritism to. It varies by what that means from club to club. Here, they don’t live on the compound. They do come and go more freely than the town women, who we call hang arounds. Sometimes, they’re given money to help with their expenses. That helps to keep them exclusive to us and to ensure we always have women ready to meet the needs of the guys.”

“So, they’re prostitutes.” I heard the uneasiness in her tone.

“No, they’re not prostitutes. Yes, we do give them money or other things in exchange for them being available. One of them had her car break down. We repaired it for free. That kind of thing.”

“If you pay them money or give them things in exchange for services rendered, then they are prostitutes in the true sense of the word, Knight. If they don’t want to do it anymore, can they leave anytime they want?”

“They can. No one forces them to do it or stay.” I was quick to assure her.

She didn’t say anything for several moments. When she did, I wanted to groan. “The women who are bunnies and the others coming, have you been with all of them?”

“I don’t know who the hang arounds will be, so I can’t say. As for the bunnies, there are three of them. One has been here six years, the other two have been with us two and three years. Yes, I have been with them.” She inched away, which was the last thing I wanted her to do.

“Please, hear me out, okay. It was never anything more than sex with them. A way to easily get off. None of them have ever meant anything to me. Same goes for the hang arounds. I haven’t been with anyone in six months.”

“Six months? You expect me to believe a man like you hasn’t had sex in six months? You don’t have to lie to me. I admit, I don’t like the idea that women you’ve been with are regularly paraded around here, but you and I aren’t together. It’s not my place to be mad if you were with one of them last night. All I want to say is, if you’re wanting to really have a relationship with

me, being with any woman, regardless if we're having sex or not, is a big no. If that's a deal breaker, then we don't need to worry about whether this could be something more."

I was about to tell her I wasn't lying and we were most definitely going to be having a relationship when the door opened and in came the three bunnies. No one else was with them, but I knew that wouldn't stay the case. I was right. They were dressed like it was the heat of summer not the fall. Shorts and skirts up to the crack of their asses and tiny tops which barely kept their breasts from spilling into full view was their dress code. They tottered on huge high heels with overly dramatic hair and too much makeup. Seeing her compared to them was like night and day.

They immediately made beelines toward where the single brothers were at. They knew to steer clear of Agony and Dare. I'd have to make sure they knew to add me to the list. Since meeting Natalya, I hadn't been around when they were here to tell them. Those nights at home with Cara were no lie. I noticed Joli and Eliana watching them. I was shocked by Natalya's next words.

"Knight, why in the world would you want to waste your time with me when you can have one of them in your bed right now? I'm nothing like them and I never will be."

Seeing her face and how upset she looked, I knew she was serious. I stood up and pulled her to her feet. "Come on, we're going home where we can talk. This isn't gonna be something I talk about where everybody can see and hear us."

She didn't say no, so I headed for the door. A few called out, asking where we were going, but I ignored them. I saw Dare and Agony exchange knowing looks. They knew what this was about. I bundled her into my truck and didn't waste time getting to the house. Once I had her inside, I shed my cut and boots. She took off her boots then I made her sit on the couch with me.

"To answer your question, those women have nothing on you, Natalya. You don't even have to try to be better than them."

“Elijah, you don’t surely think that. They’re sexy and they have bodies I can never hope to have. They’re curvy and men like that. My boobs sure aren’t close to their sizes. I’m tall and while I have a little bit of curves, they’re not anything like theirs. I bet with all their experience they know how to more than please a man in bed.”

“You honestly think your body is lacking and you can’t please a man in bed like them?” I asked to make sure I’d understood her right. She nodded.

“Jesus Christ, has no man ever told you or shown you how fucking beautiful and sexy you are? Have your sexual partners never shared how much they enjoyed being in bed with you?”

Speaking of sexual partners she had in the past made me want to howl. I hated the thought of her with other men, but it was reality. She might not have had a serious boyfriend more than the one time, if Wire was right, but he couldn’t be the only man she’d ever slept with. How could they not tell her what she did to them? She made me hard just thinking about her. She got an odd look on her face.

“Babe, talk to me.”

“What was Cara’s mom like? You haven’t told me about her. Is she around? Oh God, she’s not dead, is she? Is that why you’re raising her alone?” she asked aghast as she switched subjects on me.

I didn’t want to talk about Ciandra, but I needed to tell her. I might as well get all the unpleasantness out of the way at once. As soon as I did, I’d go back to my questions.

“I’ll answer that then you and I will address what you just said about yourself and your prior sexual partners. Cara’s mom isn’t dead. Where she is I have no idea and I don’t care. Let me tell you about her. Ciandra was a club bunny like the three you just saw. She came around for a few years and she slept with almost all of us. We were idiots and slept with her again and again. Then, one day, she stopped coming around. We figured she got tired of it and quit. No big deal. About seven months later, she showed up with a newborn.”

Natalya gasped in shock.

“We were all shocked too. She then said she knew which one of us fathered Cara. She named Dare as her father. He denied it and said there was no way he could be but she insisted. From that day forward, anytime she needed money or anything, she’d come to us and ask for it. It was always with the excuse so she could care for Dare’s daughter. We were a bunch of dumbasses and never made her prove it.”

“So how did you find out she’s yours and when did that happen?”

“I found out about ten months ago. It was after Joli and Dare got together. Ciandra had moved away for a while then suddenly reappeared. She almost wrecked Dare’s relationship with Joli. It wasn’t until they had a bad run-in and Joli almost lost Branson—before any of us knew she was pregnant—that it came to a head. It was so bad Joli left and went back to live with her cousin at our Georgia chapter. Dare had to work to get her back. We all agreed the big thing needed to win her back was to prove Cara wasn’t his and to stop us all giving Ciandra money. If Cara needed shit, we said from now on we’d buy it for her. That idea was what made her get into the fight with Joli in the first place.

“We all agreed to have the paternity tests done. A judge friend of Agony’s forced her to allow it. Even though Dare knew he wasn’t the dad and Agony had never been with her, they took the test too. We thought it was likely none of us was her dad, since we knew Ciandra had never been exclusive to the club, although we asked for that. Imagine my shock when I found out she was mine. As soon as I knew it, I made Ciandra sign away her maternal rights and leave town. She knows not to come back here again. I took Cara, and we stayed with Dare and Joli while we had this house built.”

“Does Cara know all this? What does she say about her mom?”

“She doesn’t. I plan to tell her when she’s older. She stopped asking about her mom a couple of weeks after she left. She’s happier here than she ever was with her.”

“Yet, even after all that, you still sleep with women like her. What’s

gonna stop you from knocking one of them up? I mean, it's possible with any woman, I know, but I'd think it might be more likely with them."

"I've only been with a couple of women since I found out Cara is mine and that was six months or more ago. I didn't lie about that. And yes, any woman I'm with could get pregnant despite the fact I always wear condoms. I'm not reckless. I use condoms, even if they swear they're on birth control and I get checked regularly for STDs even with using them. However, when I have more kids, I plan on them being with the woman who's my wife." I gave her an intense look.

"Why're you looking at me like that?"

"Because I want you to know the woman I see being my wife and the mother of my other children is sitting on this couch with me. I'm not playing a game with you, Natalya. I can see it. We're meant to be together. It doesn't mean shit that we only met a few weeks ago. In this club, we know almost the second we meet the right woman."

"Elijah, you have to slow down. You might think that, but what if we're not sexually compatible? That's a big part of marriage. You don't know everything about me and vice versa."

"I know we're sexually compatible and the rest we have years to find out. Which brings us back to your remarks about not being able to satisfy me like the bunnies and other women can. What in God's name did the men in your past say to you? I can't believe any of them would be crass enough to say they weren't satisfied. And if they weren't, then it was their fault for not showing you what they liked. However, I think in most of those situations, if the woman isn't satisfied then how can the man be? As much as I don't want to ask this, did they not sate you?"

She turned red in the face and tried to look away, but I gripped her chin so she had to look at me. This was too important to ignore or be afraid to talk about. Finally, after several moments of terrible silence, she answered me.

"No one said I was terrible and didn't satisfy them, because there

wasn't anyone who could say it. I've never slept with anyone, Elijah. That should tell you who you're dealing with. I'm a twenty-six-year-old virgin. I won't lie, some tried, but I'm not into sex just for the sake of sex. I have to have some kind of feelings for the guy."

I sat there unable to think or speak. She'd never been with a man. A thought occurred to me. "What about the man you dated for six months when you were twenty? Surely, you two had sex."

"How do you know about him?" She was surprised and sounded a tiny bit upset.

"Wire investigates anyone coming into contact with the club. After you were beaten, he dug deeper into you."

"You had me investigated? What the hell?"

"Hey, calm down. We do it to protect the club. As for why we dug deeper into you, I asked Wire to do it since I was trying to figure out who hurt you."

"Well, did he tell you why we broke up after six months?" she snapped.

"No, he couldn't know that."

"Let me tell you the rest of the story. The man I dated and thought I might be able to love and would marry, turned out to be a lying bastard. He didn't want me. He was with me because my father ordered him to do it. Apparently, he came from a family which was acceptable and the guy did it so he could get a place within my father's organization. He thought as my father's son-in-law that he'd get a VP position or something and would be able to kick back and not work but have all the money and perks. When I found out about it, I kicked his ass to the curb. During our courtship, he kept saying he wanted to wait until we were married to have sex. That he loved me too much and was old-fashioned. In reality, he wasn't attracted to me. He told me that as he walked out the door. That's when I knew I couldn't live in my father's house anymore. I moved out a month later."

The hurt in her voice made me want to go find this man and beat him into the ground. Even after all these years, you could tell she hadn't gotten over it. However, I had to set something straight for her.

“Babe, I’m so goddamn sorry that happened to you. You tell me where he is and I’ll go make him pay, but he lied.”

“I know he lied.”

“I don’t mean about telling you he loved you. I mean he lied about why he didn’t make love to you. It wasn’t because he wasn’t attracted to you. The only way that could be true is if he’s gay or dead. A straight man would kill to be with you, Bright Eyes. He was terrified your daddy would kill him. I bet he had orders not to touch you until after the wedding. He’d know what a dangerous man your daddy is.”

“Elijah, you’re sweet to say that, but I don’t think my father would give him such an order. Why would he care if we slept together? He approved of him and wanted the marriage.”

“He did, but that doesn’t mean he didn’t have some other scheme going on in regard to you. I’m sitting here and it’s all I can do to keep my hands off you. That kiss we shared has only made me need and want you more. I saw how my brothers reacted to you when they first met you. You could have any one of them without lifting a finger.”

“If that’s the case, why haven’t men been knocking down my door all these years?” she challenged me.

“I expect they’re scared of your daddy. Well, I have news, I’m far from scared of him. He has nothing to do with us. The only person who can make me leave you alone is you. So, if you aren’t at all attracted to me and the thought of being with me disgusts you, tell me and I’ll back off. We’ll still protect you, so don’t think you have to say yes in order for us to do that.”

I sent up a silent prayer that she wouldn’t tell me any such thing. Our kiss hadn’t made me think she was disgusted. It was all I could do not to push for more. Her revelations about her history with men and her lack of

experience tore at me.

On one hand, I hated the pain it caused her. On the other hand, I found I was thrilled that no man had been with her. That didn't mean she hadn't fooled around, but I'd have to deal with that. It meant if we did get together like I wanted, we could explore her sexuality together. It made me a dick, maybe, since I'd been with so many and her innocence thrilled me. My only defense was that I never led any of those women on. They knew from the start it was only sex and wouldn't go anywhere.

She was studying my face while I was thinking all this. Whatever she saw must've answered her questions, because she took my hand and squeezed it as a gentle smile appeared on her face. "I swear, that's one of the sweetest things I think a man has ever said to me. I don't know if it's true or not but thank you."

"Which part don't you think is true?"

"Well, the part about all your brothers being attracted and how you can hardly keep your hands off me."

"Oh, I'll prove it about my brothers tomorrow, but for now, I have something else to do."

"What?"

"This," I whispered right as I tugged her up against me and grabbed the back of her head. I gently pulled her toward me until our lips were a scant inch apart. Her eyes widened. "I'll show you what you do to me, Natalya."

I laid my lips against hers and I went to town. It wasn't a gentle kiss, but I made sure not to hurt her. I would let her go immediately if she resisted me. Instead, she took me by surprise. Her hands came up to thread through the back of my hair and she opened her mouth and stuck her tongue out to tease my lips. I didn't need a bigger sign. I opened my mouth and let my tongue out to play.

As we kissed and the fire inside me grew, I moved us around until she

was on her back on the couch and I was over top of her. Her legs had fallen apart, allowing me to lie in the cradle they made. I was hard and I couldn't stop from pressing my aching cock against her pussy. It didn't matter that there were layers of clothing between us. I groaned, and she whimpered and flexed her hips which drove her pussy harder into my cock.

I knew it was too soon for us to go to the ultimate point, even if I was raring to go. Pushing her too fast might scare her off and that was the last thing I wanted. However, if she'd let me show her how pleasurable other things could be, short of intercourse, then I'd happily be her teacher. I might die of frustration, but it would be worth it. I reluctantly tore my mouth away from hers. She tried to follow my mouth.

“Natalya, I love kissing you, baby. Your mouth is heavenly and I can only imagine all the things you could do with it. Just like I know what I can do with mine. I need to know how far to go before we lose our senses. We can continue to kiss if that's all you want. If you're open to more, then tell me what more entails for you. What I don't want is for you to feel pressured to do anything. I'm not in this for a race. I'm here to go the distance.”

She was slightly panting as she gazed up at me. I had no problem seeing the passion in her eyes. The way her pussy kept pushing into my cock told me she was aroused. I held on to my control. I wouldn't ravish her before she was ready to be ravished. Her hands left my hair and ran down my shoulders to my pecs. She flexed them into the muscles there.

“I'm not sure how far I want this to go, Elijah. I'm attracted to you like I've never been attracted to a man. Your kisses make me ache and cause my head to spin. I want more. However, you know I've never gone all the way. I don't know what else to say yes to. Does that make sense?”

“I think I know what you mean. I hate to bring up another man while we're in the middle of this, but I need to know. With your boyfriend or anyone else you might have dated over the years, how far did you go? What did they introduce you to and, out of that, what did you enjoy or hate?”

“We kissed, although it was nothing like what we just did. It was tame, and I didn't ache for them to do it more. It was more of an expected

thing. Other than kissing, there was touching of my breasts over top of my clothes. A few tried to cop a feel underneath, but I stopped them. It didn't feel right to me."

I blinked. Shit, she was truly a virgin. Damn, my desire shot up another hundred percent. I took a fortifying breath. "So, no one has touched your naked skin, saw your body? They didn't kiss you from head to toe and taste your skin with their tongue and lips? They didn't get to see your beautiful body without a stitch of clothing? A mouth or a hand hasn't touched that pussy and discovered what your cream tastes like? No one has heard your cries or screams when you reach your release?"

She blushed hard as she shook her head no. I groaned.

"I'm sorry," she blurted.

"Baby, you have nothing to be sorry about. That was a groan of absolute thankfulness. I wanted all those to be mine alone. Just one more question. Have you pleased yourself and if so, how and what out of that do you like?"

She got redder. She didn't say anything for a number of moments. I thought she wasn't going to answer me but she did. "I have touched myself. It was mainly down there, although I touched my breasts to see what that was like. I've read stuff and watched porn movies. I haven't used toys. I didn't know what I would like, and it felt weird to go into a store and buy them or to order online. I didn't want someone to see what I was getting."

"Did the touching you did, did it feel good? Did you orgasm?"

This talk rather than cooling my ardor was heating it up more. Images kept flashing through my head. I pictured me touching her in all the erogenous zones and her coming. I pictured the toys and fun we could have.

"It felt okay, mildly pleasant. I've had a couple of little orgasms. Honestly, I thought they were little, maybe not. If they weren't, I don't get what all the hoopla is about sex. The way some people talk, it's the best thing in the world. I'd rather read a book."

I couldn't help but laugh at her book statement. "Oh, darlin', you have no idea. Some women need more stimulation or different kinds to get off. I've heard some women can't do it no matter what they do, but I'm convinced that's because they haven't found the right man or woman or the right playthings. I promise, I can make you scream in bliss and beg me for more. If not, I'll give you my man card and become a priest."

She laughed and ran her hands from my chest to my stomach. My muscles jumped. I wanted to beg her to go lower. "Then I'd like you to show me how you can do that. I'm not ready for us to have sex, but I'm open to your suggestions of what we can do short of that to save your man card."

Growling, I stood up. I saw the surprise followed by concern in her expression. I bent down and scooped her up into my arms. As I walked determinedly toward my room, she wiggled. Her hands had come up to grip my shoulders, like she thought I might drop her. As if. She wasn't heavy.

"Relax, Bright Eyes. I've got you. I won't drop such precious cargo. I think for this next part, we'll be more comfortable in my bed. It's soft and we've got plenty of room to work with. Is that okay?"

"Okay," she whispered.

Once I got her into my bedroom, I laid her down on the bed. I stripped off my shirt but left on my jeans. She scanned my upper body. I knew plenty of women found my muscles and tattoos attractive. The appreciation I saw in her eyes told me she was no different. I took her hand and placed it in the middle of my chest.

"You're free to touch me anywhere or anyhow you want. Explore me, honey. I want it all. Now, for this next part, would you like your bra and top to stay on or can I remove them? I'm dying to touch and maybe taste those breasts of yours, but only if you want that too."

She hesitated only a second then took my hand and placed it on the hem of her top. "You can take them off. I warn you, I'm nothing like those women at the clubhouse, as if you haven't already guessed that. I'm decent sized, but for a man, I might not be."

I frowned. “There’s one main rule for when we’re together. You won’t put down your body. I’m not thinking of anyone else’s body but yours. I haven’t seen you naked, but I know you’re more than perfect and what I want. Size has never mattered to me. How responsive you are and the enjoyment it brings both of us does.”

Not wasting any more time, I lifted the hem. She raised herself up to help me get her top up and over her head. I tossed it to the floor. As she lay back, I saw her bra opened in the front and that her skin was as ivory as her face. Her breasts were encased in a dark green satin bra. I wanted to remove it instantly, but I thought it might make her nervous, so I lowered my head and started kissing her neck.

Working steadily, I kissed and nipped at her skin with my teeth as I worked down from her neck to the rise of her breasts. I kissed them. Seeing pink marks of possession on her skin from my nibbles made me feel more possessive.

I buried my head between her breasts and rubbed my beard back and forth. She moaned. I lapped at her skin, tasting the slight saltiness of it. Kissing from one breast to the other, I cupped them in my hands and squeezed. She moaned again, only this time it was louder.

I needed my hands and mouth on her bare breasts. Easing back, I grasped the clasp with my fingers as I looked her in the eyes. She nodded. I flipped it open and pushed the cups away. I resisted looking fully at them until I raised her up and took her bra off. It landed on the floor.

I sat back on my heels and studied her. She squirmed, but I didn’t stop. Her breasts were full although not huge. I’d say she was a full B cup. Her skin was ivory like the rest of her. I wasn’t sure if her skin had ever seen the sun. The palest, prettiest pink nipples topped those lovely breasts. Her nipples were tight beads.

I ran my fingers over them and she jerked and cried out. That was my cue. I leaned down and cupped one of them in my hand. I sucked her other nipple into my mouth. I lashed it back and forth with my tongue then bit down. She bucked her hips off the bed and cried out louder. Her hands were

clawing at my chest. I stopped long enough to tell her what else I wanted.

“Touch my nipples. Play with them like I’m playing with yours. I don’t mind teeth as long as you don’t break the skin. Nails are fine too. Do whatever you want because I’m gonna spend awhile enjoying these beauties. If I do something you don’t like, tell me.”

She nodded her head frantically. I got back to work. As I played, I’d switch from using my mouth on one while the other was being played with using my other hand. She was so damn responsive I wanted to howl. Her touch and exploration of me was hesitant, but she was getting bolder. She couldn’t use her mouth since I was, but her hands were busy. She made me shudder more than once.

Finally, after playing for a good while, I decided I should let her use her mouth if she wanted. I lay down next to her. She gave me a puzzled look. Her hands came up to cover her breasts. I grabbed them and pushed them away.

“Don’t you dare cover them. I wanna see them while you get to do your exploring with your mouth. Remember, as long as you don’t break the skin, go for it.”

I let go of her hands and put mine behind my head. She slowly sat up and leaned toward me. She was watching my face. I nodded. That made her lower her head and flick her tongue across my nipple. I inhaled hard. From there, she began to explore and play more. As she got into it and saw I was enjoying it, she grew bolder. Soon, she was nibbling on my nipples with her teeth and using her nails to rake across my muscles.

She checked out my tattoos and ran her fingers along the outlines. Even as untutored as she was, she was making me harder. I could tell I was leaking precum into my jeans. My cock was demanding I let him out to play, but I couldn’t, not tonight. I let her play until I couldn’t take it anymore then I sat up.

“That was great, baby, but I need to taste those breasts again. Then, we need to stop. I’m getting close to the edge.”

“Close to what edge?”

“The edge where I push you to take off more and let me explore the rest of your body. The edge where I come in my pants. That edge.”

She ran her hand down my chest before she said anything. “What if I said I want you to take the rest of my clothes off and explore? What if I want to see what the rest of your body looks like? Your body is beautiful, Elijah. I don’t know if men like to hear that or not, but it is. Your muscles fascinate me and so do your tattoos. You have so many. They had to hurt to get them. One day, I want to know the story behind each of them. I want to know if you have more I can’t see.”

Oh, I had more for her. I didn’t know if she was ready to see all that or not. “Natalya, I’d love nothing more than to see the rest of you and to play. I’d love for you to see all of me, but I don’t want to rush you or scare you. This is all new to you. Don’t let me pressure you. I’ll always want more, but never if you don’t.”

She didn’t say anything back. Instead, she reached down and undid the button and then slid down the zipper on her jeans. I didn’t need her to say more. I sat up and grabbed the waistband of her jeans and slowly started to inch them down. She raised up her ass to help. As each inch of her green-satin-covered mound then long legs were revealed, I grew hotter. Finally, when her pants were off, I could see those long legs and imagine them wrapped around my waist as I pounded in and out of her pussy. I groaned.

I ran my hands up both legs to her panties. I gripped them and began to ease them down. She helped again. I closed my eyes as I did it, so I couldn’t see her pussy. I wanted to see it once I could fully see it. As her panties came off her ankles and I dropped them, I opened my eyes. She was lying there totally bare and watching me anxiously.

Her mound was covered in fine short caramel-colored hair like her head was. I put my hand between her thighs and pushed them apart, so her legs would spread. As she let me, her full pink pussy was revealed. It was wet, and I saw her hard distended clit. I broke. Like a wolf, I attacked her.

I growled as I pushed her legs further apart and bent down to latch onto her pussy. She cried out in shock as I swept my tongue up her folds, taking her cream from her entrance to her clit on my tongue. I swallowed it. Her salty, sweet, and slightly floral essence burst on my tongue. Instantly, an urgent craving happened, and I had to have more.

I lapped at her like a hungry dog eating its last meal. She wiggled and squirmed but I held her hips still and ravaged her virgin pussy. The knowledge that no man has seen, touched, tasted, or smelled her pussy made me wilder.

I used not only my tongue but my fingers and teeth. I tried to slow down. I was going too fast, I knew, but I couldn't stop. I don't know how long it was before she tensed and screamed. Her orgasm shook her whole body and more of her creamy deliciousness flooded my mouth. I didn't let up. Even as she was fighting to come down from her high, I was working to push her into another one.

"E-Elijah, oh my God, you have to stop. I can't take it." She panted as she pushed at my head.

I shook my head as I held her clit between my teeth and lashed it with my tongue. She moaned. Knowing I could make her come even harder and that she could stand it, I inserted a finger inside of her for the first time. She tensed then whimpered. Jesus, she was tight as hell. When I finally got my cock inside of her, she'd squeeze the hell out of me. That thought had more precum sliding out of my slit. The front of my jeans was wet.

I fucked her gently with my finger until she eased up around it then I inserted another one. I worked her until I could get three inside her snug pussy then I went at her faster and slightly harder. As I finger fucked her, I sucked on her clit harder. Within a minute or so, she exploded into a full body orgasm. She shook and screamed as she gushed. I lapped up every drop I could get.

This time, I eased her down with gentle licks and by removing my fingers from inside of her and petting her pussy. She stopped shaking and lay there with her eyes closed. I reluctantly sat up. I didn't want to stop, but she

was new to this and I was close to coming in my pants. Her eyelids flew open.

“What’s wrong?” she croaked.

“Nothing’s wrong, baby. I’m just enjoying watching you. I think I proved you can have a spectacular orgasm, didn’t I?”

She laughed and nodded. “You sure did. I think I lost brain cells.”

“Good. Why don’t you get cleaned up? You can use this bathroom while I use the one down the hall. If you’re willing, I’d love for you to sleep in here tonight with me. I promise to be on my best behavior.”

I hated to stop, but we had to. While she was cleaning up, I’d go to the other bathroom and take care of the raging beast in my pants. She sat up to lean on her elbows.

“Why do you want me to clean up? Are we done? What about you?”

“Baby, we have to stop. Not that I want to but I’m close to coming in my pants. I need to take care of that, as crass as it sounds. While you get cleaned up, I’ll do that,” I explained.

I wasn’t going to hide things from her, especially when it came to sex. She deserved to know what she did to me. I pointed out the bulge in my jeans to illustrate my point. Her eyes widened as she took it in. Suddenly, she sat up and her hand cupped me through my jeans. She gently squeezed, causing me to moan as electrical shocks ran through me. My cock jumped in her hand. She gasped then did it again. I grabbed her hand.

“Fuck, you have to stop. I’m not kidding. I’m a hair away from coming. Go get cleaned up.”

She shook her head. “No, I don’t want to. I had two orgasms. They were amazing. It’s not fair that you don’t get the same. I don’t want you to go to the bathroom and take care of that monster in your pants alone. I want to see it. I want to know what it’s like when you come.”

Her quiet though firm confession made me close my eyes and pray for strength. As I did, I felt her other hand tugging at my button and zipper. I opened my eyes and went to stop her. The look on her face stopped me. I could tell she wanted to see me as badly as I had wanted to see her. The desire written on her face was evident. Taking a deep breath, I let go and let her take the lead.

Natalya: Chapter 8

I couldn't believe how bold I was being with Knight. A part of me was scared to do more, but another part was dying to experience more with him. The two orgasms he gave me were so much better than the pale ones I'd been able to give myself, they weren't worth comparing. If I'd come close to having anyone make me feel the desire he did, even before the orgasms, I wouldn't be a virgin.

I'd seen naked men and their cocks in my movies. I wasn't that sheltered. During those porno movies, I'd been curious if the women in them actually enjoyed what was happening to them or was it all pretend? I wanted to know that answer for myself, but no man had ever made me want it enough to have sex just for the hell of it. It went without saying, I hadn't ever been in love with one to do it either.

Seeing Knight's upper body and touching all those gorgeous muscles and engrossing tattoos of his had made me burn with desire. It pushed me to want to see the rest of him. His being a gentleman and stopping after he got me off was endearing, but I didn't want to leave him wanting. I wanted to see the rest of him now. I wasn't ready for us to go all the way, but I did want more.

I undid the button on his jeans then tugged down his zipper. He was watching me closely. I heard him take a deep breath, but he didn't say anything to stop me. Slowly, he reclined back on the bed. I got up on my knees more, so I could work on removing his pants. He helped by lifting his bottom off the bed then he settled back down and raised his legs.

Once I got them off and looked at him properly, I gulped. His erection looked even bigger straining the thin material of his briefs. The front of his underwear was wet. I ran a finger over his bulge. I wasn't able to resist doing it. He shuddered.

“Does it hurt?” I asked softly.

“Not the way you mean. Is it uncomfortable to be this hard and feeling like I’m ready to burst, yes, but in a good way. It’s not painful as in real pain,” he answered gutturally.

I could smell what must be his musky cum smell. It wasn’t gross, like I’d imagined. It made me wonder if it tasted bad or not. My mouth began to water at the thought of finding out. *God, what had come over me? Here I was, drooling to taste a man’s cock and cum. Wait, scratch that. Here I was drooling to taste Knight’s cock and cum.*

“If you changed your mind, don’t be afraid to tell me, Natalya. We can go back to my plan. I promise I won’t be mad.”

“No! No, I haven’t changed my mind. I don’t know what to do. I want you to come like I did, but what do you like? I don’t want to disappoint you or hurt you.”

“First, tell me what you think you might want to do. Do you wanna touch me, watch me get myself off, or do you want to do more? As for hurting me, that’s unlikely unless you bite me or squeeze the fuck out of my cock or balls. My likes are what most men want, I think. Touching, exploring my cock and balls, licking, and sucking. I’m finding having you look at me is enough to give me pleasure. We’ll go at your speed, Bright Eyes.”

I took a moment to decide then I voiced my first desire. We’d have to see where it went from there. “I want to see all of you. Can I take off your briefs?”

“Please, I’d love that. Look your fill,” he said.

Inching my fingers under his waistband, I hooked my fingers and began to slowly ease them down. Like with his jeans, he helped. As they cleared his cock and it bounced into view, I gasped. He looked ginormous, and I caught the glint of metal. *How in the world would I get that in my mouth or vagina? Didn’t that metal hurt?* I gulped.

Focusing on getting his underwear all the way off, so I could try to stop freaking out, I avoided his gaze. Once they were off, I started at his

ankles and slowly ran my eyes up his legs. They were muscular and hairy. I saw he had tattoos on his lower legs and thighs. I knew I couldn't avoid looking at his cock forever. I jumped when he spoke.

“Baby, don't be nervous. I can see you're tense. I can put my underwear back on if that makes you feel more at ease.”

“I don't want you to do that, Elijah. I do want to do this. I'm just nervous. You're huge and you have metal. I wasn't expecting that. Doesn't that hurt?”

He smiled and reached down to grab my hand. I scooted up closer to his middle again.

“I'm not that huge, baby. I'm longer than some men. I'm eight inches long and probably about six inches around. As for my hardware, well, they hurt like hell when I got them and while I healed, but it's felt fine since then. As long as I don't accidentally get it caught in my zipper, that is. That hurts like a mother.” He grimaced.

“Does it make sex feel better for you? For women you've been with?” I hated to ask about other women, but I wanted to know.

“I don't know what it feels like during sex, babe. I got this five months ago. I'd always thought about it but you have to give yourself time to heal and well, I was too busy using it to do that. I told you, I've only been with a couple women since Cara came to live with me. It has been literally six months since I've had sex. As for whether it feels good to me, well, my cock has been more sensitive to my hand jobs, so I think that's a good sign.”

His frankness and the way he didn't hesitate to answer my questions or make me feel stupid for asking them, made me calm down. Gathering my courage, I ran my finger down the length of him, touching his multiple piercings on the underside. His cock jumped.

“Shit, do that again,” he hissed.

I did, but this time, I paused at each piercing to run my fingertip back

and forth crosswise on them. He moaned.

“What is this kind of piercing called?”

“It’s a Jacob’s ladder.”

“What if I were to tug on one of them? Wouldn’t that hurt?”

“If you yank on it hard, yeah, it would hurt like hell, but a gentle tug wouldn’t. Why don’t you give it a try?”

Before I could chicken out, I tugged on the one closest to his balls. He didn’t yell in pain. He moaned. Taking encouragement from it, I did the same to the rest of them. By the time I made it to the one closest to the head of his cock, he was moving restlessly on the bed.

“Here, give me your hand,” he ordered.

I put mine in his. He brought it down to him and wrapped my hand around his cock, as far as it would reach. He let go. “Now, move your hand up and down like that’s your pussy and you’re riding me.”

More wetness soaked me between my legs at the mental image his words formed in my mind. I did as he asked. The feel of him was incredible. He was hard yet soft at the same time. Once I began, I couldn’t seem to stop. As I came close to the head, his cum, which had leaked out, got on my fingers. It made my hand slide easier. He groaned loudly and after several strokes, he wrapped his hand around mine again.

“Harder, you won’t hurt me. Fuck, that feels so good, Natalya. Make me come, baby.”

My heart sped up in delight as I tightened down more. He didn’t let go until I must’ve gotten it to the tightness he liked. I thought it was too tight, but what did I know? As I worked him, his breathing got faster. His cock throbbed in my hand and more cum leaked from his slit. In utter fascination, I watched and jerked him quicker.

Suddenly, he stiffened and shook, then he yelled my name. Wet, hot

cum came squirting out of him in jets. I didn't know if I should stop or not, so I kept working him up and down. In the porn movies, the women would continue. Eventually, he shook his head and hissed. "Stop, I'm too sensitive, darlin'."

I let go instantly. My hand was covered in his cum. Curious and unable to resist, I lifted my hand and took a tiny swipe of his cum on my tongue. It wasn't anything like I imagined it to be. It was kinda salty and had a musky scent to it. I'd heard women say cum tasted awful and bitter. I didn't think so, or at least his didn't. His groan made me look up at his face. He was watching me intently.

"Jesus, that was amazing, baby. I can say for sure the ladder makes me feel more pleasure in those hands of yours and your hands feel so much better than my own. Thank you. What did you think? And how did that cum taste?" He grinned at me when he asked that last one.

"I think watching you come was beautiful and I want to see you do it again and again. You're so hard yet soft too. I wasn't expecting that. As for how you tasted, it wasn't what I expected either. I thought it would be horrible, but it's not. Can I ask you something?"

"Sure, you can ask me anything."

"Do you like it better when you get a hand job or a blow job?"

"I prefer a mouth but that doesn't mean you ever have to do that for me. I'll be more than happy with whatever you like and want to do. Remember, this is us and we make the rules. It's all about bringing ourselves and each other the most sexual gratification we can."

"But you'd like it more if I sucked your cock rather than stroked it?"

"Yes, but again, that's not all that matters. Do you think you'd like to try it one day? If so, I don't need to come in your mouth. In fact, a lot of women don't like the taste of cum and they won't let a guy do that. Some refuse to even go down on a guy because they hate to give head or they don't want to take the chance the guy will come in their mouth, anyway. I'll never

do that to you if you decide you'd like to suck me."

Raising up until I could reach his mouth, I leaned close. Right before I kissed him, I answered him. "I think I'd love to suck your cock and soon. As for whether you can come in my mouth, we'll see. I'm finding you make me want all kinds of stuff I have no idea about, Elijah."

As I kissed him, he muttered, "Shit," against my mouth. After that, we got lost in kissing each other and left the talking for later.



Yawning, I blinked to clear my fuzzy eyes. The room was lighter, which told me the sun was up. As I tried to roll over to find my cell phone to check the time, I realized there was a heaviness holding me in place. Glancing down, I saw a hairy, male arm. Seeing it made the memories of last night come flooding back.

After we'd kissed ourselves silly, Knight had taken me into his bathroom and we showered together. He got hard again while I got aroused. We'd washed each other and the slippery hands had felt wonderful. He got me off with his fingers as I jerked him off a second time. Finally, completely spent, we dried off and got into bed. It was lights out after that.

Lips nuzzled into the back of my neck. He was spooning me from behind. "Mornin', beautiful. Are you ready for some breakfast?"

Wiggling, I turned around so I could face him. I instantly hated him. He looked as yummy first thing in the morning as he did in the middle of the day. I knew I looked frightening.

"No, I'm not. I need you to go back to sleep and give me an hour. Then wake back up and pretend you didn't see me like this," I said without thinking.

His surprised look turned into a grin then he laughed at me. I tried to punch him in the chest, but he caught my hand. "Quit being ridiculous. I can't believe you think you need to do anything to make yourself more beautiful. You're stunning whether your hair is brushed or not. You sure as hell don't

need makeup.”

“Don’t try to sweet talk me, Elijah. I know what I look like in the morning. Plus, I have bad breath. I can’t even kiss you until I brush my teeth.”

In a flash, he rolled me underneath him and he kissed me. It wasn’t a press of the lips then we were done kind either. He forced his tongue inside my mouth. My thoughts of morning breath flew out the window as he kissed me then I kissed him back. I’m not sure how long we would’ve kept kissing if it wasn’t for the banging noise that started. He groaned then sat up.

“What’s that?” I asked dazedly.

“Someone I’m gonna kill for interrupting the best morning of my life. Stay here and I’ll go kill whoever it is then come back.”

He threw back the covers and stood up. I couldn’t keep my eyes off his glorious nakedness. He went to the bathroom while I lay there daydreaming. When we got done with the shower last night, he’d begged me not to put on any clothes and to sleep with him. I couldn’t tell him no.

He came back out and blew me a kiss before he got into his dresser and pulled out a pair of shorts which he quickly put on. The knocking hadn’t stopped. As he left the room, I heard him yell, “Hold your damn horses. I’m coming.”

Giggling, I got out of bed and went into the bathroom. After I peed, used his comb on my hair, and finger brushed my teeth, I went back to pick up my clothes. I hated to put on dirty ones, but I didn’t have any others in here. Mine were upstairs in the bedroom he’d given me. I hurried to get dressed.

Sneaking out the door when I was done, I tried to see who had been knocking. I knew from where the stairs were that there was no way I could get upstairs unseen unless they were out on the porch. No such luck. I saw him in the living room with Agony and Cara. *Shit, what should I do?*

“Babe, come join us, will you? Agony has a question,” Knight hollered.

Knowing I was caught, I came out. I tried to pretend I did this all the time. Agony gave me a smile and a wink. Knight came over to me and put his arm around me before leading me back to them. Cara was staring at me.

“Morning, Natalya. I hope you slept well, and we didn’t disturb anything,” Agony said.

“I slept great and no, you didn’t disturb anything.”

“Daddy, why was Natalya in your room?”

I stared at Knight in a panic. He didn’t look a bit panicked. “She slept with Daddy, Buttercup. You were gone and I was lonely.”

“Will she sleep with you tonight?” Her question was innocent, and she seemed not to be upset, just curious.

“I hope so. I want her to sleep with me every night. Did you have fun last night at Uncle Agony and Aunt Eliana’s house? Did you behave for Mercy?” he asked her sternly.

She gave him an angelic smile. “I behaved, Daddy. I love staying at Uncle Agony and Aunt Eliana’s house. The twins are so much fun and Branson only cried a few times. I helped to feed them and everything,” she told him excitedly.

“Good girl.”

“I’m sorry for knocking, but Cara couldn’t wait to get home. She’s had her breakfast, so she should be good to go. I wanted to let you know we plan to meet up at the clubhouse at one o’clock. Eliana will be there along with Tana. They’ll look after Cara while we have our meeting.”

Instantly, at the reminder of the meeting, I tensed up. I hated to interrupt the happiness I was feeling with this awful mess, although I knew we couldn’t afford to ignore it or delay coming up with a solution.

“Not a problem and thanks for having her last night. We’ll be there. Honey, why don’t you run along to your room and play for a bit? Daddy and Natalya need to talk to Uncle Agony for a minute.”

“Okay, Daddy. Bye, Uncle Agony. See you in a minute, Natalya,” she chirped. She gave me then Agony a quick hug. He growled like a bear as she did it, which made her laugh, before she took off for her room. Once she was out of sight, Knight spoke.

“Did you get a chance yet to call Wrath?”

“I did. He said he should be able to give us at least four guys. He’s gonna talk to his brothers and get back to me later today.”

“That’s not enough, is it?” Knight asked, frowning.

I hated that I was putting them to so much trouble.

“Knight, maybe we should reconsider me staying here.”

“You’re not leaving me and starting over in some other fucking town as someone new and I never see you again,” he snapped.

“I didn’t mean that. I meant maybe it would be better if I went away only temporarily. I could hide while the whole issue with my father is taken care of. He’s less likely to come after anyone here if I’m gone. He’ll be too busy trying to track me down.”

He shook his head. “Bright Eyes, the only way you’re going anywhere is if I go with you. Us out there alone isn’t the best idea. If things get too bad here or we think it’s going to go bad, then we’ll come up with a different plan. We won’t put the old ladies and kids at unnecessary risk, believe me. Now that I have you with me, I can’t live without you.”

Inside, I felt like I was melting. His expression clearly said he meant it. To be honest, I didn’t want to leave him either.

“Ahh, isn’t that sweet? You two will make me sick or cry if you don’t

stop,” Agony said in a teasing tone. He had a big smile on his face.

Knight elbowed him with his arm in the side. “Shut up, asshole. You know you feel the same way about Eliana and your kids. If we tried to make you live separate from them, you’d lose your goddamn mind.”

“True, I would. Although if it came down to it being life or death, I’d do it. You wouldn’t be able to stand me, but I’d do it. Now, back to your question about four men not being enough, the answer is no, they’re not. Which is why after I got off the phone with Wrath, I called Terror, Bull, and Jinx. I filled them in on what’s going on and what we need. They all promised they’d send some men our way in the next couple of days. Terror offered to call Sean and the other guys at Dark Patriots, Diablo, and Reaper. He’ll get them to be on standby.”

“Great. Thanks, I would rather we have too many men and not need them than not enough. All these brains working together will guarantee we don’t overlook anything.”

“Wait, who are all those men? I mean, I assume they’re with those other clubs you told me about.”

“Sorry, yeah, they are. Terror is the president of the Archangel’s Warriors MC in Dublin Falls up in Tennessee. Bull is over their Hunters Creek chapter and he’s also the charter president and Terror’s father-in-law. Sean is one of the four guys who formed the Dark Patriots along with Gabe, Griffin, and Undertaker.”

I interrupted him. “Undertaker? That sounds like a biker’s name.”

They both exchanged looks then Knight nodded his head. “It is, although it isn’t uncommon for guys who are in the military to get nicknames too. In Undertaker’s case, that was his when he was a Navy SEAL and it was used when he went undercover in an MC for five years. It stuck and suits him more than his real name, Mark. Reaper is the president of the Iron Punishers in Virginia and Jinx is over the Ruthless Marauders in Knoxville. The last one, Diablo, is the president of the Horsemen of Wrath down in Florida. His daughter, Brooklyn, is married to one of the guys in Dublin Falls, Torch.”

“Wow, what different names. I guess I’ll get to meet them all one day?”

“Oh, you can be sure of that. Okay, it sounds like you’ve left me nothing to do, Pres. Thanks and we’ll be there at one o’clock unless you have something else to tell us,” Knight said.

“Nope, that’s it until later. See you then. Natalya, try not to stress about it. We’ll find a way to take care of your dad, his dirty business, and shady people and friends, okay?”

“I’ll try, Agony. Thank you again for going to all this trouble for me.”

He waved off my words and went to the door. He let himself out. Knight hugged me close. “He’s right, we’ll take care of it all. How about we get something to eat and then we can spend some time with Cara before we go to the clubhouse?”

“I’d love that. What’re you hungry for? I can cook,” I offered.

Forty minutes later, we were eating bacon, pancakes and eggs. Cara came out and joined us for a pancake and bacon, even though she’d already had her breakfast. As we ate, we chatted, and I got to know her better. She was as sweet as I imagined. I enjoyed every minute with them. To kill time, after we finished eating, we went out to play on the jungle gym.

We played for a good hour or more. I got so involved in playing with her, which included me going down the slides with her and chasing her around the area then running with her as Knight chased us, that I forgot about the looming meeting. When he called a halt to our fun, the memory came crashing back.

A quick run to the house to wash up and then we were on our way. It was still warm out, so this time, rather than drive to the clubhouse, we walked. Cara skipped and chattered the whole way there. I tried my best to respond and not let her know anything was wrong.

Walking inside, I saw the others were there including Tana, Joli,

Eliana, and the babies. I went to them to say hello and to see the babies. A few minutes later, Agony whistled and pointed toward the hallway. Knight came over to take my hand. He had a couple of bottles of water with him. I had a feeling after this was over, I'd need something much stronger to drink.

Knight: Chapter 9

As we sat in church and Agony updated the others on the reinforcements we were getting, I tried to comfort Natalya by holding her hand and rubbing soothingly across her knuckles. The tension coming off her was making me stressed.

I knew my club and the others would be able to find a way to take care of her dad and those involved in his smuggling and other nefarious activities. I had no doubt we would. How to convince her of that was another thing. She hadn't seen or experienced the things we had over the years. Together, the various clubs had dealt with outlaw MCs, the Mafia, murders, rapists, terrorists, human traffickers and more. Maybe I should tell her this. Hearing Agony's update coming to an end, I raised my hand to get his attention. He saw me and acknowledged me right away.

“Yeah, Knight, you have something to add?”

“I do. It's for Natalya. I know she hasn't been with us over the years and got to see firsthand what this club and the others have dealt with successfully. It might make her feel better if she knew. Baby, we've battled so many different people it's kind of crazy. There's been stalkers, murders, rapists, human traffickers, terrorists, outlaw MCs, corrupt businessmen, cartels and more that we've gone up against and won.”

Her eyes widened and her mouth dropped open in shock.

“It's never easy but we do find a way. Our resources are many and varied. We have the top hackers in the country and even the world working with us. If that's not enough, we have government people and agencies we can ask for help. Shit, in some cases, even the local cops have been known to side with us. Your dad and those who work for and with him won't be any different.”

“I-I don't know what to say. I had no idea. It does make me feel better knowing all this, but I'll still worry until it's over. I have no real idea what

else my father is involved in. I know he smuggles, but I don't know what or where. He might be involved in other illegal things too. I do know he's ruthless and the men he employs, his inner circle of bodyguards and closest employees, are just as ruthless. However, to make it worse, there are legitimate businesses he owns and I believe the people working in those have no clue the kind of man he is. This won't only destroy his illegal stuff, but those as well."

"Baby, you're right, the legal businesses might go down too. We'll try not to let that happen if we can stop it. If we can't, we'll see if there's any help we can get them to find new jobs or to lessen the impact. I wish only bad people had to suffer, but it's not always possible," I cautioned her. She gave me a smile and nodded.

"Before we can get to your dad, we need to know the properties and businesses you know he has. In addition, the names and any information on his people, assets, bank accounts, offshore accounts, property, etc. Anything and everything you can tell us will help," Dare told her.

"I can jot those down for you. I'll do it before the end of today. Can I ask what you'll be doing until you have that information? Do you have to wait for me to give those to you before you can start researching?"

"No, we don't. I've already started digging and compiling what I'm finding on your dad. I asked Smoke, Everly, and the other hackers in the various clubs to help too. We're already learning things. Having your lists to compare to will be invaluable. What you don't know, I believe we'll be able to find out. It might take some deep digging and time, but we'll find it. Once we have all those pieces, we can make up the rest of our plans to take them down," Wire told her confidently.

"Wow, you've already found stuff? I can't believe it. I have another question. It doesn't pertain to my father. With these men coming from the other clubs, where will they all stay? There aren't enough houses or beds here, are there?"

"No, we don't have enough, but I took care of that," Cyclone told her.

“How? Don’t they need to be here to keep everyone safe?”

“Ideally, yes. If they’re not on protection details outside the compound, then we want them here. I have some friends who are able to lend us fifth wheels, RVs, and campers. We’ll set them up here on the compound and it’ll give them a place to sleep. They’ll use the showers and stuff at the clubhouse and so on. Meals can be cooked in some of those or again, in the clubhouse. We’ll have guys standing guard around the clock even inside the walls.”

“Your property is enclosed with a chain link fence. Will that be enough to keep others out? I’m not dismissing your efforts, so please don’t think that. I just want to learn and understand. The gate only opens if you have the code to get in or if someone opens it for you. When you say there’ll be men standing guard around the clock inside the fence, do you mean they’ll be armed with guns and stuff?”

“Yes, that’s exactly what we mean. As for the fence, certainly, if they hit it with something like a grenade or bigger, then they can gain entry. However, that would alert us to their attack. The smarter thing would be to find a spot that isn’t patrolled and cut a hole in the chain link. That’s why Razor from Dublin Falls is sending his dog, Blitz. Blitz is trained in search and rescue, plus how to be a guard slash attack dog. He’ll be able to sense things we might not. Razor might send more from his in-laws’ place. They train dogs,” Agony explained.

I hadn’t known about Blitz, which was a relief. The more we had the better. In fact, thinking of dogs made me want to add one to my family. If nothing else, he or she would be a companion when not guarding them. I should’ve thought of that. Cara had been bugging me to get a dog for months. I’d wanted to wait until she was more settled with me. The time to start the process would be now. I knew from talking to Razor and his wife, Talia, that it could take a year or more to get a dog. They usually had a waiting list. I’d prefer to get one from someone I knew and trusted.

Natalya was starting to look a little more relaxed. I think our expertise, if you want to call it that, was sinking in. Nothing was ever one hundred percent foolproof, but we’d do our damndest to get as close as we

could.

From there, it was a whirl of all of us posing our ideas and working on getting a start on information from Natalya. She jotted a few things down right there and gave the list to Wire, so he could dig deeper. Finally, Agony decided we'd had enough for now and ended the meeting.

Walking into the common room, I could feel how ready everyone was to get to work on this. Joli, Tana, and Eliana were anxiously eyeing Agony and Dare. I knew they'd fill them in on what was planned. It wouldn't be smart not to tell them. That way, they knew how important it was to listen to what we told them and what precautions to take.

Thankfully, Tana had moved to the compound from her house outside of town after Agony and Eliana got together. She wanted to be closer to her great-grandchildren. We all wanted her where we could keep an eye on her. She wasn't getting any younger, although none of us would take our lives into our hands and say it where she could hear us. She turned eighty-one this year but was still going strong. A lot of that was due to how Eliana treated her with her medicinal creams and teas.

Cara came running over to me and Natalya. "Daddy, can we go back outside and play?"

"We can, but first I need to talk to you. Come here." I led her over to one of the empty tables and sat down. She got up on my lap. Natalya sat beside me.

"We're gonna have a lot of the guys from the other clubs coming to stay with us. They'll be helping Daddy and your uncles take care of you and the other kids and the ladies. What that means is, I'll need you to listen to them. If they tell you to do something or not do something, you do as they say. You're not allowed to go anywhere unless an adult is with you. No more running off on your own to Agony or Dare's house or coming to find me. Understand?"

I wanted her to understand the importance without scaring her to death. It was a hard thing to do.

She frowned. “Why, Daddy?”

“Because some bad men want to take Natalya. We’re not going to let that happen. We’ll have Blitz coming to stay too.”

She clapped her hands and bounced on my lap. She’d met Blitz when we went to their clubhouse a while back. She loved him and he’d made her want a dog even more.

“Can I feed him and play with him?”

“We’ll ask Razor. Blitz isn’t here for fun, Buttercup. He’s here to work and help protect us, but I bet he’ll get to play sometimes. As long as Razor says it’s okay, you can. He’s the boss when it comes to Blitz, not me. Okay?”

“Okay. I promise to behave. If I do, can I get a dog?” She batted her blue eyes at me and gave me puppy dog eyes.

I didn’t always let her use that against me, but I probably gave into it more than I should. Hell, I was making up for the first two plus shitty years of her life with her worthless mom. Sue me. I’d make sure it didn’t get out of control and she didn’t become a spoiled brat no one could stand.

“I’ll think about it. But if we do, it might take a while to get the kind we want, so don’t bug me about one.”

“I won’t. Can I go play outside now?”

Knowing she needed to run off more energy, I nodded. “Babe, do you wanna come with us or stay here? It’s up to you,” I asked Natalya.

“I think I’d rather go with you. I need to be out in the sunshine while the weather is nice. Come on, let’s see if I can run the jungle gym faster than you,” she told Cara.

Just like that, Cara jumped off my lap and ran for the door. I was about to holler and tell her to wait when Natalya did. She stopped. We got up and went to her. Moving outside, I kept my head on a swivel. The playground

was set back from the fence a good ways and it was behind the clubhouse. That provided protection. The trees closest to the fence on the other three sides were too far away for someone to shoot at us. Although, we might want to think about having them cut back further. The land outside the fence for several yards belonged to the club too.

As Cara played with Natalya, I stood by and kept watch while thinking about what might happen next. At some point, Natalya's dad would realize she wasn't at her house and he'd start looking for her. I wondered how fast he would find out she was with us. In a perverse way, I couldn't wait. I wanted to confront him about his treatment of her and to mete out justice sooner rather than later. Beating him bloody would feel so damn good.



Our compound looked nothing like it did two days ago. There were campers, fifth wheels, and RVs scattered around. They were placed close to the clubhouse and the houses we had already built for added protection. On top of that, we'd doubled in men. Jinx, Terror, Wrath, and Bull had come through for us, and between them sent thirteen men.

From Dublin Falls, we got Sniper, Bandit, Coyote, and Gunner. I noticed with the clubs that they'd sent us their single guys. I didn't blame the married ones for not coming. They had wives and kids. They'd come if we really needed them. Hopefully, we wouldn't.

Bull sent from Hunters Creek Iceman, Loki, and Vex. He had other single guys we could get if needed. It was weird seeing Vex with the Hunters Creek guys rather than the ones from Dublin Falls. He'd prospected with Dublin Falls, but when it came time to vote him in, he had a great opportunity in Hunters Creek to take over their construction foreman position, so they'd voted him in and approved his transfer all at the same time.

All the guys in the Ruthless Marauders club were single, so any of them met the unspoken single criteria. Jinx sent his VP, Animal, along with King and Styx. Wrath's guys—Ryder, Chains, and Fury rounded out our numbers. Having them here was great, except for one thing. It put even more single men around Natalya.

Even though I spent every spare moment I could with her, she was still not officially an old lady. The guys weren't blind, and they saw how beautiful and desirable she was. I'd seen more than one checking her out. So far, they hadn't made any moves on her. They'd have to be blind not to know she was mine and I wouldn't take kindly to any of them trying to steal her away.

Natalya seemed to be oblivious to their appreciation of her person, just like she was to the fact my brothers found her attractive. It boggled my mind that she was like that. Secretly, I was kind of glad. I didn't want her to notice anyone but me.

It was too soon to make an official claim to her. I knew she still needed time to get comfortable with me and decide if she wanted to be with me. I knew what I wanted. I figured as soon as she gave me the green light to go all the way sexually, that would be my cue she accepted me as her man. I planned to make my claim then.

The common room was certainly more packed when everyone was in there. We still had room for more, but it gave us an idea what it would be like if we ever became the size of Dublin Falls. They were the biggest club out of our allies. They had twenty-eight members, with most of them, except the four here and the prospects, being married with kids. Their compound looked like a daycare, there were so many kids. The next generation of Warriors was well on its way.

Since it was now during the regular work week, we had to spend our days covering our various businesses. I was lucky that I had an assistant who wasn't part of the club, who worked the nights for me. I would help at times, but since Cara moved in with me, nights had become a lot less frequent for me. Bucky loved to work after dark. He was a night owl, and he liked it to be busy. I teased him that he only liked it because there was more of a chance to fight then. He didn't deny it. He had no problem helping the bouncers out.

After a long day at the Pagans Watering Hole, I was ready to kick back and relax with my friends and family. Strolling into the clubhouse, since I found Cara and Natalya weren't at home, I scanned the room for them. I found Cara was off chatting to Vex as she petted Blitz. Since Razor hadn't

come himself, he sent Blitz with his wife's foster brother. He'd helped to train Blitz.

Scanning more, I finally spotted Natalya. She was talking to Tana, coming out of the kitchen. Making my way toward her, I stopped short when I saw Animal approach her as Tana walked off. He was smiling at her. She gave him a friendly one back. I edged closer. They didn't see me.

"Privet, krasavitsa. YA tak ponimayu, vy govorite po-russki," he said to her. I saw the surprise on her face.

What the hell had he said?

"Privet. YA delayu. Otkuda ty znayesh' russkiy yazyk?" she replied back.

"Moya mat' byla ruskoy," he replied, as he stepped closer to her.

"Moy tozhe," she said, smiling and nodding.

I had heard enough. I wanted to know what the hell they were saying. Animal was giving her an even more appreciative look. Time to shut this shit down. I walked up to them and wrapped my arms around her from behind. She jumped. Once she looked over her shoulder and saw it was me, she smiled and relaxed. "Hi, honey. I didn't know you were home."

"I just got here. I see you found someone else who speaks Russian. Animal, I didn't know you did. Mind telling me what you two said?"

My intense glare told him I wasn't happy. He smiled and shook his head as he moved back a few steps.

"It's all good, brother. I couldn't resist making sure what I heard was right. Bones said Natalya speaks Russian, so I came over to find out if he was joking or not. I should've known with that name, she did. It wasn't anything bad."

"Okay, then what did you say?"

“I said, hello, beautiful. I understand you speak Russian,” he stated.

Natalya was looking over her shoulder at me with a puzzled look on her face. She wasn't getting it. Animal had been flirting with her.

“Then I replied, hello. I do. How do you know Russian?” she added.

“I told her that my mother was Russian.”

“And I told him mine too. What's going on, Knight? Why are you upset with Animal?”

“He's upset because I was flirting. It's not every day I meet a woman as beautiful as you, who also speaks Russian. I was going to ask if things are serious between you two. I heard it was, but you're not wearing a property cut, so I hoped.”

Her surprised look confirmed that she had no idea he had been flirting. I didn't waste time making my stance clear.

“It's as serious as it can be with us. She doesn't have her property cut yet, but that'll soon be remedied. I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't make moves on her. That could get you hurt.”

“Message received loud and clear. Just don't wait too long to claim her, Knight. A treasure like her isn't worth losing for any reason.”

“You're right and I don't plan to lose her. If you'll excuse us, I need to greet my woman properly and then my daughter.”

He saluted me and nodded to Natalya before walking off. As soon as he was out of earshot, she turned around to face me.

“Knight, what's gotten into you? Even if Animal was flirting, I wouldn't have allowed anything to happen. Don't you trust me?”

“I trust you. It's other men I have to keep in line. You keep thinking you're not attractive to other men, because of your fucked-up background, but you are. Here, let me prove it.”

I took her hand and led her over to a group of guys nearby. In it were my brothers—Bones, Cyclone, and Nitro. With them was Bandit, Iceman, and King. They all smiled and greeted us with hellos. Once they were done, I got straight to the point.

“I need your help with something.”

“Sure, what is it?” Iceman asked. The others were all murmuring their agreement to help.

“It seems that my woman here doesn’t think she’s all that attractive and none of you here think she is. I tried to tell her you’d be all over her if she wasn’t with me. Hell, even though she is, you’ll still flirt, to see if you can get her away from me. It’s been suggested that since she doesn’t have a property cut, I might not be serious about her.”

The looks of surprise and shock on their faces were kind of funny if I was in a laughing mood. They glanced at me then each other before their eyes all landed on her. She was turning red and trying to move off, but I held on to her.

“Knight, stop it, you’re embarrassing me and them,” she hissed.

“I’m not trying to embarrass you, Bright Eyes. I’m trying to prove a point.”

“Jesus, Natalya, you can’t honestly truly think you’re not attractive, can you?” Bones asked her incredulously. She didn’t answer him, which was an answer.

King whistled. “Goddamn, where have you been that men haven’t told you this a million times and fallen all over you? Darlin’, if you weren’t with his ass, I’d be trying to win you. As it is, I thought about testing the waters, but by the look on Knight’s face, I’d be dead.”

“Knight’s right. Any man would be lucky to have you as his. Don’t ever let anyone tell you differently,” Iceman added.

She was squirming at their praise. “I, uhm, thank you,” she said hesitantly.

“Yeah, thank you. Now, I think I’ll go find my daughter and spend time with my family. See you guys later.”

They all said goodbye. As I walked off with Natalya, I waited to see what she’d say or do. She kept quiet. I headed to Cara. When we got to her, she gave me a hug and then started chattering.

“Daddy, look at Blitz. He’s such a good dog. Vex said he might be able to get me a dog.”

“Whoa, I said if your dad wants a dog like Blitz, then I can see what I can do. You know Dad and Mom have a waiting list, but we do have wiggle room for friends and family. Are you interested in a dog like him? Or is that just wishful thinking on Cara’s part?” he asked, as he smiled indulgently at her. She was busy watching me and petting a happy Blitz.

“She’s dying for one, but I was just thinking the other day if we could get one like Blitz, that would be perfect. What do you think, babe? Do you like dogs? Would you be okay with one like Blitz?”

“I love dogs, although I’ve never had one. Why’re you asking me? It would be your dog.”

“Bright Eyes, it would be our dog. You’re with me and part of our lives. I’m not gonna bring a dog home if you hate them or prefer a different kind. Ideally, I’d like one similar to Blitz, so he or she can be a guard dog too. I want a trained dog that can be a family pet as well. It would need to be safe to be around kids.”

Her expression of wonder had me deciding to increase my efforts to show her what she meant to me and Cara.

“Oh, well then, yes, I’d love a dog like Blitz or similar. I think a larger dog is what you need for protection. And I agree, it has to like kids. With Cara, the twins, and Branson, you don’t want it to bite.”

“And don’t forget future kids,” I reminded her softly. She gave me a tiny smile and nodded. Vex was standing there looking amused.

“I say go for it. If your family doesn’t have one right now, I’m willing to go on the waiting list. Just let me know how much one of them cost. I know it’s not cheap with all the training they get.”

“It takes around a year and a half to properly train one. It’s not cheap, although for you, I’m sure they’ll give you a deal. Typically, you’d be looking at least twenty grand for a dog like Blitz.”

I wasn’t expecting it to be that much. I’d have to dip into savings more than I thought.

“Oh, that’s not a problem. If they can’t give a discount, I have the money either way.”

I shook my head no. “I’m not having you pay for the dog, Natalya.”

“You can’t stop me, Knight. I have a huge trust fund my mother had my father set up when I was born. It’s one he can’t touch, much to his displeasure. I hardly use it, so the money is just accruing interest from investments. A good guard dog is essential here. It’ll be my gift to Cara.”

Damn it, she knew by making it a gift, I couldn’t decline it. We’d have to talk about this more, but not in front of Cara or Vex.

“We’ll see. Alright, I say see what you can do. Thanks, Vex. I appreciate it more than you know.”

“Not a problem and it’ll be kid-friendly. Blitz lives in the house with Razor, Talia, and the triplets. He’s very easy going with them, even when they were infants.”

“Wait, Razor and his wife have triplets?” Natalya gasped.

“Yep. It shocked the hell out of them when they found out. Two boys and a girl. The boys are Cooper and Colter and their girl is Charleigh. They just turned two years old three months ago. I keep asking when they’ll have

more, but Talia has threatened to kill me if I ask again, so I shut up.” He smirked.

“No wonder! Any woman having three kids at the same time deserves a medal and maybe no more pregnancies for life. God, I can’t imagine that.”

I leaned closer so I could whisper in her ear. Vex could hear me but Cara couldn’t.

“We could find out. Just say the word and I’ll try my hardest to not only get you pregnant, but to make it a multiple pregnancy. I can’t promise if it would be triplets, but we could start with twins and build from there. Cara wants brothers and sisters.”

I expected her to blush and tell me I was crazy. Instead, she shocked me.

“Well, hurry up and take care of my father and his associates and we’ll get started on that. I’m sure we can find ways to increase the chance of twins or more. There are all kinds of old wives’ tales about how to do it and how to get the sex you want.”

Just like that, my half-teasing comment backfired on me. I had images of her round with my baby popping into my head. Instantly, I began to get hard. I wanted to drag her to bed and get started on a baby or babies. I think Vex knew what I was thinking, because he coughed as he covered his grin with his hand.

“I’ll let you three go. Cara, later, I’ll come find you and you can help me take Blitz for his nightly walk, if your daddy says you can. We’ll stay well away from the fence line.” He added the last part for my benefit.

“Oh, can I, Daddy?” she asked as she jumped up and down.

“As long as you behave and help us with chores and promise to listen to Vex, then yeah, you can. Thanks, man. If we’re not here, just come to the house.”

He gave me a fist bump and said goodbye to Natalya before walking off. Blitz fell in step with him.

“Let’s go to the house for a while. We need to figure out dinner and stuff,” I told my girls.

“I have dinner almost ready. I hope you like beef stew. I’ve had it cooking all day in the slow cooker I found in your kitchen. I didn’t think you’d mind if I used it.”

“Shit, no you can use anything you want in the house, baby. If you find you need anything, just tell me and we’ll get it. I love beef stew. It’s been a while since I had any. Is it a recipe you got online or one you knew?”

We set out for the door to the clubhouse. Hearing her mention beef stew had my mouth watering. My stomach growled in approval. They heard it and laughed. Cara poked me in the stomach.

“Daddy, you have a bear in there?” She giggled.

“I do and if you don’t feed the bear soon, he’ll eat a certain little girl I know.”

She screamed in pretend fright and took off running ahead of us.

“Don’t get too far ahead, Cara,” I cautioned her. She slowed down but kept going. I held Natalya’s hand as we followed her.

“It’s a recipe I found a few years ago when I was getting into cooking. I played around with it and tweaked it to suit me. I hope you and Cara like it. I have some rolls that came from bread dough Tana gave me. She insisted I try it. If we like it, she’ll teach me how to make it. I’ve never made bread, so I’m excited.”

“I can promise you, it’s excellent if Tana made it. She’ll be a great teacher. And I don’t mind being your taste tester.”

She blew me a kiss. I wanted to give her a real one, but that could wait until I had her in the house. I wanted to take my time. Later, after we

went to bed for the night, I planned to find out if her remark about babies was real or a joke. I was praying it was real.

Natalya: Chapter 10

It was all I could do, to pay attention to what Knight and Cara were saying and asking me all evening. I was still thinking about what had happened at the clubhouse. For one thing, how Knight had put Animal on the spot about flirting with me and then he admitted he was. He didn't try to hide it. That surprised me. But then to have Knight go over to a group of the guys and ask them to help him, to prove men found me very attractive, had stunned and embarrassed me.

I know he didn't mean for it to embarrass me, but it wasn't how I thought about myself. I guess my boyfriend and father had done more damage to my self-esteem than I ever realized. I mean, yeah, I wasn't ugly, but I didn't think I was sexy or beautiful. There were lots of women I thought had way better bodies than I did or were better looking. To find out, according to the men here, that I was wrong was shocking. Maybe I should've been looking for a biker a long time ago.

However, what really was consuming my thoughts was Knight's remarks about having babies and my reply. I opened my mouth and had no control over what came out. The more shocking part was, I meant every word I said. This insanity that was my life kept getting crazier. I would have to be insane to want to have babies with a man I barely knew but was close to declaring I wanted forever.

The last couple of nights, we'd repeated the make-out sessions from our first night together. Each of those had been as thrilling as the first. Those had pushed me even closer to being able to tell him I was ready to have sex with him. After this evening's conversation, I was there. I was trying to tell myself to slow down and give it more time, but my body and heart were saying hell no and my brain was listening to them.

It was time to talk to Knight about what was on my mind. Cara had just gone to bed for the night and we were going to relax in his bedroom. Or I should say our bedroom since he moved all my stuff into it after that first

night. Just as we entered the bedroom, his cell phone rang.

“I’ve gotta answer this, baby. Why don’t you start your bath and get in the hot water?”

“Okay, please come join me when you get done. We need to talk.”

“Is everything alright?” He gave me a concerned look.

“It’s fine. Take your call then we’ll talk.”

He sighed as he hit the button to answer the call. He stayed in the bedroom while I went into the bathroom. It wasn’t a hardship to soak in his tub. The thing was deep and big enough to allow both of us in it at the same time. Turning on the water, I stripped as the tub filled up. I put my hair up in a scrunchie on the top of my head, to keep it out of the water. I wasn’t planning to wash it tonight.

I let out a deep sigh of contentment as I sank into the water and the heat instantly worked on my tired muscles. I don’t know why I was so tired. The meal hadn’t taken much work. I did sit for several hours at my computer working on projects. Sometimes that made me more tired than physical labor.

Cara had been with me part of the time and the rest she spent with Mercy at Eliana’s house. I told Mercy she didn’t have to watch her, but she insisted it was her day. I didn’t want Cara to be bored since I couldn’t play with her, so I let her go.

She got escorted to their house and back by Atticus. It was strange to look outside and see armed men moving about the compound. While it made me feel safer, it kind of made me nervous too. Seeing them made me think of my father. Thinking of him made me think of this weekend. On Saturday I was supposed to have dinner at his house. I hadn’t had any communication with him since I moved here. I needed to talk to Knight about what was going to go down.

I was so caught up in thinking of how Knight would react to the news about the dinner, that I didn’t hear him come into the bathroom. I jumped

when hands came down on my shoulders. I whipped my head around to find him standing there naked.

“Bright eyes, it’s me. Why’re you so jumpy? Is whatever it is the cause of what you wanted to talk to me about?”

“Sorry, I was lost in my head and didn’t hear you come in. Yes, it’s one of the things I want to talk to you about.”

He got into the tub and sat down behind me. The way I was positioned, he was able to cradle me between his legs. His arms tugged me to lie back against him. His lips caressed my neck then he nibbled on my shoulder. God, how I wanted to say the hell with talking and let him make love to me, but I couldn’t.

“Honey, you have to stop or I won’t be able to talk. Let me say what I have to say and then you can drive me wild with your mouth and do anything else you want.”

“Mmm, that sounds like a plan. Go ahead, shoot.”

“First, I wanted to tell you that you embarrassed me by asking the guys to tell me how attractive I am. I love that you find me so, but I don’t need others to think that. Even if they happen to think it or flirt like you said Animal was doing, I need you to know you have nothing to worry about. I’m not someone to jump from man to man. You know that. As good-looking as your brothers and friends are, they don’t tempt me a bit.”

“I know you’re not one to do that. I’m sorry I embarrassed you, but you need to know. The stuff your ex said and the things your dad has done all these years is a bunch of crap. You deserve to hear and know how attractive you are. I’m so goddamn happy you don’t find my friends and brothers tempting.”

“Well, I’m glad. Now, can you promise in the future not to be so blunt?”

“I’ll try, but the truth is the truth. Is that all that’s bothering you?”

“I have more to talk to you about. The next one isn’t something that’s bothering me. More like it stunned me and now I can’t seem to stop thinking about it.”

“What’s that?”

“What you said about having babies came out of left field. However, I was more stunned by the way I answered you. All that talk about having babies got me thinking. I know we’re not ready for that yet, although it seems like we’re going in the right direction, to becoming a full-blown couple. Were you honest about having more kids? Is that something you want? I can understand since you have Cara that you might not want more. I know she wasn’t planned.”

He stopped me from saying more by putting his hand over my mouth. I was partially twisted around, so I could see his face while we talked. He was looking at me with an earnest expression on his face.

“Natalya, I do want more kids. And I want you to be the mother of them. Of course, if you don’t want any, I have Cara and she can be enough for me. I might not have planned to have her, but I love her. Do you want kids? Be honest with me.”

“I do want kids. I’ve always wanted them. I adore Cara and I can see her as a big sister bossing around her little brothers and sisters.”

He chuckled and nodded. “I kind of thought I wouldn’t have any after going this long without finding someone. Now I have hope if this goes to where we want it to go, that I can have them,” I told him.

“Have no doubts that this thing between us is going where we want it to go and it’s happening fast. Don’t get scared is all I ask. Let me prove to you that falling in love almost instantly happens and those relationships can last.”

“I’m trying. I swear I am.”

“We might not get multiples, but I’m willing to give you as many as

you want. I was thinking of reducing the number of pregnancies for you when I said we could have triplets,” he said with a grin.

“Yeah, sure you were. Believe me, if I had triplets, I’d give you enough grief it would be like I was pregnant three separate times. I don’t think one triplet pregnancy is less hard than three single baby pregnancies. Nice try.”

“Okay, I was pushing to see what you’d say or do. You tell me what you want me to go for when the time comes and I’ll do my best to make it happen.”

“I can live with that.”

“Is there more? You still seem tense.” He rubbed my shoulders.

“There is and you’re not going to like it, but I have to tell you, because we need to plan. Before we talked again and I moved here, my father contacted me. Remember, I told you he knew I had been around the club and he ordered me to stay away from you?”

“I do.”

“Well, it was during that call that he informed me I was expected to be at his house this coming weekend on Saturday. He’s having another dinner. He didn’t say if it was just the two of us or if he was going to have a special guest. He said if I didn’t come and behave then he would remind me of the last time I didn’t and got a beating. I don’t know what to do. I know going is stupid, but if I don’t, he’ll come looking for me for sure.”

Immediately, Knight’s whole body tensed and his hands on my shoulders tightened. His face changed from amused to angry.

“You’ll go to that dinner over my dead fucking body, Natalya! The whole reason you’re here is to keep you out of his hands. We can’t protect you there. Let him come looking for you. I want him to, so I can beat him to death. I don’t care if he’s taken out of the equation now or later.”

“Elijah, if he does that, he could hurt someone. I’d doubly die if it was Eliana, Joli, Tana, or the kids. What if he hurt Cara? It’s bad enough imagining him hurting you or one of the other men, but them? If he hasn’t caught on to the fact that I’m not staying at my house, then why not let me go?”

His look turned outraged. I held up my hand fast. “Hear me out. If I go, it might help us to keep him in the dark for a while longer. It’ll protect the innocent here, while giving us time to keep digging into him. Plus, I might get a clue about what he’s up to now. If this is more than just a dinner for the two of us, then I’ll get to meet who else he thinks is suitable and might be trying to match me up with. Whoever he wants me to marry has to be a person like him and likely involved in his smuggling.”

He didn’t say anything at first when I was done. His fury hadn’t abated. That was obvious by looking at his face. He was tense. Abruptly, he got up out of the tub and hastily dried off before walking across the room to stare out the window into the darkness. I knew I had to let him think through what I said. The fact he didn’t immediately shoot it down meant he knew it had some merit.

Was I terrified to go to my father’s house alone? Hell yes, I was. Did I want to do it? No, however, if it helped to protect others and gave us a chance at finding out more in order to bring him down, then I’d do it.

I doubted he would try to kill me. He wanted me to marry someone. I couldn’t do that dead. Sure, he could beat me again. It hurt like hell last time, but I survived. I could do it again. I decided to share those thoughts with Knight.

“Honey, I know you’re thinking and you don’t like this plan but think about this. He doesn’t want me dead. He wants me to marry someone. If he tries to push the point, I’ll tell him the man isn’t to my taste, but I’m willing to meet others. If he gets mad, he might beat me, but I can survive that. I did it once already.”

He swung around and came charging over to me. I fought not to flinch at the enraged look on his face. That expression from my father would

mean I was about to be hit. He stopped short of touching me.

“You’re asking me to do something I don’t think I can, Natalya. I really don’t think I can do it. Everything you said makes sense, but to have you where I can’t see you or protect you goes against everything I am as a man and a protector. If you came out with a mark on you, I’d charge in there and kill him that instant. What if he decides to spirit you away and hold you prisoner until you agree? What do I do then? He has money and he can hide you anywhere in the world. I’ll do everything in my power to find you but what if I can’t or it’s too late? There are places where having the woman consent to marriage isn’t needed. You belong to your father and then to a husband. You have no rights.”

I shivered at that thought. I hadn’t thought of those things. Hearing him say them made me sick to my stomach. My father could easily be a man like that.

“Then we’re back to me not going and him coming to look for me. I doubt Wire and the others will have everything they need to make a plan and move on him and his associates within the next week.”

“True. What would he do if you showed up to dinner with a guest of your own?”

“I doubt very much he’d like it. I’ve never asked to have someone join us. It’s bad enough when I have to go to them. If I had close friends, I wouldn’t have exposed them to him.”

“But would he be bold enough to refuse entry? Or would he let your guest come in, thinking he’d make you pay for your gall later?”

“Most likely the latter. Remember, he does everything he can to preserve his good-guy persona around other people.”

“Then that’s what we’ll do. Saturday night, you’ll be bringing someone home for dinner, me.” The smile on his face wasn’t a pleasant one.

“And who will we say you are?”

“You can begin by telling him I’m a friend. I want to see who he invites. Later, before the night is over, we’ll break the news that you can’t marry someone of his choosing because we’re together. The more I think about it, the more I like this. It’ll throw him off and might make him either fuck up or reconsider what he’s doing. Either way, it buys us time.”

I didn’t like the idea of him being in there with my father and his men. They could decide to do something to Knight.

“What if he decides to hurt you while we’re there? He could. You won’t have any help.”

“As long as there’s no more than him and a couple of guards, I can hold my own just fine. Does he keep a bunch of men in the house?”

“No, usually it’s him and his two main bodyguards, Troy and Lyle. They’ve been with him for the past ten years. There are other men who patrol the grounds. The most I’ve seen is six of them.”

“Do they use dogs?”

“No, my father hates dogs. I think he’s secretly scared of them. I’ve seen him move back away from a Frenchie before. That’s one reason I never had a pet, even before my mom died.”

“I’m curious. Why do you call him father but use mom when you talk about her?”

“I don’t call him dad or daddy because to me that indicates someone warm and loving. He’s never been that. On the other hand, that was my mom to a tee. If she had been like him, I’d call her mother. Weird, I know, but it’s just the way my brain works.”

“Actually, it makes a lot of sense to me. I guess Cara thinks I’m warm and loving then.” A small smile peeked out.

“That’s right. You’re a very loving dad to her.”

“I sure hope she thinks that. I never knew I could love a child like I

love her. It still kills me that I took as long as I did to find out she was mine. If I'd known, she'd have been living here as an infant."

"Don't beat yourself up. Stuff happens for a reason. Maybe you wouldn't have been ready to be her daddy then. All that counts is how you treat her now and that you're together."

"True. Okay, back to your father. I think this plan is the best one. There are risks either way, but I can live with these. Tomorrow, I'll talk to Agony and the others and we'll come up with a plan. We won't be left in there without backup. I can guarantee you that. Now, why don't we forget all this bullshit and relax? Your water is getting cold. Want me to warm it up again or do you want to get out?"

As serious as our conversation had been, when he got out of the tub and stood across the room naked, it was all I could do to keep my mind on the topic at hand. What I really wanted to do was touch him all over, a new favorite pastime for me. The way his eyes were heating up, as he looked at my naked body, I knew he was thinking the same thing. Which brought me to my much-earlier thought. Talk about my father could wait.

Standing up, I let the water run down my body. He groaned then held his hand out to help me out of the tub. As soon as my feet hit the bathmat, he surrounded me with a big warm bath towel and unstoppered the tub. His hands slowly rubbed the towel against my skin until I was dry and aching. Once he was satisfied with how dry I was, he tossed the towel over the edge of the tub and pulled me against him. His mouth descended to give me a consuming kiss. I more than eagerly returned it.

I got so lost in kissing him that it wasn't until he lifted his head that I realized he'd walked us from the bathroom to the bed. His hands grabbed me underneath my ass cheeks and he lifted me up to lay me down on the bed. I thought he'd join me, but instead, he kneeled down on the floor and started kissing and caressing my feet. I raised up on my elbows so I could see him.

He slowly worked his way up both legs, moving back and forth between them. The feel of his calloused hands on my skin and the softness of his lips aroused me quickly. Goosebumps broke out all over my body. My

nipples hardened into taut nubs. Slickness gathered between my legs. When he reached my thighs, he stood up and wedged his hands between them to press them open. He licked his lips when he saw my wet pussy greeting him. A low rumbling purr came out of him.

“Scoot back more on the mattress, Bright Eyes. I see a picnic and I’m starved.”

I swiftly used my elbows to drag myself back on the bed. I barely stopped moving before he laid down between my legs and made his first swipe with that talented tongue of his. I moaned. While he settled in to drive me to what I knew would be more than one orgasm, I tried to prepare myself for my surprise.

Tonight was the night. I was going to tell him that I wanted him to make love to me completely. No more oral sex and kissing only. I had to know what he felt like inside of me. I needed to know what his glorious, pierced cock felt like. I knew it would hurt. It would be my first time and he was big, but the pain would be worth it. I just knew it would be.

Suddenly, my whole body seized, and I cried out as I shook and came. He gave a hungry sounding growl. He didn’t stop. He kept pushing me right toward another one. I’d found out he didn’t believe in me just having a single orgasm. I would never complain about that. I only wish he could have more in a row like I did. Men got robbed when it came to that. Of course, not all women could do it either. I was one of the lucky ones, or maybe it wasn’t luck. Maybe it was because I had a man who knew what he was doing and who worked to make it the best it could be for me, not just himself.

Knight:

I was at the end of my restraint. I had to get my release soon. Seeing her sexy body and eating her pussy until she got off three times was my limit. The only thing I wished for was that I could be inside of her when I came. Although, having her give me a blow job then finish me by hand wasn't anything to turn down. She was learning how to make it even better for me every time we fooled around.

I never was unsatisfied, and I made it my goal that she wasn't either. I knew one day we'd go all the way. When it happened, nothing would stop me from claiming her fully. Hell, I was so convinced it would happen, that I'd ordered her property cut already. It should be here any day. After I made her my old lady officially, I'd work on asking her to marry me. Our discussion about having kids had confirmed to me she was mine. The final cherry on top, no pun intended, would be taking her virginity.

Reluctantly, I sat up and back on my heels. She was flushed and her eyes were dazed looking. Her hair was a mess from her moving her head back and forth when she came. Her pert breasts were begging me to come taste them too, but I couldn't do it. I would blow my load if I did that. The urgency was building. My balls felt ready to burst and my cock was twitching. Trying to ease the ache, I tugged on it twice.

“I want to feast on you all night, but I can't. I need your mouth and hands on me, Natalya. I need you to make me come. I'm gonna explode if you don't.”

I let her hear the plea in my tone. I had never been this needy to have a woman in my life. She sat up. I moved out from between her legs, so we could get into position. Maybe I should suggest we try a sixty-nine position. She'd gotten me off with me straddling her chest and me on my back with her over top of me. I lay down on my back.

“Come up here and straddle me, only we're gonna try something new.

I want you to suck me while I keep eating that pussy.”

She surprised me when she shook her head no.

“Aren’t you ready to try that position? If not, then you tell me how you want to do it?”

“I don’t want to get you off that way, Elijah.”

“Okay, then how?”

“I thought you might like it if I let you inside of me and we got off together.”

I froze. I must’ve misunderstood what she meant. “Umm, baby, I don’t know what you mean. You mean inside your mouth and you get me off like that, with me coming in your mouth? Are you sure you want to try that?”

“No, I didn’t mean that. I mean I want you to take your cock and put it inside of me. I want you to show me what else I’m dying to know and experience. I’m ready for us to go all the way. Take my cherry, Elijah.”

I took a moment to search her face to see if she was serious. She sure looked like it. In a shot, I sat up and grabbed her upper arms. I was careful not to hurt her. As much as I wanted to throw her down and take her, I had to make absolutely certain she was ready. If she went through with it, then regretted it later, it would kill me.

“Baby, please, think about this. I know we’re both horny and that can fog your brain. Why don’t we wait and calm down? Then, if you still want me to do it, I’ll be more than happy to. I’m not pressuring you to do this. I need you to be one hundred percent sure you’re ready.”

She reached up and gripped my hands on her upper arms. She gave them a tender squeeze. She smiled at me.

“I am sure. This isn’t just a heat-of-the-moment thing. I made this decision hours ago. I was just waiting for the right time to tell you. Please, I ache so much. I need to know what you feel like inside of me. I want to

experience everything with you.”

I answered her by tugging her down against me then rolling her over onto her back. I was the one hovering over top of her. Her soft skin was pressed into my body, which made me hornier. Her hard nipples scraped against my chest.

“Then you’ll get me. Before we do this, we need to talk about birth control. I can use a condom, but if you’re on something by chance, then I’d like not to use one. I want to feel all of you. Condoms can blunt the sensations a little. I’m safe. I had myself tested right before I got my piercings. You know I haven’t been with anyone since then.”

In truth, I didn’t give a damn if she was on birth control or not. All I wanted was to take her bare. Her having my baby wouldn’t bother me a bit. I told her the truth earlier. I did want kids with her. The only thing I didn’t tell her was I’d gladly take them now. I knew having a baby right now would be too much for her. She had to get rid of her father and settle into our relationship more. When the time was right for both of us, we’d start on a baby. Cara might not get a sibling like she wanted by next Christmas, but maybe the one after that.

“I don’t want anything between us either. As for birth control, I take a shot every three months. I kept breaking out and having terrible periods and the doctor suggested this might help. It did, so I stayed on it.”

A twinge of disappointment ran through me, but I pushed it away. This was good. “Well, baby, if you’re sure, I know I’m ready. It’s gonna hurt but I promise I’ll take my time and be gentle. I want you to enjoy your first time.”

The good thing about taking time to discuss all this was my raging need to get off had calmed down. I was still erect and eager to have sex, but I could last longer. I had to make her ready before I went sticking my cock inside of her. There had been some women in the past who complained that I was too long and thick. I sent up a silent prayer that she wouldn’t be one of them. She ran her hand down my chest. She stopped when she got to my cock. She cupped it and gently squeezed it. I moaned.

“I’m ready. Show me what you’ve got.” A coy smirk spread across her face.

“Oh, I’ll show you. I’m gonna make you scream in ecstasy, woman. If I don’t, I’ll die trying.”

She giggled and shook her head. “No dying on me. Now, don’t you have something to do, Mr. Studly?”

I answered her by attacking her sensitive neck with my whiskers and mouth. She laughed aloud and tried to wiggle away, but I wouldn’t let her. Good thing Cara was a heavy sleeper and down the hallway. Maybe we’d have to consider putting some soundproofing up in our room. I wanted her to be free to be as vocal as she wanted.

I kissed her neck then down to her collarbone. She sighed. Pausing there, I nipped at her skin with my teeth—not enough to break her skin, just enough to leave a faint red mark. From there, I licked and kissed my way down to her heaving breasts. Her hands were resting on my shoulders.

I nuzzled her breast then sucked her taut nipple into my mouth. I lashed it with my tongue before biting lightly on it. She hissed, but not in pain. Our nights of exploring had revealed a lot about her likes. For one thing, she didn’t mind me using my teeth, as long as I didn’t get too rough. Her whole body seemed to be ultra-sensitive to all kinds of stimuli. It all made her moan, and she got more aroused. I had never had a woman as responsive as her.

While I pleased one breast with my mouth, the other wasn’t neglected. I kneaded it and teased her nipple with my fingers. I flicked my nail across it then plucked it between my thumb and finger again and again. It grew harder. She didn’t just lie there and take it. Her hands were busy running up and down as much of my body as she could reach.

My position placed me between her spread legs. I lowered my hips more and pressed into her pussy. Her slickness instantly coated my cock. She jerked and her nails bit into my back. I pressed against her tighter then circled my hips, grinding my hard cock into her clit.

“Oh God, that feels so good, Elijah. Don’t stop,” she panted.

I thrust then circled again to answer her. In no time, she was thrusting her hips back to meet my thrusts. I could tell by the way she was breathing she was ready to tip over the edge at any moment. Feeling her rubbing against me had revved my engine back up to a desperate level again. I knew once she blew, I’d have to take her. I hoped she was slick enough from her cream to take me. I had no idea how much lubrication a virgin needed. I’d never been with one. My first girl when I was fourteen had been sixteen, and she wasn’t a virgin. Not even close.

A couple more sucks on her breast, and circles along with thrusts, pushed her over. She tensed under me then cried out, “Elijah,” as she shuddered and came. More of her cream flooded my cock. I thrust rhythmically against her, mimicking what I was about to do inside of her. She kept coming and moaning. Finally, as she began to relax, I sat up. She stared at me lovingly. I gripped my cock and brought the head to her opening.

“Try not to tense up. It’ll hurt more if you do. Remember, I’ll go slow.”

“I know. I’m ready. Please, I have to feel you now, Elijah,” she sobbed.

Not able to delay a moment more for my sanity’s sake, I eased the tip inside. Jesus Christ, she was tight! Her pussy was squeezing the head hard. I paused then pushed deeper. She hissed but didn’t tell me to stop. Flexing my hips, I pulled back a little then pushed back. Inch by excruciating inch, I worked myself inside of her. She had a strangle hold on me and I fucking loved it. It provided the perfect mix of pain and pleasure. I had to tell her what she was doing to me.

“Natalya, I can’t tell you how fucking good you feel. It’s like nothing I’ve ever felt. You’re strangling my cock and I love it. Are you doing okay? Do you need me to stop?”

“No, don’t. It burns and hurts, but it’s not anything I can’t handle. I didn’t realize your piercings would feel like they do. God, I can’t stand it.

Finish it. I want us to get to the best part.”

“Are you sure?” I asked through gritted teeth.

There was nothing I wanted to do more than bury the rest of my cock inside her and ride her until we both came screaming, but I didn’t want to hurt her more. She answered me but not in words. She brought her feet up and put them behind my ass. As she did, she jerked them hard against me, which threw me forward. I sank the rest of the way inside, pushing through her hymen. I felt it give. She cried out.

“Shit, baby, you shouldn’t have done that,” I told her as I froze.

Her legs kept me close, and she reached up to grip my face. Her stare was blazing. “Move! Don’t stop.”

Not wasting any more breath or time, I did as she ordered. She relaxed her legs, and I started thrusting. I began slowly and easily but it didn’t last long. Her moans and sighs spurred me on. In no time, I was stroking away. The sensation from my piercings rubbing inside of her was incredible. If they were making her feel half as good as they did me, they were well worth the pain I went through to get them and heal. The tightening in my balls told me I was getting close to blowing my load. I refused to do that unless she got off too.

Picking up speed, I fucked her a bit harder. She wasn’t ready for me to go as hard as I loved it, but one day, she would. I had no doubt she’d love the same things I did. I just knew it. She was my soulmate and we were made for each other.

It only took another minute or so for her to explode. When she did, she tightened so damn hard around me that I saw stars. I cried out as she screamed. Her pussy milked the hell out of my cock, which threw me into my orgasm. I thrust over and over as I came, filling her full of my cum. She’d be leaking for a while.

Finally, we both stopped coming. I was feeling weak, so I rolled over so we were facing each other. My softening cock was still inside of her. I

wasn't ready to disconnect yet.

“How was it? Was it everything you imagined?”

“No,” she whispered.

I frowned. What the hell? I knew she enjoyed it by the way she came.

“I couldn't have ever imagined it being that good. You've ruined me. You can never get rid of me now, Elijah. I'd never be able to be with someone else and I can't live without you. And it's not just because of the mind-blowing sex. As insane as it is, I love you.”

I leaned over and gave her a kiss. When I was done, I shared my feelings with her.

“It's not insane, or if it is, we're insane together because I love you too. I'll never want to be with anyone but you and you'll never get away from me. I have experience when it comes to sex, but I've never felt anything close to that. We're soulmates, baby.”

The smile she gave me was blinding. I gave her another kiss. As we cuddled, I was busy planning her claiming ceremony and the next round. Once wouldn't be enough if she was up to it.

Natalya: Chapter 11

I was so nervous pulling up in front of my father's house, I could hardly breathe. I must've been out of my mind to go along with this plan. When he saw Knight, he'd lose it and probably kill him. The stares we got coming through the gate, where one of his men stood guard at all times, had told me that. The guard had glared at Knight and gave me a look that said, *what the hell are you thinking?*

I didn't know the guard's name. He was new and I hadn't met him. That wasn't unusual. My father changed men constantly outside his core group. As we drove up the long driveway, I spotted the other men stationed around the grounds. As Knight stopped the car, I grabbed his hand.

"We need to leave. You can't be here. Let's head home. I'll call and tell him I got sick or something."

"Babe, we're not running. We'll be fine. The guys have eyes and ears on us. If anything starts to go down, they'll be in here in a shot. Come on, we can do this. The sooner we get this night started, the sooner it'll be over. I'm not going to let him hurt either of us."

Taking courage from his confidence and remembering what all the club had done to prepare, I nodded. He got out of the car and came around to open my door. I undid my seatbelt and took his hand. As I stood up, I admired him again.

I didn't know what I expected him to wear to dinner, but he'd surprised me when he put on a suit. By the look of it, this one didn't come off the rack either. It had definitely been altered to fit him. It was a dark navy blue. He wore a blue shirt underneath the jacket that matched his eyes. He'd decided not to wear a tie. His hair was combed back and he looked good enough to eat. All of his tattoos were covered. There was no way, just by looking at him, you would know that he was a biker. In fact, he could be any successful businessman.

I'd worn a long flowing skirt paired with heels and a sweater that matched. It happened to be blue too. It made us look like we had coordinated our outfits. When you had dinner with my father, he expected you to dress nicely. There were no jeans or comfy clothes at his table. He was a snob, and it was only one of the things that made me hate coming home over the years. When it was just us, why couldn't we be comfortable?

Knight hooked my hand over his forearm after closing the car door and we headed for the front doors. My legs shook as we climbed the stairs to the intimidating double doors. He didn't hesitate to raise the knocker and bang it hard against the door more than once. Inside, I knew it would echo throughout the main floor.

We were left waiting for less than a minute. When the door swung open, it wasn't my father greeting us, which I knew it wouldn't be. No way would Fabian LeBlanc answer his own door like a commoner. It was Earl, his butler. He'd been with the family for as long as I could remember. He was a sweet man in his sixties. He'd always been nice to me. When I was young, he and the chef would sneak me treats when I got into trouble. Honestly, I had no idea how either of them stood working here all these years. I guess my father paid them well. He sure didn't treat them kindly. He smiled at me.

"Good evening, Ms. Natalya. It's good to see you again. Please, come in. It's cold outside. Let me take your wrap." He was eyeing Knight with a curious look.

"Hello, Earl, thank you. It's good to see you again." I handed him my thick cape. It was one you wrapped around you that had no arm holes in it.

"Earl, this is my friend, Knight. Knight, this is Earl. He's my father's butler. He's been here all my life. Do you know, is anyone else joining us for dinner tonight?" I asked Earl.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, sir. Yes, your father has a guest this evening. They're already having drinks in the den. I'll take you to them."

Although he was being pleasant, I could tell he was nervous. He knew my father would be angry with me for bringing a guest. The night I was

beaten, Earl had been excused for the night. I had no idea if he knew what happened. Knight gave my hand a light squeeze and smiled at me. I had to smile back. *Let the show begin.*

I think if Knight hadn't been holding my arm when we entered the den, I might've fallen. My legs were that weak with nerves. I detested my father's den. It was where he always called me to reprimand me, even when I was a child. He made you stand there while he looked you up and down like you were a bug he wanted to squish. It was also the place he'd beaten me the last time I was here. Flashes of that night bombarded my brain.

"You're alright. He can't hurt you," Knight whispered in my ear. He must've felt me tremble. I gave myself a mental shake and continued to stroll in. I hoped I looked like I didn't have a worry in the world.

Scanning the room, I found my father and his guest sitting on the sofa. They were talking quietly until they saw us, then they came to their feet. I could tell instantly my father was angry that someone was with me, although he masked it well behind a congenial smile. It was like seeing a shark trying to smile. The man with him narrowed his eyes.

"Good evening, Father. I hope we're not late."

"Good evening, Daughter. No, you're not late. We were just having a quick pre-dinner drink. Please, introduce us to your guest. We haven't met. I'm Fabian LeBlanc."

He held out his hand to Knight. I expected him to shake it, so the facade of us being here willingly and without malice was maintained. I was wrong. Knight didn't shake his hand. He merely nodded to my father.

"Good evening. I hope you don't mind that I tagged along with Natalya. She assured me you wouldn't mind. She was telling me about how hospitable you are to people who come to your home."

I caught his double meaning and by the way my father barely stiffened, he got it too. First volley deployed.

“Of course I don’t mind. I love to meet new people. I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your name.”

“It’s Knight.”

“Knight? Nothing more? Is that your first name or last name?”

“It’s my nickname, you could say. Who’s your guest?”

Knight’s refusal to give him a name he could use to find out everything about him irritated my father. I knew him. His outer appearance didn’t change but the vibe in the room did. I swear it got colder.

“How rude of me. This is Leonid Vasiliev. He’s an old friend. He’s in the States visiting and conducting some business. I invited him over so we could catch up. He was eager to meet Natalya.”

Leonid’s eyes were fixed on me. He’d finished studying Knight. There was something in his stare that scared me, even more than my father scared me. This man was pure evil. He came forward and held out his hand to me. I didn’t know what else to do, so I took it. Instead of him shaking it, he raised it to his mouth and kissed it.

It wasn’t a brush of the lips then he was done kind of kiss. He lingered and I swear I felt his tongue touch my skin. I tried to remove my hand, but he held onto it for a couple of seconds before he let go. I discreetly wiped it on my skirt. He turned to Knight and nodded his head.

“Hello, it’s wonderful to meet you and especially Natalya. I’ve heard so much about her over the years. I see the rumors of her beauty are true. She looks like her mother, Sasha. She was a stunningly beautiful woman too. I was always jealous that your father won her heart before I did.”

His tone was pleasant and even hinted at being sincere, but the underlying emotion came through. He was telling the truth, I think about my mother, but he was angry about something too.

“It’s nice to meet one of Father’s friends. I’m sorry, I don’t recall him

mentioning you. Then again, he knows so many people, it's hard to keep up."

He smiled, which did nothing for his looks. He was in his late fifties, maybe even sixties was my guess. His hair was receding and had gone gray. He was tall and even underneath his impeccably tailored suit, I could tell he was developing a paunchy stomach. Too much good living. His face was a roadmap of lines. I was being generous on my age calculation. If he was an old friend of my father's then he'd be around that age. My father was sixty-one. He was older when he married and had me. My mom had been only twenty-one when she had me. She'd be forty-seven now.

"We met when we were both young. He had business with some friends of mine. Unfortunately, I don't get to the States often. My businesses in Russia keep me very busy. However, I have reason to stay here for a while. I plan to enjoy it. May I ask, how you and Knight, was it? How do you and Knight know each other?"

"We met through a community event. It was like it was fate that we were both there. We hit it off instantly and have been getting to know each other ever since," Knight replied.

"A community event? I guess I need to start attending more of those, if finding gorgeous women like Natalya is possible."

"I doubt it'll work like that again. It was a once-in-a-lifetime thing that brought her into my life. I'm very fortunate she's my friend."

The way he emphasized the word friend made it clear that we were likely much more than that. This wasn't how I thought it would go. The underlying tension was higher out of the gate. Things could blow up at any second. I was about to ask if we should take a seat or was it time to go into the dining room when a shadow moved. I was startled enough to jerk. Shit, I had forgotten these two would be in here.

Another shadow detached itself and came into the light. It was Troy and Lyle. They were looking at me with smirks on their faces. When they looked at Knight, those smirks fell away and they were almost frowning.

“Who’re these guys?” Knight asked, as he shifted slightly. Anyone not watching closely would’ve seen him do it. It placed him just a scant couple of inches more in front of me.

“Oh, don’t mind them. These are my personal bodyguards. They go everywhere with me.”

“Even in your own home? Are you expecting your friend or your daughter to try and kill you?”

The ridicule wasn’t hidden in Knight’s voice. My father’s face got tighter and his eyes blazed for a second then settled.

“Of course not. They’ve become like family and I like having them around. I hate not to offer you a drink, but it’s time for dinner. We’ll have wine or if you prefer, brandy with dessert. Afterward, we’ll come back here and have drinks if you’d like.”

“Lead the way. I’m starved and Natalya told me how talented your chef is. I believe she taught Natalya how to cook. I’ve had your daughter’s excellent cooking, so I must taste her mentor’s food.”

Stiffly, my father pointed to the door. I knew he wanted us to precede him out the door. Having our backs to the enemy wasn’t something I knew Knight would like. As we started to walk, I saw he had his body slightly turned toward me, like he was looking at me, but it allowed him to see behind him. I steered him through the maze of rooms to the dining room.

Even though there were only four of us for dinner and we had a perfectly nice table in the smaller family dining room, we would be eating in the formal dining room. It was big and opulent looking. It was meant to impress people and to make them feel they weren’t on my father’s level in any way. Even when it was just me and him, he made us eat here.

Earl was standing by the door when we entered. He gave me a faint smile and nod. I moved us over to where I usually sat. Knight pulled out my chair. I sat down and let him scoot it closer to the table for me. As he pulled out the one next to me, my father interrupted the silence.

“Mr. Knight, I’d like you to sit on my left, please. I want to be able to talk to you and not yell across anyone. Leonid, please sit beside Natalya. That way you can get to know her.”

I didn’t want that man anywhere near me, but I couldn’t think of a reason to say no. Knight squeezed my shoulder and gave me an encouraging look. He mouthed, *it’s alright*, before he went around the table to take the seat my father indicated. Leonid didn’t waste time taking his. As he did, he somehow made sure his chair was closer to mine. *God, wasn’t this night over with yet?*

After my father took his seat and Lyle and Troy took up positions along the walls, Earl rang a bell. Within moments, the door which came from the servants’ passage that ran from the kitchen to here opened and in came two men. Yes, in this house, there were what people in the Victorian ages called footmen. They served dinner and stuff like that. Honestly, I didn’t know what they did all day to earn their salary. They were dressed in matching uniforms. The pretentiousness was cloying. Another thing I hated about this house and, why, even as much as I hated boarding school, I was glad I hadn’t spent all my time here as a child. Moving out had been one of the best decisions of my life. They silently sat platters and domed dishes down on the table. They removed the domes and took them out of the room.

“Sir, I hope everything is to your liking. Please let me know if you would like something else. I’ll be right outside. Enjoy your dinner,” Earl said congenially.

My father didn’t bother to answer him, he merely waved him away. Earl left the room. Scanning the selection, I saw some Russian cuisine was included. The number of dishes was going to be ridiculous if this first course was any indication. What a waste for so few people. This wasn’t a fancy dinner party for God’s sake.

There was mushroom julienne, which was a Russian appetizer. It was mushrooms cooked in cream sauce with sour cream and cheese. There was also oysters Rockefeller, beef tartare, caviar, the Sevruga kind, by the looks of it, and Pelmeni, another Russian appetizer which was filled with pork and eggs.

The mushrooms and the Pelmeni were my kind of food, so I took some of those. I checked to see if Knight was eating any of this. I was surprised that he'd not only taken the same two that I had, but he also had caviar and beef tartare. He caught me looking and winked at me.

“Ah, I see you're trying to bring me the comfort of home, Fabian. Thank you. I can't wait to see what else is on the menu for this evening,” Leonid said with a smile. He'd put a bit of everything on his plate. *If he kept doing that, no wonder his middle was expanding like a tire*, I thought snidely.

We ate quietly. There wasn't any conversation. If this was how the whole meal went, it might turn out to be a much more tolerable night. After the first course was done, the footmen came back to clear the table and bring out the main courses. As expected, there were several of them.

There was Coulibiac, a Russian savory pie that was filled with rice, salmon, vegetables, and eggs. I didn't know what the fascination was with Russians and eggs, but they seemed to be in a lot of their dishes. As a side dish, there was haricots verts with herb butter. It's just a fancy way of saying blanched green beans with lemon, tarragon, and parsley butter. Simple, but very tasty. A bowl of lemony risotto with asparagus and shrimp sat in front of me. Additional side dishes of saffron mashed potatoes and browned brussels sprouts with orange and walnuts graced the table. To round it out, there was roast duck and a leg of lamb with garlic and rosemary.

As I took what I wanted, I couldn't help but think of the starving people in the world and how we would be wasting so much. There was no such thing as leftovers in this house. If the staff didn't eat it all, then it would be thrown in the trash. At least my father wasn't stingy enough to not allow them to eat whatever he didn't eat.

During the main course, there was some chatter between my father and Leonid. He ignored Knight. I would've been fine if the two of them ignored us all night, but I wasn't so lucky. Leonid kept asking me questions. He wanted to know about my work, where I went to school, and where I lived now. He asked if I had a bunch of close friends. He even had the audacity to ask if I was involved with anyone. I navigated those questions with vague answers or by changing the subject. I didn't want that creep to know anything

about me.

The whole time he talked to me, he tried to find reasons to touch my hand or arm. His leg kept brushing against mine. I inched my chair discreetly over. Knight knew what he was doing. His eyes were narrowed on him.

“Natalya, don’t be modest. Tell Leonid how successful your translation business is. I was so proud when she chose to honor her Russian ancestry and study the language in college. That was one thing Sasha did right with her. She taught her to read, write and speak Russian from an early age. When she died, I made certain it wasn’t lost by making sure the school she went to had tutors who could continue teaching her what she needed to know,” my father bragged.

That was the first I’d heard of him caring about my degree and being proud of me. Or that the boarding school he sent to me was chosen because they offered Russian. What the hell was this all about? Why make a big deal about it?

“I’m certain that Natalya’s mom did more than that for her daughter. She told me how loving she was. I think your daughter’s loving nature and generous spirit comes from her mom,” Knight said out of the blue.

My father blinked at being rebuked. He quickly responded to Knight. “Of course my dear Sasha taught our daughter more than that. I didn’t mean to imply she was lacking in any way. My wife was a beautiful, intelligent woman, who I loved very much. When we lost her, it broke my heart. She was too young to die.”

To an outsider, it might sound like my dad was sincere. To me, I knew he was full of shit. I doubted he ever loved my mom. Why he married her or why she married him was still a mystery to me. Thankfully, the footmen came and took the main dishes away then returned with the desserts. Again, there were too many of them. There was panna cotta, a pear and hazelnut Frangipane tart, opera cake, and to honor his guest, there were berries and brown sugar Pavlova and morozhenoe. I saw Knight eyeing the unfamiliar ones.

“This is an opera cake, Knight. It’s a fancy name for an almond sponge cake coated with coffee syrup, topped with coffee buttercream and a chocolate glaze. I love it. This one is Pavlova. It’s basically a meringue dessert that’s baked. It’s very good. This last one is called morozhenoe. It’s Russian ice cream. You find it mostly covered in different fruits and nuts. The ice creams are creamier in Russia than what we have here in America. Honestly, there isn’t one dessert here I don’t think you’ll like.”

“I trust you, Bright Eyes. I think I’ll try a taste of each. Fabian, your chef has outdone herself. After the meal, I’d like to thank her personally. Not only for this meal, but for being such a wonderful mentor and for being a friend to my Natalya.”

The smile he sent across the table to me left no doubt we were more than just friends. I caught the look my father sent to Leonid. He was sitting next to me like a statue. His face held a scowl which he didn’t hide fast enough. I guess it was time to break the news to my father that I wasn’t on the market.

“Your Natalya? I thought you were just friends who met at a community event,” Leonid said sharply.

“We did meet at a community event. And we did start out as friends, but we quickly moved beyond that. To be honest, I came here tonight not only to meet her father, but to inform him that I plan to marry his daughter. I know it’s old-fashioned to ask for permission, so I’m not, but I do think he should hear it from me. Your daughter will always be loved and cared for. I will let nothing and no one ever hurt her. I take care of what’s mine.”

The thinly veiled threat was obvious to everyone at the table. I wondered if my father would call him out on it or act like he didn’t hear it. I was shocked that Knight had said what he did. He hadn’t told me he was going to tell my father he was going to marry me.

My father slowly turned his head from looking at me and Leonid to look at Knight. He narrowed his eyes on him. “My daughter and I will discuss this alone. Where I come from, a man doesn’t come into someone’s home and tell him that he’s going to marry his daughter. I’m the one who

determines who is acceptable for my daughter. There are a lot of men who would attach themselves to her for her money. She's my only heir and, as such, she's worth a fortune. As if you didn't already know that. I won't let her be conned or used by a fortune hunter."

"I agree, there are a lot of people out there like that. Luckily, I'm not one of them. I have zero interest in your daughter's money. My only interest is in her. And the days of a man having authority over his adult daughter are long past. Natalya can decide who she wants to marry herself. She's already said yes. Her ring, unfortunately, is being resized, or you'd get to see it. I have enough money to keep her comfortable. That includes our children. So, if you had hoped she'd marry someone of your choosing, I'm sorry your plans are ruined."

I jumped as Leonid came to his feet and his chair went crashing to the floor. He looked incensed and his face was beet red. He had his fists clenched at his sides. He was glaring at Knight with hate-filled eyes.

"You will not marry Natalya! She's mine. I already came to an agreement with her father. She will marry me and we will return to Russia. Since I have only a short time here in the States, the wedding will be within the month. Fabian, this man needs to leave so we can talk to Natalya and explain the facts."

Knight came to his feet. Troy and Lyle moved closer. He smiled at them, only it wasn't a pleasant one.

"Tell your hired goons if they take one more step, I'll have to teach them a lesson. As for you, Leonid, Natalya isn't yours and she will never be yours. Baby, it's time to say goodnight. This evening is obviously over. Come on."

He started to round the table. Lyle and Troy came rushing at him. Leonid tried to grab my arm, but I wiggled away from him. I dashed past my father, who was sitting in his chair, looking stunned. I made it to Knight seconds before the bodyguards did. He gently pushed me behind him and faced them.

No one thought to check him for weapons or anything when we arrived. I'm not sure why. They had no idea that not only did he have a gun and a knife on him, but he was wired. The club had put listening devices on both of us so they could monitor the situation, in case things went south. I'd call this going south.

"Knight, watch out," I cried out as Troy came at him.

He rushed Knight. As he got close, rather than try to get out of the way, Knight moved toward him and punched him hard in the jaw. I watched in shock as Troy's eyes rolled to the back of his head and he fell. He lay unmoving on the floor. Oh my God, he knocked him out with one punch!

Lyle swore and came at him, although he was more cautious. He reached into his jacket. Before he could pull what I thought was a gun out, Knight had his gun out and pointed at him.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you. I came here prepared for the worst. Not only will I not hesitate to put a bullet in you, but I also won't care if I have to do the same to Fabian and Leonid over there. They don't scare me. The days of Fabian controlling Natalya's life are over. However, before I go, I do have a bone to pick with you, Fabian, and your bodyguards. It has to do with a beating you gave your daughter a few weeks ago."

I glanced at my father. He was finally standing and he was pale. His gaze darted from Knight to Leonid then to Lyle. I saw him swallow. "I-I have no idea what you're talking about. You need to leave my home. Natalya, stay. We need to talk. There are things you don't know."

I'd never seen him act like this. He always remained cool and never acted like anyone intimidated or worried him. Now, he was afraid and I wasn't sure why. It wasn't just because of Knight, I was almost positive. There was more to it.

"She's not staying and you'll have no further contact with her. I want you to know her beating isn't forgotten or forgiven. The three of you will pay for it soon. Until then, I'd think of your sins and get your affairs in order."

Just as Lyle lunged forward, the lights went out. I heard cursing. It was dark in the room, but not totally. It was dark enough to have people stumbling around and knocking stuff over. I felt a hand grab mine.

“It’s me. Come on, let’s get out of here,”

I held onto Knight’s hand and let him lead me out. I had no idea how he was navigating so easily and without running into anything. In a matter of minutes, we were outside. There were stars out, so there was more light to see by. I peered up at Knight, who was beside me. My question was answered. He had on those funny goggle things. The ones you saw in movies that soldiers wore to see at night. *Where in the world did he get those?*

He ran to our car. As he hustled me inside, I wondered where the club was. When he got inside to drive, I saw the goggles were gone. He started the car and took off so fast that the tires squealed. He was racing toward the gate. That’s when I thought of the guard there.

“Knight, stop! We can’t get through the gate. There’s a guard. He’ll know something is wrong by now and he won’t open it. You can’t crash through it. There are other guards.”

He gave me a warm smile. “Babe, that’s all been handled. Everything is gonna be alright. I just want to get us clear before they can get reorganized. I’d rather they didn’t know to come to the compound tonight.”

“What was all that challenging my father and Leonid about? I thought we were gonna play it cool. Where did you get those goggles? They were night vision, weren’t they?”

“I’ll answer all your questions as soon as we get home, I promise. Until then, hang on and do as I say.”

Shutting my mouth, I nervously watched. To my amazement, when we got close to the gate, it was open. There wasn’t a single guard in sight. We passed through without a problem and once out on the main road, we took off speeding even faster toward the compound. A mile or so down the road, we were joined by a van and a truck. For some reason, the club had decided not

to ride their bikes. I anxiously waited to reach home, so I could find out what I missed in the briefing. None of this was in the plan I was involved in formulating.

Knight: Chapter 12

I knew I had a lot of explaining to do as we entered the compound. Natalya had gone silent for the whole ride back. I knew she was upset and wondering what the hell happened. I wasn't looking forward to telling her that the guys and I had devised more to the plan which we didn't share with her. It wasn't because I didn't trust her. I just didn't want to stress her out even more. The days leading up to this fucking dinner from hell had her growing more tense by the hour. I thought she was gonna give herself a stroke, worrying about how it would go.

Parking outside the clubhouse, I shut off the car then turned to her. She was staring out the window. "Baby, let's go inside so I can explain what all this was tonight."

She turned to look at me. "Oh, so now you're willing to tell me shit. What happened back there was bullshit, Knight. You made decisions without consulting me."

Her tone and her calling me Knight told me I was in deep shit. Knowing it wouldn't get better by procrastinating, I got out and came around to her side of the car. I opened her door. She'd undone her seatbelt. I held out my hand, but she ignored it and got out herself. She didn't say a word as she brushed past me. Sighing, I shut the door and followed her. She beat me to the door to the clubhouse. She jerked it open and as she passed through, she let go of it. I barely caught it before it slammed closed in my face. Yep, she was pissed. The others were coming in behind me from the van. The truck had ridden ahead of us with our car in the middle for protection. The guys who were in it were already inside.

Jerking the door open wider, I came inside. She was halfway to the bar. The guys were watching her. The place was unusually quiet, especially for a Saturday night. Agony had left orders that none of the bunnies or other women were to be allowed in tonight. She stopped at the bar and I heard her tell Atticus to give her a shot of tequila. I had never seen her drink hard

alcohol.

I came over to stand beside her. "I'll take one of those too, Atticus."

He didn't waste time pouring two shots and handing one to her then the other to me. She tossed it back without pausing. I was impressed. She didn't cough or anything. I tossed mine back. She slammed her shot glass down on the bar.

"Give me another one," she ordered. Atticus glanced over at me, as if to ask if he should. She saw him do it.

"Don't ask his permission to serve me. I'm over fucking twenty-one and my own boss. Either give me the goddamn drink or I'll go somewhere where they will serve me," she snarled.

"You heard the lady. Give her another one," I told him.

She didn't bother to even glance at me. As soon as she had the second one, she tossed it back like the first one. However, this time, when she asked for another, I put a stop to it.

"You're not gonna get drunk and be pissed all night at me, Natalya. Let's sit down and talk like adults."

She whipped around so fast, she caught me off guard. She stuck her finger in my face.

"Oh, now I'm an adult and you want to talk to me. What about before this? Why was I kept in the dark about what you were gonna say and possibly do at dinner? I'll have another goddamn drink if I want."

Instead of arguing, I grabbed the hand pointing at me and I tugged her into my arms. Once she was there, I kissed her. I needed to taste her. After that fiasco tonight, I had to reassure myself she was unhurt and with me. Hearing the way her father and that fucking Russian said she wasn't mine had infuriated me. I only wished I'd had time to teach them all a lesson, but it had to wait. There was more going on than we knew with Fabian and his desire to

be the one to find an acceptable man for his daughter to marry.

I let go of her when she kicked me in the shin. I'll admit, it hurt a bit. She was fuming mad, and I wasn't sure if she'd throw a punch. I'd never seen her like this. As perverse as it was, I liked it. The fire in her right now only teased me with thoughts of make-up sex later. No matter what happened tonight, when we were done, she was going home with me and I was gonna fuck her until she wasn't pissed at me anymore. I kept that to myself for now. If I said it to her at this moment, she might geld me.

“Don't you manhandle me, Knight. And don't think a kiss will make this alright. Until you can treat me like an adult and equal, don't touch me, talk to me or anything else. Now, I'm tired. Can I have a room here in the clubhouse or do I need to go back to my house? I prefer the latter, but I doubt you'll allow that.”

“You're not going home or staying here in the clubhouse. Goddamn it, let's talk this out. Okay, I'm sorry I didn't tell you everything we had planned.”

She ignored me and was staring at Agony. He didn't look happy. He'd been one to argue that I should tell her what I had planned, and I had ignored him. Well, I'd ignored him and Dare. Maybe I should've listened to the two guys with old ladies of their own. I didn't want her to blame the others.

“Natalya, this isn't anyone's fault but mine. I made the decision even though some told me not to. There's no way you can stay here in the clubhouse. Come home with me and we'll sit down and talk this through. I'll explain why I did what I did. It was for a reason.”

She looked back at me. The anger hadn't abated a bit in her expression. “If I can't stay here, then I want to stay in someone else's house. I know they have to have a spare room. Hell, a couch will do. What I can't do is be in the same house as you right now or I might kill you.”

I tried to reach for her again, but she backed away. “Babe, please.” I gave her my most contrite and pleading look.

“Don’t babe me. By keeping me in the dark, you acted more like my father than you know. I’ve suffered all my life being not worth someone’s time or consideration. My own needs, opinions, and wants are ignored and ridiculed. I won’t let that happen anymore. Agony, I need you to give me a safe place to stay tonight. As the president of this club, I know your word is law. Why you didn’t overrule Knight, I don’t know. I don’t seem to have any friends to turn to, so I’m throwing myself on your mercy. I need to be alone. Please.” Tears sparkled in her eyes.

I felt my heart drop, and I felt like a total asshole. To be compared to her dad was the very last thing I ever wanted. Agony exchanged a look with me before he answered her.

“Natalya, you don’t need to plead for mercy. No one here wants to see you hurt or hurting. You do have friends. We’re your friends and I hope you can see that once you’re not so upset. You’re right, I could’ve overruled Knight, but I didn’t. I try not to interfere in a couple’s relationship. What he did wasn’t something that put you at risk. You were always safe. He did it for a good reason and I hope after you rest tonight, you’ll let him explain it. You’re more than welcome to stay with me, Eliana, and the twins. We have the guestroom all made up. I expect you’ll need to go get some things from Knight’s house. Do you want me to take you to get them?”

I wanted to yell and say she couldn’t go, but I knew if I pushed it right now, she might close down completely and not listen at all, even after she rested. I couldn’t risk that, so I held my tongue.

“I can go do it myself. Please have Knight stay here. It won’t take me long to pack.” She turned and walked out without another word or even a glance at me. As soon as the door shut behind her, the buzz of voices started.

“Goddamn, she’s upset,” Cyclone mumbled, shaking his head.

“I don’t get it. She knows we’re her friends, surely,” Nitro said.

“Let her rest and think about it. I’m sure she’ll be calm in the morning,” Twisted offered to me.

“I don’t know if she will. I really screwed the pooch on this one, guys. To remind her of her father is the last fucking thing I ever want to happen. Agony, please, keep an eye on her and if you think I need to come over later, call me. I’ll give her until morning then we’re gonna sit down and talk this shit out. I can’t have her deciding to leave me over this. Not only would she not be safe, but I can’t lose her.”

He patted me on the back. “I’ll make sure she stays inside the compound. Someone will be at the gate all night. Just try to get some sleep and be ready to lay it out to her. I know we keep some things back as club business. It’s to protect the women and kids so they have deniability, but in this case, there wasn’t anything like that going on. I understand you’re worried about telling her what you planned ahead of time. You’ll find with women, or at least with ours, they have very different ideas about protection than we do.

“What you did wasn’t unforgivable. She’ll see it once she’s calm. It was a very stressful night. Later tomorrow, after you and her get things worked out, we’ll all meet to talk about this Leonid fellow. Wire will start working on his background after he gets some sleep. Everyone else, I’m gonna call it a night as soon as Natalya gets back. Blow off steam or whatever but get some rest. No women allowed tonight, sorry. You’ll have to go to town if you want that tonight,” Agony informed us.

No one objected. I paced the common room while we waited for her to get back. Luckily, the other women and kids weren’t there. I knew Cara had gone home with Joli earlier. We’d arranged it before we left, knowing we wouldn’t get back until after her bedtime. I was glad she wasn’t here to see Natalya going somewhere else for the night. It would’ve upset the hell out of her. She adored Natalya.

Finally, the door opened, and she came walking in. She had a small travel bag in one hand and her computer bag and purse in the other. Agony hurried over and took the two bags away from her. I couldn’t let her go without a word. I walked up to her. The guys moved away to give us privacy. She wasn’t looking at me. I gently lifted her chin up with my hand. Her expression was lost looking.

“I know you’re mad at me and I deserve that. Take tonight to rest and then in the morning, we’ll talk. I’ll explain everything. I never meant to make you think I’m anything like your father. This isn’t the end, Bright Eyes. I will get your forgiveness. Just remember, I love you.”

She didn’t say anything. All she did was nod and then she moved away from me. It made me sick that she didn’t say she loved me back. Surely to God this one mistake wouldn’t be the end of us. She couldn’t have stopped loving me over this little fuckup. Agony came over and took her arm. He sent me an encouraging look before he escorted her out. Once she was gone, I couldn’t stand it. I needed to forget the whole shitty night. I went back to the bar and ordered another shot. Maybe if I got drunk, it would help, although I doubted it.

Over the next two hours, I tried to steadily drink enough to get my mind off her, but it didn’t work. Part of the reason was the guys kept interfering when I tried to get more drinks. They wouldn’t leave me alone and they kept talking to me. They insisted she’d be better in the morning. I didn’t know if that was true.

Finally, when I couldn’t stand it anymore and I knew they weren’t going to allow me to get fall-down drunk, I left and went home to a dark, lonely, empty house. I forced myself to shower before I fell into bed. I closed my eyes and willed myself to sleep. It was a long time until I drifted off. When I did, I was still thinking about her.



Jerking awake, my fuzzy brain tried to figure out what had woken me up. It was still night. My bedroom was dark. I listened hard. There it came again, a rustling noise. I inched my hand toward my nightstand. I had one of those gun safes that recognized fingerprints you programmed into it. It was how I kept my guns secure with Cara in the house. Although I was teaching her about guns and to never handle one without me with her, she was still only three. I heard the slight click as it recognized my fingerprint and it unlocked.

I was just easing up the lid when the noise got louder and the bed

slightly dipped. Her scent hit my nose and I knew who it was. I pushed the lid down to re-latch it then rolled toward the other side of the bed.

“Bright Eyes, what the hell are you doing, sneaking in here in the dark? I could’ve shot you,” I hissed at her.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t think of that. We’re inside the fence. I was trying to get into bed without waking you up,” she whispered back. Her voice sounded funny.

I reached over and snapped on my bedside lamp. I ran my hungry gaze all over her face. She still looked upset. Her face was puffy and her eyes were red and swollen. Even looking like that, she was still beautiful to me. I held my breath as I opened my arms to her. She launched herself into them and buried her face in my chest. Sobs broke out, and she shook in my arms. I wrapped her tightly in my arms and against my chest. I kissed every bit of her head and face I could reach as I tried to calm her down.

“Shh, everything’s okay. Don’t cry, baby. You need to know, I can’t stand to see you cry.”

“I-I’m t-trying not to,” she stuttered.

“God, am I glad to see you. Why don’t you tell me why you’re here? I thought we were gonna talk later this morning.”

She sniffed and raised her head. I wiped the tears off her cheeks and kissed her nose. I really wanted to kiss her mouth, but I wasn’t gonna push her. The fact she was here meant she might be willing to talk and forgive my blunder. Being in a relationship was new territory for me.

“I couldn’t wait any longer. I’m sorry that I acted crazy and insisted on staying somewhere else. I should’ve been an adult about it and let you explain, so I could tell you what I thought and felt about the whole thing.”

“True, but I know you were running on emotion. My biggest fear is you wouldn’t let me explain and would leave all together. That’s one thing I can’t let happen, Natalya.”

“I know you want to keep me safe.”

“It’s not just that. I love you and I have to keep you safe, which got me into trouble. Not telling you the whole plan of what I was gonna do was because of my desire to keep you safe.”

“How were you doing that, by not telling me you were gonna tell my father we were together and then that we’re supposedly getting married?”

I shifted around until we were semi-sitting up against the headboard. “Are you sure you’re ready to talk? We can try and sleep for a bit longer then talk after the sun comes up.” I offered her this option not because I wanted to wait, but because she looked so wiped out.

She shook her head. “No, I’d like to do it now, if we can. I need to understand. I tried to see it from your point of view and I’m not getting it. Did you think I wouldn’t go along with it? What if I’d shown my shock at your news and ruined the whole thing?”

“I wasn’t really concerned that you wouldn’t go along with it. I knew how damn stressed you were about this dinner, facing your father, and bringing me along with you. I didn’t want to add to your stress by telling you we had to tell your father about us and convince him we were already engaged. I wasn’t even sure if we’d need to do that. I was playing it by ear.”

“Okay, so what made you do it? Was it the fact Leonid was there?”

“Partially, but even without him, I would’ve done it. Your father’s smug attitude and how he looked like he was the ruler of everyone and everything around him pissed me off. How you ever grew up to be the woman you are with a man like that as your father, I haven’t a clue. The fact he brought a man to dinner with the intent of telling you that he’d found you a possible husband was too much. Then to find out he’s promised you to him was over the top. This isn’t feudal times, for God’s sake. He really does think he can have people do whatever he says without a peep of resistance.”

“He does. I always knew he didn’t love me like a real parent should, but he’s proven this past month that he probably hates me. I don’t know why.

And whoever this Leonid is, I've never heard his name mentioned in my life. If he's such a good friend to my father, why haven't we met before or I at least have heard of him? Something's very wrong here. I want to know how he knew my mother."

"Agreed. Wire will be starting to research him as soon as he wakes up today. Your father seems to be one of those people who can't feel anything for others. Tell me how he and your mom met?"

"I don't really know. She never talked about that when I asked her. She'd just change the subject. After she died and I asked my father, he told me they met through friends when he was in Russia on business. He said he saw her and fell in love with her at first sight. Supposedly, she did the same, and he married her and brought her here to the States as soon as he could. I was born before their first wedding anniversary. She was twenty-one when I was born. He was like fourteen years older than her. I used to ask why they didn't have more kids and both of them would say because they didn't need more than me."

"Did she ever tell you anything about her family? Are there still any of them in Russia? Have you met any of them?"

"No, nothing. She told me she didn't have any family, and that they were all dead."

"Did you believe her?"

"Well, I did. I mean, why would she lie? Although now, I'm starting to wonder what I don't know. Tell me what you're thinking."

"I don't know yet. It's just random things I can think of that could be an explanation. On one hand, maybe everything they told you is the truth, but my gut says it's not. I think if we can find out how Leonid knows your father and we can find out where your mom came from and who her family was, that will answer a lot and might help us to figure out why your father is insisting you're engaged to Leonid. Fathers don't give away their daughters to men."

“I hope those answers do help us. He’s always been very dictatorial, but this is a new level. If he truly wanted to force me to marry someone and he thought he could just order me to do it, why not do it with my boyfriend in college? He was the one to tell Paxton to get close to me and make me fall for him.”

“Paxton? That was his name? What’s his last name? Maybe if we look into him, it might help us to figure out why the change. At this point, any clue will help.”

“His name is Paxton Hart. People call him Pax. I don’t know where he lives now. He moved away after we broke up.”

“Do you have anything else on him? Like a birth date, old address, any family names?”

“I might be able to find his old address and I know his birth date. It’s July twenty-third, nineteen eighty-six. He’s two years older than me. As for family, he told me he didn’t have any. I don’t know if that was true or not.”

Not letting go of her, I reached over and grabbed my cell phone off the nightstand. I’d send this to Wire now. He would get it when he woke up. She watched as I typed out a quick message with the information in it and why I was sending it. Once I sent it off, I got back to her.

“That’s enough worrying about why tonight. I need to know, does this mean you’re forgiving me for last night and for being an asshole?”

“You have to realize that I can’t be happy in any kind of relationship where I’m treated less than equal and like I’m not smart enough to know important information or determine my own life. My days of accepting that are done with. I want to stay here with you and to work toward a future, but if you can’t give me that, it’s not going to work.”

“Baby, I never meant to make you think of yourself as not my equal, or that I thought you were stupid or unable to determine your life. I’m not your father. I was purely worried about stressing you out. I want to protect you from every worry and hurt I can. I’m learning, Natalya. I haven’t had a

relationship in more years than I want to recall. I have to ask you to give me a chance when I screw up.”

“So you’ve been in relationships in the past with women? You said you weren’t in one with Cara’s mom, not really. Just how long ago were those relationships? I’m not asking for any details, I just want to know how far back it’s been.”

“Ugh, I hate this but you need to know. Okay, so when I was young, like barely in my twenties, I ended up dating this woman. I thought we were serious, and we’d end up going somewhere with it. About six months into it, I found out she was never going to get serious about me. She only wanted to be with me so she could brag to her friends about being with a biker and a guy from the other side of the tracks. We split up as soon as I found out the truth. I thought she was a bitch and that was it. About a year later, I met another woman. She was similar in background as the first one, but I didn’t let it deter me. We started dating and again, I thought I might have found someone to get into a serious relationship with. This one only lasted about four months before I found out she was with me for the same reason as the first one. After that, I’ve never been more than into a casual hookup with a woman until I met you.”

“So that’s why you said those things you did to me the first time we met. About me wanting to sleep with a biker so I could brag about it to my friends.”

I nodded. I hated to be reminded of how I acted toward her that first time.

“Elijah, I’m so sorry you went through that. No wonder you thought I was the same. I guess being from a well-to-do family would be a trigger for you.”

“You have nothing to apologize for. I was wrong. Two bitches doesn’t mean everyone with money is like them. I’m just thankful I was able to get a second chance with you after that terrible first impression. Since you’re here talking to me and not trying to castrate me, does this mean I get a third chance?”

She smiled and rolled her eyes. “You didn’t mess up that badly. I guess we both need to learn how to do this relationship thing. Neither of us has a good history with it. As long as you swear you’ll keep me in the loop and not make decisions about my life without talking to me again, I think we can put this to bed.”

“I swear I’ll do it,” I promised. I was about to kiss her when she halted me with her words.

“What’ll we do about my father and Leonid? They won’t give up and when they figure out where I am and that we lied about the whole engagement, it’s only going to add fuel to that fire. I wish you hadn’t told him we’re engaged. Saying we’re together would’ve been enough.”

I plastered her entire length to mine. Staring intently into her beautiful eyes I confessed, “Bright Eyes, I didn’t lie. I am gonna marry you and the ring is being resized. The only thing I didn’t tell them is I haven’t asked you yet. I was planning something, but I need your answer now. Natalya LeBlanc, will you marry me?”

I didn’t give her a chance to answer before I kissed her. As she caught fire in my arms and my desire for her blazed higher, I prayed her answer would be yes when we came up for air.

Natalya: Chapter 13

Having Knight ask me to marry him along with a kiss that made my whole body catch on fire and my brain seize, I gave up trying to answer him. Instead, I threw myself into kissing him back as passionately as he was devouring me. I hoped my response would tell him what my answer was.

It might be total lunacy to agree to marry a man I met a month ago, but I wanted nothing more. To grow old with him and to raise not only Cara but other children hopefully was one thing I'd always dreamed of. With the coldness I lived with all my life, I wanted to raise a family who had no doubts they were loved and wanted. By watching how Knight was with Cara, I knew he was the same. He adored her and did everything he could to show her how much he loved her.

As we hungrily kissed, we were both frantically trying to remove each other's clothes. Knight only had on underwear, so it didn't take much to get him naked. As for me, I had taken off my shoes and stripped down to my underwear and shirt before coming into the bedroom to get into bed with him.

I'd spent hours lying over at Agony and Eliana's, wallowing in my tears and anger. Finally, after I started to calm down, I knew no matter what else had to be resolved between us, I needed to be in his arms, so I snuck out of their house and over here. Since nobody locked their doors, I had no trouble getting inside.

I moaned as he tore my panties off. He'd removed my shirt but the panties I guess he was too impatient to work them off my legs. He rolled me over onto my back. As he kept kissing me, his hands were busy molding my breasts, kneading them and tweaking my nipples. I gasped, breaking our kiss when he left my breasts, reached between my legs and teased my clit before thrusting a finger inside of me. Just that little bit of kissing had me wet for him. He growled then sat up. I tried to haul him back down, but he resisted me.

“No, I need to see all of you and then I have to be inside of you, Natalya. I swear, I’ll make you come over and over, but it has to be on my cock tonight.”

“Then take me. Don’t wait. I need you too,” I wailed.

He took his time raking his gaze from my face to my feet and back up. He paused a few times to study me longer. I squirmed. The heat in his gaze was making me hornier. I was soaking wet. Deciding to push him along, I lowered my hand and slipped it between my legs to rub up and down my slit. As it grazed my clit, I moaned loudly and threw back my head.

“Fuck,” he muttered, then he was gripping my hips tightly.

“I wanna take you from behind. I can go deeper that way. I need to go as deep as I can,” he grunted, as he flipped me over onto my stomach.

I tried to help get myself on my knees, but he was too impatient. He jerked me up on them. My head and shoulders remained on the mattress. I went to push up, but he held me down. We hadn’t done it like this yet.

“Just your ass in the air,” he muttered as he got behind me.

I tried to turn my head as far as I could, so I could see him. He looked savage as he spread my ass cheeks. I moaned as the head of his broad cock pressed against my opening then he pushed. It wasn’t a slow push either. He stroked into me in a single, hard thrust. I couldn’t hold back my cry. It was one of intense pleasure mixed with the tiniest amount of discomfort.

“Am I hurting you?”

“Not really. It’s just you’re big. It was a bit uncomfortable. I’m alright.”

“Sorry, I should’ve been more careful. I don’t want to hurt you. I just need you so damn much, Bright Eyes.”

“Then take me. I’m fine. I need you too. Show me how much deeper you can go like this,” I pleaded.

A smirk spread across his face right before he pulled back and pushed back inside again. I cried out at the intensity of it. He was deeper than ever before. His cock was stretching my pussy to my max capacity. My nails bit into the sheet underneath me. As he pulled back again, I couldn't stop from thrusting my ass back toward him as he began to push back inside again. This made him moan. In no time, we were both heaving and sweating. I could feel my orgasm coming like a freight train.

I warned him, "Elijah, I'm about to come, honey."

"Good. Come for me. I wanna feel that pussy strangling me," he muttered hoarsely.

His words, the image it painted in my head, and the sensations bombarding my whole body made me detonate on his next stroke. I hollered his name as I came. I clamped down hard around him and I prayed he was enjoying this half as much as I was. By the time I was coming out of it, I was hoarse and panting hard. My body felt like it was floating. And he wasn't done. He was still hammering in and out of me. I realized he hadn't come with me.

"Oh God, why didn't you come? What's wrong?"

"Nothing. I plan to come next time or maybe the time after that. Once isn't enough with you, baby. You can still talk. That means I haven't done my job," he growled.

All I could do was whimper and go with it. I became lost in a haze of passion as he rode me hard, deep, and fast. The sound of our gasping breaths, the slap of his hips against my ass, and the smell of sex in the room was pushing me to a new high. Raising up on my elbows, I slammed my hips back to meet his next thrust. He groaned then made me gasp.

His fingers slid through the copious amount of cream that was spilling from my body. He didn't leave them there long, only for a moment or so then he lifted his hand. I was still watching him over my shoulder. He held my gaze as he slipped his fingers between my ass cheeks and over my asshole. I

tensed up.

“Can I? I think you’ll love this, but if you don’t, just tell me and I’ll stop. I wanna make you come like never before, baby.”

I’d read a lot over the years about anal play and anal sex. It seemed to be much more accepted now than in the past. It used to be only deviants and homosexuals who supposedly did it. I never thought that about people. Whatever brought them pleasure and was consensual between adults, then I had no problem with it. However, I hadn’t decided if I was someone who would like to try it if the opportunity arose. Now here was my chance and I didn’t know what to say. He waited. His hips kept thrusting, but he’d slowed down as he waited for my answer.

“Baby, if you’re not sure or ready, then we don’t need to do it. I can get you off without this. I just thought you might like it.”

“Do you like doing that to a woman?”

“If she likes it, yes, I do.”

“Do you like anal sex too?” Maybe this wasn’t the time for this conversation, but I wanted to know.

“I have, again, only if the woman was into it. Doing it only for my pleasure isn’t half as good as when it brings both of us that intensity.”

“Then what’re you waiting for? Show me what this part is like. Who knows, I might just one day let you try the other if it’s as good as you say,” I said, throwing all caution out the window. I surprised myself.

He groaned and the look on his face made me glad I said yes. I tried hard not to tense as he pressed his fingertip to my asshole. It felt strange to be letting something in rather than out.

“Breath. It’ll help if you push out while I push in. Tell me if it’s too much.”

Nodding my head, I did as he instructed. It did let his finger slip in

easier, although it was still tight and stung. He'd slowed down his thrusts so he could work his finger into my ass. Slowly, he eased it back and forth. Each time he pushed back inside, he went just a fraction further. I didn't feel any good sensations. It burned and hurt. Finally, he stopped. I wanted to tell him it wasn't doing it for me and he should remove his finger when he flexed his hips back. At the same time, he withdrew his finger until only the tip remained inside. On the next breath, he thrust inside with both his cock and finger.

I cried out. I was surprised by the tiny bite of pleasure that went through me. He did it again. When I didn't tell him to stop, he sped up. Soon, he was back to pushing me toward another orgasm. Only this time, I knew it was going to be a doozy. The promise of it bringing me more enjoyment was showing more and more to be true. There were bolts of intense pleasure shooting throughout my body. The combination of being penetrated in both holes was growing intense.

"Elijah, oh damn, that feels so good," I cried out, as another jolt went through my body.

"Good. Come for me, baby. Show me how much you like being double penetrated. How much my Bright Eyes likes her ass played with," he grunted.

It took him a few more thrusts to get me to tip over the edge. This time, I screamed harder and longer, as not only did my pussy milk his cock but my ass was doing the same to his finger. I saw spots in front of my eyes as I came and flooded his cock. He was only a couple of strokes behind me. When he came, his grunts filled the room. He sounded like an animal as he jerked and filled me full of his warm cum.

By the time I was done, I couldn't hold myself up. I collapsed onto my stomach on the bed. I was breathing like I'd run a race. He was lying over me but holding his full weight off me with his one elbow. He was panting hard. I jumped when his teeth scraped my shoulder.

"I think I'm blind. What about you?" he whispered.

“I can’t answer you. I’m dead,” I said back in a whisper.

He chuckled which made me moan, since it made his finger and cock move inside of me. Slowly, he eased out his finger then his cock. He flopped down beside me. Lucky for me, I was already facing his way. I saw the love in his eyes.

“I love you,” I told him.

“I love you too and thank you for trusting me to do that.”

“Anytime,” I said before yawning. My eyelids closed as I stared at him. *Lord, I’m tired.*



It had been two days since Knight and I made up over the fiasco at my father’s house. I got my stuff later in the morning from Agony’s house while they were in church. Knight assured me he would tell me what they decided to do regarding my father. And he kept his promise. The main things they were working on were not only to find out more about my father but also Leonid and my mom. They were convinced she was somehow key to figuring out a bunch of stuff.

I wasn’t as sure, but I was willing for them to try anything. I tried not to let my nerves show, but I was counting down the days until my father figured out where I was. Being cooped up at the compound was getting old, but since I could work from here, I had no need to risk anything by going off the grounds.

The extra men who’d come to help guard were still here and keeping to their patrol schedules. I felt bad for them and the fact I was the reason they were all here instead of at home. Whenever I voiced my remorse, they were quick to tell me I had nothing to feel bad about. I didn’t know if I should believe them.

Right now, we were all gathered at the clubhouse after everyone got home from work. Knight told me Agony wanted everyone to get together, so I didn’t object. Besides, I liked to be around everyone here. They acted so

much nicer than those I'd been around most of my life. The single ones outside of the Pagans here in Cherokee liked to flirt and tease me. The teasing Knight handled, but he had threatened more than a few with shallow graves if they kept trying to steal me away from him. It was all in fun and I knew they were doing it to rile him up and to relieve the boredom.

Cara and I were growing even closer. She was spending most of her time with me during the day while her daddy was at work. I was feeling less guilty about not spending all my time with her. She was good at entertaining herself when I was busy with translating my work projects. Knight told me it was because her mom had basically ignored her all the time and she was used to soothing herself and playing alone.

I hated that and wished I could meet her mom just once. I'd give that bitch a piece of my mind along with my fist. Not only for what she did to the club and Knight, but especially for what she did to her daughter. For short periods at a time, Cara still would go over to spend some time with the other old ladies and the babies at their houses. That gave me a break. Also, the guys were good about watching her when she wanted to play outside on the playground. The whole place acted like one huge communal parent. Anyone would take care of a kid, not just his or her parents.

I shivered as Knight's teeth raked gently along my neck. He was behind me. We'd just gotten drinks at the bar and he took me over to sit at one of the tables. I joined the ladies.

"Baby, I'll be back in a little bit. I need to talk to Agony and Dare. Do you have everything you need?"

"I'm fine, Knight. If I need something, I know where to get it myself or I'll come find you. Go. I can tell they're anxious to talk to you."

I pointed to his president and VP. They were both watching us. They saw me looking at them, so they smiled and tipped their drinks at me. I waved back.

"Okay, I know when I've been given the heave-ho. Watch out. If any of these flirty bastards get out of hand, just holler," he reminded me with a

wink.

I laughed and pushed him toward the guys. I enjoyed watching him walk away. His ass in those jeans was a thing of beauty. I was so caught up in fantasizing about what his ass looked like underneath his clothes, that I didn't hear Joli ask me something. It was a nudge to my ribs that got my attention. She was grinning at me.

“What? Sorry, I was thinking.”

“Yeah, you were thinking about your man's fine ass. We know. You looked like you were in a trance. Should we take Cara and let you two go back to the house alone tonight?” she teased.

“Hey, a woman has to admire the finer things in life. I know you and Eliana do the same with your old men. I thank you for the offer, but Knight said Agony wanted us here tonight, so we have to stay at least for a while. No pissing off the president, you know? And Cara can sleep in her own bed, though thank you for the offer.”

Eliana rolled her eyes. “Please, don't make that man think he's even a bigger deal than he already does. It takes more work for me to keep him grounded when you all do that.”

“Grounded? I don't think that happens much. At least not with Dare,” Joli added.

“If you young'uns need help in learning how to keep those men of yours in line, come talk to me. I know all the tricks,” Tana said as she smiled at us.

“Tana, you're the bomb. We all wanna be like you when we grow up,” I told her.

She was becoming the grandmother I never had. Along with not having siblings, I'd always been jealous of kids who had aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Tana was that for not only Agony, but the rest of us. She called all the men her boys and us her girls.

“You’ll get there. It takes time and practice. You’ve got the hardest part done. Your men love you like no other. That’s the biggest part of the battle. See, they want to make you happy and to feel loved. Just like you want them to feel.”

She was right. Even as new as we were, I had no lingering doubts that Knight wanted me to be happy and to feel loved. He showed me and told me so every day in different ways. I prayed he felt the same from me.

I jumped when the bell rang at the bar. That thing was loud. Everyone quieted down and faced Agony, who was the one who rang it. Standing beside him was Dare. Glancing around, I didn’t see Knight. *Where was he?* Agony was about to make an announcement. He should be here.

“Everyone, I asked you all here so we could spend time together. That wasn’t a lie, but it wasn’t the only reason. If you’d all bear with me, I’d like us all to go to the windows facing the parking lot out front and open the blinds. Natalya, I want you to come over here to me,” Agony said as he held out his hand toward me.

While the others all moved over to the windows to do as he said, I got up and went over to him. He took my hand. I had no idea what he wanted from me. “Agony, what’s this all about? Where’s Knight?”

“Don’t worry about him. He’ll be back soon. Come on.”

He took me by the hand and led me to the front door. As we got to it, Dare, who was standing next to it, swung it open and waved me outside. Agony lightly nudged me to go ahead of him. As I did, he let go of my hand. My mouth fell open when I saw what was waiting on the other side of the door.

Right outside was Knight. He was smiling at me. In his hand was a bouquet of the reddest roses I’d ever seen in my life. There had to be at least two dozen of them.

“I have a surprise for you, Bright Eyes,” he said as he held them out to me.

I automatically took them and inhaled their scent. They were so fragrant. I smiled at him.

“Honey, these are beautiful and they smell so good. Thank you. I love them. Although, why you made everyone get up to look out the window, I don’t know. Couldn’t you have given them to me inside?”

“I could’ve, but then it wouldn’t be anything special. The flowers aren’t your surprise, baby. Hand those flowers to Dare. Let him make himself useful for once.”

Everyone chuckled as I did what Knight asked. Dare checked around then gave my man the middle finger. I knew he had made sure Cara couldn’t see him. I couldn’t help but giggle. He winked at me as he took the roses. Turning back to Knight, I waited to see what the surprise was. I noticed he had his other arm behind his back.

“Knight, what’re you hiding behind your back?”

“It’s something I’ve been waiting on. I wanted to give it to you where everyone could see it. Close your eyes and stand with your arms out. No peeking,” he warned me.

I did as he asked. I felt something brush against me then slide up my arms. I fought not to look. Within a few moments, something cool and heavy rested on my shoulders and wrapped around me.

“Open your eyes,” he said softly in my ear.

I snapped them open and looked down. I sucked in my breath. I was wearing a cut like the ones worn by Eliana and Joli. On the upper left chest, I saw in script writing the words, *Bright Eyes*. Tears filled my eyes. He’d given me a property cut.

I’d admit if asked now, that I had been kind of jealous that the other women had one and I didn’t. I knew Knight considered me his old lady. I just didn’t know how long it took to make it official. I guess I had my answer. I whipped around and threw my arms around his shoulders and gripped his

neck. I jerked his head down so I could kiss him. Cheers faded into the background as we kissed. I could've gone on kissing him for hours, except, he eventually pulled away.

“No,” I moaned.

He laughed. “Yes. I’m not done. I promise we’ll pick this up later and we’ll celebrate without an audience. I want you to see the back. I love seeing this on your back.”

Reluctantly, I stepped back and let him remove the cut. He turned it around so I could let the words, *Property of Knight*, sink in.

“If I could wear a property cut, I’d proudly wear one that read Property of Bright Eyes. Since I can’t, you’ll have to be content with me getting it tattooed on my skin. Agony is ready to do it as soon as I’m ready, which is right away. Since it’s too dangerous for you to leave the compound, he’s gonna do it here. I want you to watch me get it if you will.”

“Knight, I’d love to watch. I’ve never seen anyone get one before. Do you think he’d do your name on me at the same time? I know it’ll hurt, but I think I can stand it,” I said excitedly.

I’d always wanted one but never had the guts to go get one. Now that I was a biker’s old lady, I had to show I was tough enough. Who knows, I might like them enough to get more than one. I knew Joli had one and so did Eliana. She got hers after the twins were born. They’d shown me theirs one day. I’d been instantly jealous. That was when I found out Eliana had gotten her clit pierced after the twins were born too. She used the time she was recovering from their delivery to heal up the piercing too. She had to be one tough woman. I didn’t think I’d ever be able to go that far.

“Natalya, he’ll do it in a heartbeat if you really want one. It hurts but I don’t think it’s unbearable. Joli and Eliana said theirs weren’t awful,” he said excitedly.

I could tell he loved the idea of me doing it. I vowed I’d do it no matter how much the damn thing hurt.

“This is the best surprise ever. Thank you, honey.”

He shook his head. “This isn’t all of your surprise. There’s more.”

“What else could there be? This is more than enough, Knight.”

Abruptly, he sank down. He stopped when he had one knee on the ground and the other bent at ninety degrees. His hand slipped into his cut and came out holding a shiny object. I gulped and started to breathe heavily. Shining between his thumb and forefinger was a ring. One that had gemstones on it. He held it up to me.

“I told you the other night that what I told your father wasn’t a lie. I had a ring and it was being resized. The only thing I fibbed about was that you’d already accepted it and we were engaged. You promised me then to say yes. So, I’d love it if you would make an honest man out of me in more than one way. First, to stop me from being a liar, but more importantly, you’ll make me doubly honest by agreeing to marry me. I love you and I don’t want to wait to ask you later. I know you’re the only one for me, Natalya. Will you please accept this ring and make me the happiest man alive? Will you be my wife?”

I let out a very undignified squeal, but I didn’t care. Even though we’d talked about it the other night, it still thrilled me to no end. I sat down on his bent knee and held out my hand. He laughed as he slid it on. He did a very good job. It was a perfect fit. I was struck with awe as I admired it.

It wasn’t your typical diamond engagement ring. The center princess-cut gem was a dazzling white diamond. However, on each side of it was a slightly smaller princess-cut gem. It was an amberish, light chocolate color. It was almost an exact match to my eyes. Running down the band on both sides were tiny white diamonds. It was set in a rose gold band.

“I love it. What kind of stone is this other one?”

“It’s smoky quartz. When I saw it, it reminded me of your eyes. I had to get it. They only had one of this particular stone and it was too big, so I had to get them to resize it. So, does this mean your answer is yes to being

my wife for a second time?”

“Of course it does.”

He rose, taking me with him, and wrapped me up tightly against him as he kissed me. This time, he didn't break it off until we were both being tugged on. Looking down, we saw Cara. She was smiling up at us.

“She said yes, Daddy?”

He bent down and picked her up. “Yes, she said yes, Buttercup.”

“Yeah,” she cheered, which made everyone laugh. Then she gave me a serious look. “Does this mean I can call you Mommy now?”

I almost choked and had to force out my answer, since I had a lump in my throat. “I'd love it if you'd call me Mommy, Cara. As long as you and your daddy want that.”

She nodded eagerly. Knight gave me a serious look. “Baby, there's nothing we want more. You're her mom, period. Now, how do my girls like the idea that we all go celebrate with our friends and family? They've been waiting to congratulate us.”

We both nodded our heads. That was how I was officially claimed as an old lady, got engaged, and became a mom all in one night. It didn't get much better than this.

Knight: Chapter 14

Despite not having all the answers we wanted about Fabian, Leonid, and Natalya's mom, life was pretty close to perfect. It had only been a couple of days since Natalya accepted her property cut and my ring. We were settling more and more into our life together, which included Cara. She was overjoyed to be able to call Natalya mommy. I knew it made my woman tear up every time she did it. I loved it.

This was all despite what was still unresolved with her father and Leonid. Wire had been working like crazy to find out everything he could about both of them, as well as anything he could find out about her mom, and her ex-boyfriend, Paxton. We wanted any clues which might help us take both men out of the picture. I had no doubt and, neither did the club, this would mean killing both men.

We were meeting tonight to go over everything Wire had found. It was our usual night for church. I was anxious to hear what he had to say. He'd been finding stuff for the past few days but held off on telling us until he was sure he had everything he could get for now, or at least enough to make it worth our while. Taking our seats, I waited impatiently for him to speak.

"We're not gonna go through the usual stuff unless someone has an urgent matter to discuss. Otherwise, we'll get right to what I know Knight is dying to hear. Honestly, so am I," Agony stated. None of us raised our hands. Nodding, he pointed to Wire. "It's all yours, brother. Tell us you found some shit we can use on those fuckers."

Wire's lip curled up on one end. "Oh, I found more than enough to get us started. I'll begin with the more minor stuff first then give you the biggest shit. I think these fuckers need to be buried where no one can ever find them and one day soon," he snarled.

"First, let me start with Natalya's ex-boyfriend from college, Paxton

Hart. Wow, all I can say is the guy turned out to be an utter loser. He's lucky his family has money, or he'd never have shit. Don't get me wrong, the guy's okay looking and on the surface appears to have it all, but he's a deadbeat."

He put a picture up on the screen we had for this purpose. I hated to put a face to the man who'd hurt her like he did and find anything about him that wasn't disgusting. However, in this case, Wire was right. He was a nice-looking guy. I was secure enough in my manhood to be able to say that about another man. He wasn't as tall as me or as muscular, but he was good looking. He had short dark blond hair and dark blue eyes. He was clean shaven. Although, the way he looked in the picture would've made me guess that he was older than he was.

"He spends his time blowing his family's money while he parties and travels all over the world. He hasn't held down a job for more than a few months. That was right out of college and was at the family's main company, Hart Industries. They specialize in producing and exporting navigational instruments. Those are things like detection, navigation and search instruments, lab analytical instruments, appliance regulators and controls and properties testing equipment. I had no idea who used those, so I checked. Industries like air-traffic control, construction, shipbuilding and geophysical services and research use their products. It's one of the top ten largest export industries in the US. They're not the biggest company doing that by far, but they make more than a decent living at it."

"Okay, he's a freeloader. Anything else?" I asked.

"No, other than he goes through women like water. He drinks and parties almost every night and I bet he's doing drugs too. From what I found, it looks like he wasn't like this when Natalya knew him, but after they broke up, he started going down the tubes."

"Good, he deserves it. What about her mom? Anything about her or her family? Are there any of them left in Russia?" I asked, knowing how much Bright Eyes would love to have someone still alive from her mom's side. Wire shook his head.

"Sorry, Knight, not that I can find. It appears that Sasha Popov was

the only daughter of a small dignitary in the Russian government. He wasn't one of the main players over there. By all accounts, he was a fair man who worked to better his country. He had a wife and daughter and a few remote second cousins. I couldn't find out how she met Fabian LeBlanc, only that after she married him and he brought her to the States, her parents died a year later. There was a gas leak in their home and they were found dead from carbon monoxide poisoning. The cousins were all older and died over the next few years of natural causes. Sasha's mother was an orphan and had no family."

I knew this news would hurt her. I had been praying she might have at least one person there. "Go on. What about Fabian? Please tell me he's more than a rich bastard," I growled.

"Oh, he's filthy rich. His official work is supposedly investing. He does it mainly in real estate and land. However, I did find a small business. One that doesn't show a real profit of significance. It appears he ships gas turbines from different manufacturers here in the States to Russia, exclusively. Which could explain why he thought Paxton Hart would be a good match for Natalya. Combining those two things would likely increase the profits for both companies."

"Is there anything that ties him to illegal activities?" Agony asked.

"Nothing definitive that I found yet, but it's there. I know it is. I need more time to dig. Now, Leonid Vasiliev is a whole different story. If he and Fabian are associates, then it proves her dad is dirty. Leonid is well known in Russia and in other parts of the world."

"How?" I asked impatiently.

"It's widely known that if you want someone to disappear, an official to be bribed or threatened, drugs to be moved in Russia, you name it, he's one of the main men who does it. He took over the business, if you want to call it that, from his father, who inherited it from his father. They're a crime family, although they're not part of the Bratva. They have had dealings with them though. He's fifty-eight years old. He's been married twice but never had children. Both wives were younger than him. One died when she fell

down the stairs in their home while alone and broke her neck. He was thirty-five at the time. He didn't remarry until six years ago. His second wife died last year. She was killed in a skiing accident when they were in the Swiss Alps. She went missing after wandering away from him and was found frozen to death hours later."

"Jesus Christ, being married to him sounds like a guaranteed death sentence. Any rumors that he might have been behind his wives' early demises?" Dare asked before I could.

"Rumors, but no proof. I did find one other rumor you'll find interesting. Before he married his first wife, he was supposedly going to marry a different woman. Something happened and it fell through. The details aren't known about why. Or if they are, no one is willing to say. All I found was that she was younger than him by several years, insanely beautiful with unusual eyes and he referred to her as SaSa. I was curious about the name, so I Googled it and found out SaSa is a common nickname for Sasha. He married his first wife a scant year after this failed engagement."

"Goddamn it, that had to be Natalya's mom! Her name was Sasha and that would explain how he knew her mom and why he knows Fabian. They were rivals for the same woman," I exclaimed.

"That's likely, but why would you offer the man who was your rival for your wife, your daughter's hand in marriage? It's insane," Hulk growled.

"It is, so why? Why in the hell would Fabian LeBlanc do it? Leonid has or had some kind of hold over him. Maybe they're in business together. Whatever it is, it doesn't bode well for Natalya. She's in danger and keeping her here until we take care of both men is essential," Agony stated.

"Why don't we just wipe both their asses out right now? I mean, Christ, we know her father is no good and the connection, whatever it is, isn't a good one. Leonid is corrupt as they come," I barked as I hit my fist on the table.

"Brother, I get it, I do, but we don't work that way. You know that. We have to prove they mean her harm or they're hurting other innocents.

Rumors about someone's past aren't enough. Right now, it's only an insistence that she marry him. For another thing, we don't know if Leonid is even in the States right now," Agony argued back.

I opened my mouth to argue, even though I knew everything Agony said was right. We didn't just kill people for the hell of it. Although, when it was my woman in their crosshairs, I wanted it to be that way just this once. However, it was a slippery slope from which you might never recover from. I sighed and slumped back in my chair.

"I'm sorry, but Agony's right. Leonid left for Russia the day after you had dinner at Fabian's house. I'm working to see if there's a return trip itinerary out there. Of course, with his money and a private plane, he could make that decision at the last minute. I set up alerts on his various accounts in case he files a flight plan. He uses three main airports in Russia. I'm still digging and as soon as we get something irrefutable, I'll let you know. They're scum and once we can prove it, they'll be taken out of circulation," Wire said ominously.

The others sitting around the table all nodded their heads and muttered their agreement. My head was pounding. How the hell did I tell Natalya this? It would likely scare her to death, but I promised after the fight we had over what I did at her father's house, I wouldn't lie or hide things just because I thought it would stress her. I looked over at Dare and Agony. They were watching me and by the expressions on their faces, they knew what I was thinking and how I felt.

"You gotta tell her, Knight. Don't mess shit up again with her over this. If we have to bring in more men, then we will," Dare said.

"Fuck, I know, but it doesn't make it any easier to tell her. We both just want this to be over with, so we can get on with our lives. I want to marry her as soon as possible."

"So, do it. Don't wait around for us to get rid of them. Why don't you talk to her about getting married now and then having a second ceremony later? One where she can have a big wedding if she wants. Maybe if they know she's married, they'll back off the marriage thing, giving us time to

finish our research to take them out,” Bones suggested.

It wasn't a bad idea. Ideally, I'd like our wedding to be what she wanted from the start, but he might be right. Once she was married to me, they couldn't force her to marry Leonid.

“I'll think about it. Is there anything else, Wire?”

“Nope, that's it for now.”

“Thanks, man, it was more than enough. I have no doubt you'll find the rest of the information we need. Agony, are we still on for tomorrow to get our tattoos done?” I asked. Both Natalya and I were excited to get them.

“I am if you still are. I'll have it all set up in one of the rooms. You've both picked your fonts and stuff out. I'll have the designs for you and I can alter them on the fly if I have to.”

“Great, we can't wait.”

“Me too. Well, since that's it for tonight, let's get the hell out of here and see what the ladies are doing,” Agony ordered.

We filed out of the room. I was talking to Agony on the way, telling him more about what I thought of for my tattoo earlier. When we made it out to our women and kids, he assured me he knew exactly what I wanted and he'd be able to incorporate it into my tat. Natalya came out of her chair when I reached her. I saw the anxious look on her face. I hugged her.

“I'll tell you all about what Wire found after we get home. I don't want to chance Cara hearing anything. Alright?”

“Sure, that's fine. Sorry, I didn't mean to rush you as soon as you came out.”

“Baby, no need to apologize. You can rush me anytime you want,” I teased.

It brought a smile to her face and she lifted her chin. I took her

unspoken invitation and kissed her. She moaned softly while I fought back a groan. God, just that quick and I was hungry for her. I hoped this would be how we were until we were ninety or older, God willing we'd live that long.

A few guys were razzing us, which made me flip them off without lifting my mouth away from hers. They chuckled. Damn them to hell. Couldn't they see I was busy? Natalya pulled away from me. She narrowed her gaze at the ones heckling us the most, who were standing closest to us. She pointed her finger at them.

“Keep it up and you'll pay for it. One day, when you find a woman, I'll tell her all the shit you pulled. That's after I get Wire to find out your secrets. And if that's not enough of a threat, then how's this? I'll put you all up on every site I can find as grooms looking for mail-order wives. I'll make sure the responses come to me and I'll answer them, as if I'm you and then pick one out for you. You won't know it until she shows up on your doorstep.”

Her wicked grin combined with their horrified looks was too much. I lost it.

“That'll teach you assholes to mess with me and my woman. Hey, babe, I'll help you pick out the perfect one for each of them. So they don't have to worry about their wife being stolen by another man, I'll make sure to pick out the ugliest, most gnarly looking crone I can find.”

She cried out and ran away in mock fear as Sniper, Loki, and Styx launched themselves at me. They took me down to the ground. They were making loud threats and pretending to beat the hell out of me, but it was all in fun. That was until my daughter came barreling to the rescue. She punched Styx in the ribs and pulled Sniper's hair. They all stopped to stare at her in shock.

“You leave my daddy alone or I'll beat you up and you'll go to bed without dinner for a month!” she shouted at them, stomping her little foot, with her hands on her hips.

I sat up fast and put an arm around her. “Buttercup, Daddy's okay.

They weren't really hurting me. We were playing pretend. There's no need to beat them up or take away their dinner."

They were working hard to look contrite, but I could tell they were about to burst out laughing. Natalya came to the rescue. "Come on, honey, let's go get you a popsicle from the kitchen. Daddy and his friends will behave. They were only being boys. You'll find boys act silly like that."

Cara rolled her eyes. "Well, I'm glad I'm not a boy." She huffed before walking off with Natalya. As soon as she was out of hearing range, they lost it. Actually, the whole room did.

"Damn, I guess Knight doesn't have to worry about fighting his own battles. All he has to do is let Buttercup loose on people. Pussy," Chains said with a grin.

"You're just jealous," I shot back.

He nodded his head. "Hell yeah, I am. A daughter like her and a woman like Natalya. You're a lucky bastard. I need some of that luck to rub off on me."

Several others murmured their agreement with that idea. I got up off the floor and dusted off my jeans. Taking a seat, I thanked Ryder as he handed me a beer. Yeah, it was good to be me. I hoped all the men here and their single brothers all got to experience what I had one day.

By the time Cara came back with her popsicle, we were behaving. The three of us hung out with the rest of the crew until it was close to Cara's bedtime. When that happened, we told everyone goodnight and headed to the house. She'd need a bath and a story before she went to sleep.

One of the weirdest things I had to get used to when she came to live with me was learning to bathe a little girl. It felt odd to me. I knew what to do with a cock but to wash her down there made me nervous. What if I was too rough? Soon, I realized with help from the women here that she wasn't that delicate and wouldn't break. Luckily, she'd already been potty trained by then, so I didn't have to change diapers, although she did need help

sometimes to wipe after she had taken a shit. The fun parts of being a dad. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Tonight, she wanted her mommy to bathe her then for us both to read her a bedtime story. She picked the one about the bears off the shelf before climbing into bed after her bath. We sat on either side of her and took turns reading. I did the male voices and Natalya did the female one. By the time we were done, she was sound asleep. Tiptoeing out, we closed her door.

“It's time for Daddy to give Mommy a bath,” I said as I wiggled my eyebrows at her.

She gave me a sultry look. “Well, then. Come show me what you've got, Daddy Bear.”

She took off running for our room. I heard her stifling her laughter, so she wouldn't wake up Cara. I'd show her what happened to bad little girls who teased Daddy Bear. As I came into our bedroom and closed the door, I gave a low growl. She did laugh then as she took off for the bathroom. She was definitely in the mood to play. I'd tell her later what we found out. No need to spoil the mood if she was feeling amorous. I stopped long enough to take off my shirt and toss it on the chair by the bed, then I went after her.

I caught her trying to take her clothes off and step into the shower. She wasn't fast enough. Besides, the water hadn't heated up yet. Grabbing her hips, I yanked her back against me so she could feel my erection pushing into her ass. I ground against her which made my cock throb more. She was breathing a little hard.

“Oh, no you don't. I wanna watch you strip off those clothes nice and slow, then I'll let you get into the shower. When you take off your pants and panties, bend over nice and far.”

She shivered, but she didn't argue. I let go so she could step far enough away so I could have a full view of her from head to toe. She faced me and gave me a smirk as she grasped the bottom of her top and inched it up. She took it slow, just like I asked. Seeing inches of her ivory skin being revealed turned me on more and I wasn't even seeing the really good stuff

yet. She tossed her top in the hamper once she got it all the way off. Her hot pink lace bra showcased her breasts to perfection. I itched to get my hands on them, but I'd wait.

“Now, your jeans. Remember, bend over for me.”

She undid her buttons. She was wearing button-fly, not zippered jeans. When they were all undone, she hooked her thumbs on either side and wiggled and bounced, to work them down then off. All that movement made her breasts bounce and jiggle which made me grow harder.

When she bent over to take them all the way off, she pointed her ass toward me. I couldn't resist reaching out and touching her beautiful ass. She moaned. Standing back up, she faced me again.

“Take off your bra next. Offer me a taste.”

Again, she did exactly what I asked. Her breasts came free of the cups and she tossed it aside then cupped both breasts in her hands and moved closer to me. I brought her body against mine and lowered my head so I could suck first one nipple into my mouth then the other. Her breathing grew more ragged. Teasing them for a couple of minutes, I finally let go and stepped back. I twirled my finger.

She turned her back to me again and slowly inched down her panties. When she reached the floor and she was spread wide for me to see her pretty pussy and tight asshole, I had to slap her ass. She jumped but stayed bent over. I cupped both cheeks and kneaded them before running a finger between her drenched pussy folds. Her slickness coated my finger. Lifting it, I rimmed her asshole then pushed inside gently. Her hiss was followed by a whimper.

“Bright eyes, your ass is so tight. One of these days, I'll have to beg you to let me put my cock in there like I mentioned before. God, that would be fucking hot. You'd make me blow in no time. Although, your pussy makes me feel the same way. Hurry and get in the shower before I say the hell with it and take you right here on the cold, hard sink,” I growled as I removed my finger.

She swung back around to face me, but rather than get in the shower like I told her, she put her arms around my shoulders.

“Then take me on the sink, Elijah. I don’t want to wait. I need to feel you pounding inside of me. As for taking my ass one day, we’ll just have to see, won’t we? As much as I enjoy your fingers, I think the possibility of me saying yes just got better.” She nipped my chin with her teeth, grabbing onto my short scruff.

Growling, since I couldn’t get the words out, I lifted her off her feet and sat her on the sink. She jumped when her bare skin came in contact with the cold marble. I tugged her ass until it was on the edge, then I leaned over her and sank into her in one long thrust. She cried out. Her arms went around me and her fingers sank into the muscles of my back. I held her against me, so she wouldn’t fall back and hit her head. I began to thrust in and out, only I started out easy and slow.

As she clenched around me more and more, I sped up. In addition to speed, I added a snap to my hips, bumping against her clit. I made sure to do it harder and faster after several seconds. In no time, I was working her pussy and making her sob and beg.

“Please, harder, Elijah.”

“You want it harder? How hard? This hard?” I grunted, before I hammered back into her and ground my pelvis against her clit. She screamed and writhed in my arms then clenched down on my cock like a vise. I kept going and within seconds, she was coming. I held on by sheer willpower to keep from joining her.

I didn’t stop thrusting, not even when she begged me to stop. I continued to push her straight toward the climb to the next orgasm. That one would be the one I’d let go for. This was going to be the first of at least two sessions tonight. Maybe three.

It took less time to get her to the second orgasm and when she wailed and started to milk my cock with her amazing inner muscles, I blew. I came hard and long. By the time we regained our breath and senses, she was

shaking. I kissed her tenderly.

“Are you alright, Bright Eyes?”

“I can’t feel my legs. I don’t know,” she mumbled.

Feeling like the ultimate man, I kept kissing her until I was sure my legs would hold us both up, then I carried her into the shower. Thankfully, I had a tankless water heater, so we hadn’t run out of hot water while fucking on the sink. Placing her underneath the hot spray, I got her wet and prepared to wash every delectable inch of her. Then I’d take her to bed, and we’d start our lovemaking all over. That is, if I could wait that long.

Knight: Chapter 15

This day wouldn't seem to end. I was only working a half day and it still was dragging along for me. The Pagan's Watering Hole opened at ten, so it could get ready for the lunch crowd. We weren't a restaurant, but we did serve bar-type food and appetizers. It was amazing how many people would come in to eat those for lunch, rather than go to a regular restaurant. It was those people who had us open this early, not the early "let's get drunk crowd", although we got them too.

With me now having Cara, it worked out for me to work the day shift and then be home at night. Well, at least most of the time at home at night. There were still times I came in later, just to check on how things were being managed and stuff. Bucky did a great job, but you still needed to keep on top of things. I wasn't gonna risk any of that, while the cat's away the mice will play shit.

We had a good crowd in here today and the staff was on point. I was working on paperwork, the least favorite part of this job for me. I swear to God, I have no idea how Agony did it. As president, he dealt with a mound of it. Being a legit biker took work and you had to account for everything. We were all slaves to the IRS now. That wasn't always the case, but those days were gone and I was grateful. The chance of one of us dying or going to prison was too high back then. Life expectancy was longer now.

I was leaving at two, so I could get back to the clubhouse. Agony was gonna do our tats today and I couldn't wait. The desire to have her name on me was unbelievable. In my mind, once it happened, then nothing could break us apart. The fact she wanted to do the same made me feel great. Nothing said I'm taken like permanent ink on your body, a ring and a property cut. I couldn't think of anything else, but if I did, I'd get it.

I wasn't afraid she'd walk away, and that was why I was doing all of this. It wasn't to be an obsessive asshole either. In my world, this showed a commitment that was unbreakable and warned anyone thinking of messing

with her, that I would come for their asses. On the flip side, I couldn't wear the property cut, but the tat and ring would signal to everyone I was taken. And I did plan on wearing a wedding band. I'd be proud to be her husband.

A knock on the office door had my head coming up. I'd been looking blankly at a bill while daydreaming. I wasn't gonna get much done doing that. I hollered for whomever it was to come in. The door opened and I saw it was Bucky. He had an uncomfortable, slightly pissed-off look on his face. Instantly, I was on the alert. He wouldn't disturb me for something minor.

"What's wrong?" I asked, as I stood up. Surely, it was too early for a fight. And Bucky was more than capable of quelling one of them on his own. Our bouncers didn't come in until evening.

"I hate to disturb you, Knight, but you need to get out here. I can't make her leave."

When he said that, that's when I heard yelling from the bar. Oh hell no, not today! I took off. He was right behind me. When I hit the barroom, I came to a screeching halt. Standing at the bar, yelling at our waitress, was the last person I expected to see here or wanted to see. The she-bitch from my past just wouldn't go away. Ciandra stood there acting like she was queen of the fucking world and had a right to order my people around. Like hell she did.

"Ciandra, shut your goddamn mouth and leave. You're not welcome here or in any Pagan establishment," I growled loudly.

The customers were quietly watching us. I didn't like giving them something to gossip about, but it was too late. She already fueled that fire. Ciandra whipped around to face me. I saw her quickly put what she thought was a sexy smile on her face, then she sashayed over to me. It wasn't a normal walk. Again, she thought the way she was moving, her body was sexy and would somehow make me compliant. No one said she was smart.

"Oh, now, Knight, don't be like that. You know you're happy to see me. It's been months. Come give me a welcome home kiss." She puckered her lips and leaned toward me.

I planted my hand over her face. It covered her whole face and then some. I lightly pushed her away. “Get away from me. I don’t want a damn kiss from you, even if I didn’t know where those lips have been. Like I said, you need to leave.”

“I’m not leaving until I get what I came for. Call the cops if you want. I think they might be interested in the fact you stole our daughter.”

Not wanting to air more of my business to the customers, I grabbed her arm and hauled her to the office. She came along willingly. She probably thought she’d won or that I’d want a quickie in the back. That was how her mind worked. Everything boiled down to sex or money in some way to her. Slamming the door shut, I pushed her down in one of the chairs, then I took a seat in mine behind my desk. Distance between me and her was a good idea. I’d be less likely to choke the bitch to death.

I hadn’t forgotten how she kept my daughter from me and how she treated her. I would never forget or forgive. Yes, I was to blame too, for not forcing her to take a paternity test sooner, but like the others, I truly thought it was someone outside the club. She spread herself everywhere. I used a damn condom every time and still knocked her up. I still wondered how the hell it failed with her, but no one else all these years.

“What’re you doing here? Spit it out then leave. And your threat to call the cops won’t get you anything. You signed a legal document giving up your maternal rights to Cara. There’s nothing the cops can do.”

“They will, if I say I was threatened into signing it by you and the rest of the club. If I tell them that, they’ll put you in jail and I can get her back,” she said with a smirk.

“And if you did that, you’d wind up dead in a shallow grave somewhere, Ciandra, so I suggest you don’t try it. Or better yet, do that. It would make me happy as hell. Why pretend you give a shit about Cara? You don’t love her or give one damn about her. You want something. What do you want?”

She kept quiet for almost a whole minute as she studied me. I knew

she was deciding what to do now that her threat to call the police didn't faze me. And I meant what I said, if she messed with me or my daughter, she'd be dead.

"I want money. I need to move and that takes money and I know you have it. You have your bike and a truck. I heard you built a brand-new house. You can afford it."

"And if I give you money, you'll go away and stay away?" I asked.

I knew damn well she wouldn't, but I wanted to see how far she would take this. I didn't doubt she needed money for something, but moving was unlikely. She'd just move and find some stupid sap to mooch off of until a better one came along. I wouldn't call the women who became bunnies or were hang arounds whores just because they liked sex. However, in Ciandra's case, it was true. She was one plain and simple. We should've never taken her on as a bunny. Our only excuse was we didn't know what she was like at first.

"Yes, I will. All I need is a hundred thousand dollars."

I burst out laughing. She gave me a startled look. "You've got to be joking. I wouldn't give you a dollar, let alone one hundred thousand of them. Whatever you need this money for, find it somewhere else. You're never getting it from me. And remember, if you try and get Cara back, you'll disappear, as if you never existed."

"You owe me, Knight! I gave birth to your daughter and raised her for the first two years of her life. Men give the mothers of their children push presents these days," she protested.

"I don't owe you jack shit. As for a push present, well, thanks for the reminder. I'll make sure to give her mother one. I'm not sure what Natalya will do with it, but I know it'll go to a good use," I said with a smirk.

"Oh, you mean that whore you have staying in your house? She's not Cara's mother and she never will be. She's just the latest flavor. She'll be gone before you know it. No one will ever give you what I did."

“That whore as you call her, which she’s not, isn’t going anywhere. She’s the woman I love and we’re getting married soon. She’s Cara’s mom. In fact, my daughter calls her Mommy. And the only thing worth a damn you gave me was Cara.”

This pushed her over the edge. She jumped up and began to scream profanities at me. Ignoring them, I got up and went over and yanked her out of the chair. I marched her out of the office and back to the bar. When I got there, I saw three men standing there. It was Bandit and Coyote from Dublin Falls and my new brother, Pyro. Only Pyro would know her from the fiasco of when we got Cara, unless the other two had hooked up with her one time when they visited, which was more than possible.

“Knight, we heard you had some trash that needed to be taken out. We know how busy you are, so we thought we’d stop by and do it for you,” Pyro said, as he gave Ciandra a disgusted look.

“Thanks, brother. I do. And thank you two for coming along. I doubt it’ll take all three of you. She was just leaving and not coming back. Show her to the town limits and make sure she keeps going.”

After telling them what I wanted, I turned to her again. She was looking angry. “I don’t care where you go or what you do, just stay out of Cherokee and away from me, my club, my daughter, and my old lady. Remember what I said.” This I said softly, so no one could overhear it, except the guys.

Not wanting to waste more time on her, I nodded to them then walked off. She started screaming again as they escorted her outside. Just what I didn’t need, ever. This was another thing I’d have to tell Natalya. She was stunned last night when we finally stopped making love and I told her what we found out in church. She swore no one ever mentioned her mom knowing Leonid, nor had she ever talked about her family. When asked, her mom told her that they were all dead.

I know she was still thinking about it this morning when I left. She had this faraway look on her face. I hoped this wouldn’t stress her out too much. I had no intention of keeping it from her. I learned my lesson about

doing that.

An hour later, I called it quits. I wasn't getting anything done, because I kept thinking about Ciandra and worrying about Natalya, so I locked the office and went to find Bucky. It was only noon, but it was fine.

“Hey, Bucky, I'm gonna head out earlier than planned. If anything comes up, just call me.”

“No problem, boss. With the Chlamydia Ciandra gone, we should be good,” he said with a grin.

I laughed. He'd seen enough of her over the years to know who she was and what she was like. She'd picked up men in here a lot. He hated her and had given her that nickname a long time ago. It was about the time she left the club and we said good riddance.

The ride to the compound was short, but it felt longer since I was anxious to get home. I needed to see my girls. When I got there and pulled into my driveway, I was barely off my bike when Cara came tearing out of the house and came running to me. I scooped her up and growled like a bear as I nuzzled her neck. It made her laugh uncontrollably every time. She told me my whiskers tickled and I sounded like a bear, so it became her special greeting.

“Did you miss me, Buttercup?” I asked, as I carried her to the porch.

Natalya was waiting at the door for us with a smile on her face. Seeing her there made my bad mood over Ciandra lift. She was my Bright Eyes and everything she touched was made brighter.

“Who are you?” the little monkey asked with a grin. She loved that line. She saw it on a show and had been using it ever since.

I didn't answer her right away, because I was busy kissing my woman. The sweet taste of her lips made me want more, but this wasn't the time. We'd have to wait until later. Ah, the joys of being a parent. I loved Cara but she was a cockblocker. I knew when we had more kids, they'd be

the same. I'd have to resort to sneaking her into a closet and having a quickie to get any. No, the fuck with that. We'd be sending them to stay with one of their aunts and uncles at least once a day. Yeah, I bet that'll happen.

When I pulled myself away from temptation, I answered Cara. "I'm just the mailman. I have a delivery for you," I teased back. That was my line for when she asked who I was.

She gave me a very serious look. "Mr. Mailman, you better stop kissing my mommy or my daddy will get mad. He'll beat you up. He doesn't like other men kissing her or me."

"Oh, he will? He's a tough guy, is he? I think I can take him," I said back just as seriously.

They both laughed. It was Natalya who answered me. "Oh, he's a really big guy and he's tough. He might just eat you. He's a bear, don't you know that?"

She knew the game Cara and I played. She was going along with it. By now, we were in the house and I had sat down with Cara on my lap. Natalya sat down next to us on the couch. I tugged her up tight against me.

"I'm not afraid of a bear, not if I get you two beautiful ladies. Tell me, how was your day? Did you do anything fun?"

This sent Cara off on a fifteen-minute spiel about the things she'd done. She'd been busy. Not only with Natalya but playing outside with some of the guys and then going to see how the twins were. All the guys, even those not in my chapter, treated her like a princess and played with her whenever they could. She loved it. When she ran out of air, I jumped back into the conversation.

"That sounds like you've been super busy. Buttercup. Hey, I'd like to talk to Mommy. I want you to go play in your room for a bit, okay? It won't take long, then later we'll be going to the clubhouse. You can watch Uncle Agony give Daddy and Mommy a tattoo."

She clapped her hands. “Oh, can I get a tattoo?”

I chuckled. “Not until you're a lot older. I promise, if you want one then, we'll talk and Uncle Agony will do it. But you can't even think about one until you're eighteen.” I warned her.

She looked disappointed but she nodded. She gave me a quick kiss on the cheek then did the same to Natalya, before she got off my lap and ran to her room. Sinking back in the cushions, I feasted my eyes on my love.

“Something happened today, didn't it?” was the first thing out of her mouth.

I sighed as I nodded. “It did. I had an unexpected visitor at the Watering Hole.”

“Who? It wasn't my father, was it?” Anxiety crept into her voice.

“No, it wasn't him. It was Ciandra, Cara's egg donor.”

“What the hell did she want?” She frowned darkly.

“She thought she could come in there and essentially blackmail me into giving her a hundred thousand dollars, so she could move from wherever she's living.”

“Blackmail? How? What did you do?”

“She threatened to call the cops and tell them that me and the club coerced her into signing away her rights by threatening her. I told her if she does that or if she keeps coming around, she'll disappear into a shallow grave. I'll never give her anything. She tried to say I owed it to her as a push present for having Cara. I thanked her for reminding me that was a thing and I'd make sure to give one to Cara's mommy at home as a thank you.”

“Oh God, what did she say to that?”

“She accused me of having a whore in the house, who was just my latest flavor and you'd be gone soon. I made sure she knew that wasn't

happening and that we're getting married. She started screaming and swearing, so I escorted her out of my office. It so happened, Bucky, my manager, must've seen or called someone, because Pyro, Coyote and Bandit were waiting and they took her off my hands. They escorted her out of town."

"Do you think she'll come back? Did she believe your threat?"

"If she doesn't believe it, and comes back, it'll come true."

She gave me a shocked look. "You'd really kill her?"

"Bright Eyes, anyone who's a threat to you and my daughter or our family and friends will be eliminated without prejudice, if they can't be dealt with in any other way. I won't let her hang over us for the next fifteen years or more. So yes, I would if she gives me no other choice. Does that change how you see me or feel about me?"

I held my breath waiting for her answer. If this was something that was gonna break us up, I needed to know now, not later. The pain would still kill me, but I knew it would hurt even more if it happened later. The thought of us having kids and her leaving and taking them was unacceptable.

"Elijah, I trust you to make that decision if you must. Do I want anyone to die? No, but I do understand how it might be necessary. Lord, that sounds so bad, doesn't it? I wouldn't want her dead unless there was absolutely no other way to protect us. What if Cara wants to know her when she's older?"

"Baby, I don't see that ever happening. Cara knows Ciandra didn't want her. It was obvious even to a two-year-old. She'll grow up with you as her mom. She'll have no need to seek out Ciandra, unless it's to give her a piece of her mind. If she happens to be gone, oh well. Okay, that's enough about her. I want us to think about good things."

"Like what?"

"Well, I'd say sex, but then I'd get hard again and we can't do anything with little missy down the hall awake. So, what about our tattoos?"

Are you still excited?”

She grinned and nodded her head. “I am, although I’m nervous too. I hope it doesn’t hurt so much that I chicken out after he starts. That would be embarrassing and the guys would never let me forget it.”

“Baby, don’t worry about the pain. It stings and if he was doing it over a bony spot, then yeah, that hurts a lot more, but in general it stings and you feel like you have a sunburn for about a week afterward. It’ll form a scab that we’ll keep moist with lotion and stuff. It’ll itch as it heals and you’ll have to make sure not to scratch it. I’m sure you’re more than tough enough to handle it.”

“I hope so. I can’t wait to see what it looks like. I’ve wanted a tat for a long time but was always scared to get one. I love all of yours. If I can stand getting this one, look out, I’ll want more. Are you okay with your old lady having more ink than just the property one?”

“As long as you don’t cover all your gorgeous ivory skin with them, then yes. I love how your skin looks and would hate losing all of it. How did your work go this morning?”

“It went really well. I got one project done and I’m close to finishing the other one. Two more came in and I accepted them. They have a due date much longer than most. It’ll give me time to do them and still work on others and take care of Cara.”

“As long as you’re not working yourself too hard. You know if you need more time, Cara can go back to having Mercy watch her.”

“I know, but I don’t want her to be with someone else if I can help it. I enjoy spending time with her. We have fun. She’s even been asking me to teach her what I work on. So don’t be surprised if she starts speaking Russian.”

“Hell, that would be a riot. She can talk to Animal then he’ll leave you alone.”

“Honey, Animal isn’t trying to take me away. You know that. He enjoys being able to speak his mother tongue with someone. He hasn’t had that in years,” she chided me.

I knew she was right, but when he sat for hours sometimes talking to her, I did get a little jealous. Maybe I needed to learn Russian too.

“I guess you’ll have to teach me too then. I want all of our kids to know how. They need to know their mom’s heritage.”

This comment earned me a passionate kiss from her. One that made me hard and ache to be with her. Thinking quickly, I estimated how much time we had before Cara would likely come looking for us. We had maybe fifteen minutes was my guess. It was way less than I liked, but I could at least get us both off. Tearing my mouth away, I posed my suggestion, or more like my plea.

“Baby, I can’t wait. I have to have you now. It’ll be quick but are you game?”

“Elijah, I’m always game to have you make love with me.” She stood up.

I jumped up and took her hand and practically ran down the hall. I took her into our room and locked the door. She was already taking off her clothes, so I did the same. We were naked in no time. I stalked her as she moved to the bed. Once she laid down, I pushed her legs apart. There wouldn’t be time for foreplay, not like we enjoyed. I’d have to get her wet as fast as possible. I ran my fingers down her folds to start preparing her. I groaned when I felt she was already getting wet. It wouldn’t take much more to have her able to take me without discomfort.

“Jesus, you’re already wet.”

“I can’t help it. That kiss did it. I’m ready,” she whispered.

“Just a little more, babe. I don’t want you to be uncomfortable because you’re not wet enough.”

To make my point, I placed my mouth on her and started to tongue and finger fuck her to get her wetter. She moaned and gripped my hair. Eagerly, I lapped up the cream she began to release. It was hard not to keep going and to take it all and make her come, but I had to have her. As soon as I was sure I had her wet enough, I stood up then flipped her over onto her stomach. She giggled. She knew what I wanted. I loved making love to her in all kinds of positions, but doggy was still a favorite.

Taking enough time to spread her plump ass cheeks and admire them and her tight asshole, I aimed then thrust my cock inside her pussy. She writhed underneath me and pushed back. We both moaned as I got all the way inside. Not pausing, I pulled back then thrust again. It was a frantic race to get us to the point we both could get off. As the minutes sped by, my balls tightened and she was even wetter, She was muffling her moans in the mattress. As I got right on the brink of coming, I leaned over her and nipped her shoulder as I panted in her ear.

“Come for me, Bright Eyes. Give your man what he needs to survive.”

I felt her clench her inner muscles as she thrust back on my cock hard and fast. I hammered back. Within a minute or so, we both hit nirvana and came. She screamed into the mattress as I buried my face in her back to muffle my shouts. I came like a volcano erupting. Her squeezing made me fear she might squeeze my cock in half, it was so hard. Finally, after we stopped coming, we laid there trying to recover our breath and slow down the pounding of our hearts.

I was about to ask if she was okay when there was a knock at the door and a tiny voice called out. “Daddy, Mommy, why is your door locked? It’s not nighttime. Can I come in?”

Natalya’s whole body shook as she laughed into the mattress. I groaned and chuckled into her back. Damn that was close. Once I knew I could answer without laughing, I answered her.

“Buttercup, daddies and mommies sometimes have to lock the door during the day so they can talk about serious stuff. We’ll be out in a few

minutes. You can watch a cartoon until we do.”

“Okay,” she hollered before running down the hallway.

“So, this was serious stuff, was it?”

The amusement in her tone made me smile. I reluctantly pulled out which made her moan then I slapped her ass.

“Time to get up, woman. This serious business meeting is over.”

She jumped then stood up. When she turned around to look at me, I knew that business meeting remark was gonna come back on me.

“Yes, sir, Mr. Bossman. I’ll get dressed. Am I to expect more meetings like this?”

As she sashayed into the bathroom, I followed. “Yes, you should expect them at any time and any day, Ms. Sexy. Those are my favorite kinds of meetings.” We both laughed then started the shower.

Natalya: Chapter 16

I admired my first tattoo. I was still amazed I was able to stand to get it and that it had turned out this gorgeous. It did feel like I had a sunburn, but I could handle it. Yesterday had been incredible and not just because of the tattoos we got, although they were part of it. It was because I got to spend time with my man and our daughter. They filled me with so much joy. Cara had been fascinated to watch her Uncle Agony tattoo us. She asked him all kinds of questions, which he patiently answered. He never got upset with her or told her to leave.

Knight's design surprised me. It wasn't only because of the design he got, but also that he had been serious about getting it right above his pubic bone. The design was very feminine compared to all the other tattoos he had. Somehow, Agony was able to realistically recreate my eyes, his Bright Eyes, not only in shape but the color of my irises. My thick lashes and arched brows framed them. Below my eyes in a flowing script were the words, *Property of Natalya*. I adored it.

When I asked him why my eyes and something so feminine, he said that way he had not only my real name represented but my club name too. He loved my eyes. Although he was quick to say he loved all the rest of me too.

As for mine, I got it over my heart, even though it was cliché. He did literally own my heart, so why not. For mine, I had Agony go more masculine. He was able to make a small replica of the Pagan's logo with the gold and green snake on it, except he replaced the outer circle with the words, *Property of Elijah, my Knight*. That way, I had both his names on me too.

I made sure Knight was okay with me having his real name on display, since it wasn't used by anyone but me. He assured me he didn't mind, that in fact, he loved it. The lettering was in a bolder, less flowy script than mine on him. When Agony was done, I loved it and so did Knight. Everyone in the clubhouse insisted on seeing them when we were done and they all told us how much they liked them. I now knew I could handle getting

more, and I had an idea already. I wanted to get a dragon with flowers around it on my shoulder.

Today being a Saturday, most everyone was off work. The clubhouse was full of men wandering around relaxing if they weren't manning the fence. Those patrols still happened. Since Vex wasn't on duty, he was inside and he had Blitz with him. Cara was playing with him. It reminded me of our earlier conversation about getting her a dog. I forgot about it with everything going on.

“Honey, did you ever talk to Vex's foster family about getting a dog for Cara? I totally forgot about it.”

“Actually, I did. I just talked to them yesterday before Ciandra showed up. I was so disgusted with her, I forgot to tell you, Sorry, baby. Yes, they said they'd put us on the list. Since we're friends of the Warriors and they know we'll definitely give the dog a good home, they're gonna do something special for us. It seems they always train a few dogs, even if they're not spoken for yet. They never have trouble selling them and if they can't, they'll just keep them or see if the Warriors want another one. Anyway, it seems they have one. It's a female, who's six months away from completing her training. Her name is Vixen. She's a rottweiler. She's about a hundred pounds, which is on the high end of weight for a female. She's already been around kids and loves them.”

“Oh my, I've seen those dogs. They look mean and scary. That should keep people away for sure. As long as they can guarantee us she'll be good with Cara and other children, then I can't wait. I've always wanted a dog. Did you tell them we'd take her?”

“I said I'd ask you and let them know.”

“Well, don't wait! Call them and tell them yes. Six months isn't that far away. Are you gonna tell Cara or wait?”

He laughed as he took out his phone. Instead of calling, he typed out a message. He showed it to me before he hit send.

Hey, it's Knight. I spoke to Natalya and we'd love to take Vixen. Just let us know when and how you'd like payment. You said we could come visit, so she'd get to know us. I'd like to plan to do that soon. We have a few things going on right now, but I'll let you know once we're free and you can see what works for you. Thank you so much again. Our daughter is gonna flip out.

“She is gonna flip out. Should we wait to tell her?”

“I don't know. Part of me wants to tell her right now, but then for a three-year-old, six months will seem like forever.”

“True,” I agreed.

His phone chimed. He looked at it then showed it to me. It was a response to his Vixen text.

Love to hear you decided to do it. We'll talk about payment when you take possession of her. Come anytime to see her. We're always here. Talk soon. Oh and here's something for your daughter.

The something was a picture of a lovely, proud rottweiler standing at attention with her head turned toward the photographer. Her eyes were mesmerizing. I fell in love on the spot.

“Oh, Knight, we have to show her this. Please, she needs to see this,” I pleaded.

He grinned then nodded. He looked around for her. She was about twenty feet away with Blitz.

“Cara, come here, sweetheart. Daddy and Mommy have something to show you,” he yelled.

She took off running our way. Blitz leisurely followed her. When she got to us, he held up his phone. “Look at this dog. What do you think?”

She gasped and got closer to stare hard at it. “I love it! Whose doggy is it?”

“Well, in six months, she’ll be ours. Her name is Vixen. She’s being trained like Blitz was by Vex’s parents. What do you think of that?”

Her squeal was deafening as she launched herself into his arms to kiss him, then she attacked me. Everyone heard her and was watching us with smiles on their faces and questioning looks.

“We’re getting a dog. Vex’s family has a rottweiler we can get in six months. She just saw the picture,” he explained to them loudly so they could hear him over her babbling.

Everyone seemed to converge on us to get a look at our dog and ask questions. It was a while before things settled down. Once it did, Cara went back to playing happily with Blitz. Knight got called away by Mace, so I got up to go to the kitchen. With so many people here, maybe it would be nice to cook a meal. I knew it was a lot of mouths to feed, but it would be fun. As I was rummaging through the freezer, Joli, Tana and Elian surprised me.

“What’re you looking for?” Joli asked. She was rocking a sleepy Branson in her arms. Eliana had Zoe in hers. Zavian must be with his dad.

“I’m looking to see what we have in here. I thought it might be nice if I could cook something to feed everyone today for lunch. The guys here from the other clubs and the single ones from here have to be tired of ordering in or eating their own cooking if they do that.”

“Oh, that’s a great idea. Why didn’t we think of it? Joli and I have cooked for the guys before and so has Tana. She’s been feeding them on and off for years. Let’s all look and see what we can come up with,” Eliana said eagerly.

“Sure, you can help me look and come up with an idea, but you don’t have to cook. You have your hands full enough with the babies.”

“We can help, Natalya. Their dads can watch them. It’ll be fun. And you should enjoy not having your hands full with a baby. Although, Cara is work too. You’re getting a dog, a baby will be either next or knowing these

bikers, you'll be pregnant before the dog gets here," Joli said with a wink.

"Whoa, slow down there. We're not trying to have a baby right now. We have too much to take care of first and then we need to plan a wedding. It'll be awhile before we get to one of those." All three of them laughed at me like I said something funny.

"Child, Knight is like my grandson and Dare. They'll wed you faster than you can imagine and as for a baby, well, these Pagans are potent. Just look at what happened with Cara. I wouldn't say it won't happen. You'll jinx yourself," Tana said with a wicked smile.

I laughed at them, as I raised my hand and made the sign of the cross with my fingers. This got them to laugh. They were always so much fun to be with. Eventually, they stopped teasing me and we got back to our search. In the end, it was decided we'd make a massive amount of chicken spaghetti.

I'd never had it or even heard of that, so they educated me. It was simple and quick to make, but it was really good they assured me. Along with it we would make a mound of Texas toast and baked Italian meatballs. There was a huge package of homemade ones in the freezer they had made a while ago for a future dinner. With our menu planned we got to work. However, before we did, they took the babies out to their fathers. We'd need all our hands to do this. When they got back, we started.

I paid attention to the chicken spaghetti recipe. They were right, it was simple. All it really consisted of was spaghetti noodles, cream of mushroom soup, and cooked chicken. Again we were in luck, they'd cooked and shredded a bunch of chicken one day and froze it. That's when I found out they did things like this pretty often, even if they didn't cook meals all the time for the guys.

They also said it took chicken stock and chopped vegetables. We used broccoli, green peppers, and onions. The last ingredients were seasonings of our choice and tons of shredded cheese. We heated the oven to three hundred and fifty degrees and got out the huge pans they had for big meals. Lucky for us, there were double ovens in the kitchen. We had a lot of pans to bake along with meatballs.

We cooked the pasta until it was al dente then drained it. While the noodles cooked, we sautéed the vegetables in a skillet for four or so minutes. When they were both ready, we combined the pasta with the mushroom soup, broth, chicken, veggies, our seasonings, which we picked out salt, black pepper, cayenne pepper and a few other herbs and then added over half the cheese. After we put it in the pans, we topped them with the leftover cheese and put them in the ovens to bake them for about forty-five minutes.

While it was baking, we put the meatballs in as well. Since the Texas toast wouldn't take long, we would do it after the spaghetti was done. We were in the midst of baking all this when the noses of several of the guys must've caught onto where we went and what we were doing, because men started to crowd into the kitchen. They couldn't all get in here at once. They looked like a bunch of hungry, slobbering dogs.

Somehow, Knight made his way through them to me. He gathered me close and kissed my neck. "What're you ladies doing in here that smells so good, Bright Eyes?"

"The ladies were teaching me how to make chicken spaghetti. Along with that, we're having Italian meatballs and Texas toast. I was about to see if we should make a salad or not. I saw a bunch of greens in the refrigerator. Although, I don't know if men really eat salad."

"Babe, men will eat almost anything that's not nailed down or won't try to eat them first, although the last one is iffy. I'm sure some will eat the salad. You ladies likely will and Cara should eat her veggies. Do you want me to help you make one?"

"Honey, thank you. I appreciate the offer, but we're having fun with just us ladies. I hope that's alright."

"It's more than alright," he assured me before he kissed me.

This time it was on the mouth. When he was done turning my brain to mush, which didn't take but a few seconds with him, he stopped and called out loudly to the other men. "Okay, if you dogs wanna eat soon, let's get the hell out and let the women do this. They don't need us messing shit up.

Ladies, if you need any help, then you yell for us. Otherwise, we'll get the dishes and stuff ready and out on the bar."

"Thank you, *sogainisi*," Tana said to him, as she patted his cheek and smiled at him. He gave her a kiss on the cheek and a smile back then herded the men out. Once they were gone, I turned to her.

"What does that word you just said mean, Tana?"

"*Sogainisi* means grandson. It actually means paternal grandson, but it works. I call all the boys that. I call you girls *nigohilvi*, which is paternal for granddaughter. I got into the habit from my husband. He started it by teaching Agony words from his perspective and I kept it that way. It became a habit."

"Whatever it is, it sounds beautiful to me. I'd love to learn a few words and I think Cara should too. She's already learning a few Russian words. Knight said he wants to learn too and that our children should all know their mother's other language. I thought that was sweet."

"Sweet? That's a man totally gone on a woman kind of sweet. Yep, she'll be having her first baby in no time," Joli said with a big grin.

I made the cross sign again at her then answered her back seriously. "I'd love to have kids with Knight as soon as things with my father are settled. I know most people wait until they've been married a while before they start a family, but we already have Cara and I don't really care about what others think. All I care about is that we're both ready."

"That's how the civilian world does it, Natalya, not the biker world. Or at least not the biker world of the Pagans and their various friends. You wait until we go to Dublin Falls and Hunters Creek. It'll blow your mind. Agony blames this unstoppable need the men have to settle down on Terror. He's the president of the Warriors in Dublin Falls. He was the first out of them to settle down starting almost ten years ago. He met, claimed and then married the charter and Hunters Creek's chapter president's daughter, Harlow. Bull is one of the original founders of the Archangel's Warriors. They knew each other for years before Terror accidentally met Harlow and

boom, it was over with. He got her to his compound and claimed her within days. They had their first kid less than a year later, I think. It's been happening like that ever since," Eliana explained.

"Wow, that's an amazing story. And they all happen like that?"

"So far. The only one who didn't get to claim his woman right away, it was a year later, was Maverick in Hunters Creek, but there were extenuating circumstances. However, Rylan got pregnant right away with their daughter. They're together now and very happy," she said.

Hearing all these matches that were working and happy, gave me even more hope for Knight and me. It seemed these bikers had found the secret to happy and lasting marriages or whatever. I didn't know if all the men married their women or just claimed them as old ladies.

"Do they all marry their old ladies or do they just remain old ladies? Knight said in the biker world being an old lady means more than if they were married. Is that true?"

"It is. Although to date, all the men we know have also married their old ladies. It seems like they want to cover all their bases, in and out of the biker world," Joli explained.

I wanted to ask more, but time was wasting and I had a salad to make and then we had to feed the hungry horde out in the common room. I went to get the vegetables I was going to put in the salad. Joli helped me to chop everything. In the end, our timing was perfect. Soon after we were done making the salad, in the biggest bowl I could find, the chicken spaghetti and meatballs came out and the toast went in. It would take less than ten minutes to bake and brown. While it did, we put tin foil over the hot stuff so it would stay hot.

When the toast was done and piled on platters, we began to carry the dishes out to the bar. They would be able to serve themselves like a buffet. Seeing us, several hurried into the kitchen and came out carrying more pans and bowls.

This was the first time I'd been around them when a meal like this was served. I was caught off guard when they insisted that Cara and us women get our food first. I tried to tell them it was alright and to go ahead, but they refused. They stood there. Knight explained to me why.

“We're men, baby. We love and protect our women and children. You ladies slaved over this and shouldn't wait to eat is another reason, but not the main one. We'll make sure you all get fed first. If there was little food, it would go to you and the kids. It's what a real man does. They won't eat until you do.”

Feeling humbled and loved, I found Cara and went to fill our plates. Like at home, Knight was right there. He filled Cara's plate while I got mine. Thinking about it, I realized even at home, he would make sure we had our food first before fixing his plate. He carried hers to the table and insisted on getting us our drinks before he got in line. I gave him a kiss in thanks, which he just smiled and winked at me before going to get his food.

I thought we'd cooked way too much and we'd have plenty of leftovers. Watching them eat, I found out I was wrong. The amount they were putting away stunned me. It would take me several meals to eat all that. They ate hungrily and were vocal about how good it was and they kept thanking us. I saw their praise had all of us ladies smiling and looking pleased.

They were still eating when Cara got my attention. “Mommy, I got my clothes all messy. I need to get clean ones,” she said in a pleading voice.

One thing I'd discovered about her, along with a lot of other things, was she hated to get dirty and stay that way, unless she was playing outside. If she got a speck of food on her clothes or something like that, she had to change. If she didn't, then she would grow more and more upset. Knight said she'd been like this since he brought her home and he had no idea why. I wondered what caused it. It wasn't typical. I bet it was something Ciandra caused. I got up from the table. Knight's head came up. He was still eating like the rest of the guys.

“Cara needs to change her clothes. I'll take her to get changed then we'll be back.”

He went to get up, but I stopped him with a hand on his shoulder. “We’re just going to the house and back. Stay and eat. Your food will get cold and I don’t want that. It won’t take us but a few minutes.”

He acted like he wasn’t gonna listen, but finally he relaxed and nodded his head. “Okay, but straight there and back.”

“We will,” I said as I gave him a peck on the mouth, then I took her hand and led her outside.

We’d driven to the clubhouse since it was cold out. I got in my car and she got in then we headed to the house. With a car, it took literally a couple of minutes. Once there, we hurried to get her changed.

She was done changing her clothes and washing her face and hands, when I heard a noise coming from the kitchen. Had we been gone that long? It didn’t feel like it, but we must’ve been if Knight was coming to look for us. I knew it was him being overprotective, and I loved it. Although I didn’t think it was likely anyone would get in the compound. The fence line was patrolled constantly. They’d get caught cutting it or soon after. And they had Atticus at the gate. He wouldn’t let anyone in who shouldn’t be here. There was no way men would be coming to the gate, and he’d let them waltz in here.

“Come on, Buttercup. Daddy’s here looking for us.”

She took off running ahead of me to the kitchen yelling his name. I followed at a slower pace. What I wouldn’t give to have her energy. Abruptly, she got quiet. Before entering the kitchen, I wondered why. She usually would be laughing and talking to her daddy. She was like a chatterbox. I came to an abrupt halt as soon as I got there. Standing near the counter wasn’t Knight or anyone else I knew. It was a woman. She had her hand over Cara’s mouth and a gun in the other. I knew instantly this had to be Ciandra. She had the same white, blond hair as Cara. Her eyes were narrowed on me. How had she gotten in here?

“If I were you, I’d let go of Cara and get out of here while you still can. If you don’t, Knight will kill you,” I told her calmly, even though I felt

less than calm.

She sneered at me. “Oh, aren’t you the tough one? Well, bitch, I’m the one calling the shots, not you. Knight and his club won’t touch me as long as I have you two. Now, the three of us are going for a ride. If you run, try to take this gun, or call out for help, I’ll shoot Cara first then you. Try explaining that to Knight. How you got his little brat killed to save your own ass. I bet he won’t want you then.”

Her words made Cara cry. She was shaking in fear. My hate for the woman, until now, had been more because of Knight and Cara. Now, it was my personal hate as well. I didn’t know how, but there was no way she’d hurt Cara. I’d find a way to get her to safety. However, for now, I’d go along with her, because I could tell by looking at her eyes, she would do it. There wasn’t an ounce of motherly love in them.

I held up my hands. “Okay, I’ll go with you. Just don’t hurt Cara. She’s just a little girl, Ciandra. She’s your daughter.”

“She’s nothing but a brat! The only reason I poked holes in their condom stashes and had her was to try and get one of these guys to claim me as their old lady, so I could be set for life. Only it didn’t work out like I planned. They all refused to claim me. For a while, it was fine, since they kept handing out the dough, but then Dare’s bitch came along and ruined it for me. They found out who her father was and made me give up my rights and leave town. Well, I’m back to get what I deserve, for birthing this little bitch. Knight owes me. Lucky for me, I had a backup plan.”

Her total lack of empathy and feelings told me she was likely a sociopath. She was only interested in her own feelings and what she saw as her rights. She pointed the gun at Cara’s head.

“There are zip ties and tape there on the counter. Take one and tie her hands behind her back. Then put a piece of that duct tape over her mouth. Don’t try anything,” she warned.

I didn’t argue and I did what she ordered, even though it killed me to do it. The tears on Cara’s face and the way her eyes begged me to help her

tore out my heart. I tried to reassure her. “Buttercup, it’ll be okay, I promise. Daddy will come find us.”

“Shut up. He won’t do any such thing. Now, turn around. If you move, I’ll shoot her then you.”

I turned. She quickly grabbed a zip tie. I thought about fighting, but she placed her gun closer to her than me. If I couldn’t subdue her, she might get to it and use it on both of us. So, I swallowed my ire and let her tie my hands and then put duct tape on my mouth. When she was done, she gave her next order.

“Walk outside and get in the SUV out there. Both of you in the backseat and lie down on the seat.”

We did as she ordered. Outside was a dark green SUV. She opened the back door and waited for us to get in. Cara was too short to do it, especially with her hands tied behind her back. Cursing, Ciandra picked her up with one arm and threw her inside. She tumbled to the floor. I gave Ciandra my best die bitch look. She smirked at me then gestured with the gun for me to get in. I did. There was no car seat for Cara, not that she’d care. She got in the front seat and looked back at me.

“Lie down if you don't want me to shoot both of you.”

I did it. As we zoomed toward the gate, I assumed, I prayed that the guys would come out and see a strange car and stop her. Although, if they did, she might shoot us anyway. *God, what was the best way to get out of this?*

She slowed down and my heart leaped but then she picked up speed again. Damn it, she must’ve gone through the gate. Why had Atticus not stopped her? Did she hurt him to get inside? Was he dead? How soon would Knight miss us enough to come looking for us? And when he did, how would he know what happened?

As she sped away and these questions circled around in my head, I tried not to cry. I had to stay strong for Cara. She was on the floor looking up

at me. She was terrified and expecting me to save her. If it was the last thing I did, I would find a way to keep her safe and get her to her daddy, even if I had to die to do it.

Knight: Chapter 17

Where the hell were Natalya and Cara? They had more than enough time to get her changed and back here. I bet Cara distracted her mommy by insisting on bringing more of her toys back to the clubhouse. Not that she didn't have enough here. She liked to bring things back and forth with her and today, she hadn't. Well, it was time to come back. The guys were gonna go back out who were on patrol. I wanted my family to be here with me. Getting up, I headed for the door. As I did, Vex and Blitz joined me. They must be on duty now.

"That was great. I need to go work that food off, before I have a carb coma hit," he joked.

"I know. Which part of the fence are you two on now?"

"The south side, back behind Agony and Wire's houses. Where are you going?"

"To my house to get Natalya and Cara. They went to change Cara's dirty clothes, but they should be back. Cara must be packing a suitcase of her toys to bring with her."

He laughed along with me. When we got outside, I headed left and he kept going straight. I didn't have my bike or truck and the car was with them, so it took a few minutes to walk there. I tried to call them but they didn't answer. An uneasy feeling came over me and I sped up. Soon, I was running toward the house.

From the outside, nothing looked different. I hit the front door at a run and charged inside calling their names. All I heard was dead silence. Running from room to room, my heart sank and the sick feeling grew. There was no sign of them. I came to a halt in the kitchen. On the counter was zip ties and a roll of duct tape. Swearing, I took out my phone and I called Agony. He answered after a couple of rings. I could hear the laughter and talk in the background. He answered calmly.

“Hey Knight, where did you run off to?”

“Natalya and Cara are gone. There’s duct tape and zip ties in my house. They came here to change Cara’s clothes. Fuck, why didn’t I come with them?” I yelled.

Instantly, his tone changed, and he became my president and not my friend and brother. “Stay right there. We’ll be there in a minute. Don’t go running off. I’ll get the men to start searching the compound. It doesn't seem likely someone got inside, Knight. But if they did, we’ll find them. Hang on.”

He hung up without saying goodbye, not that I gave a damn. All I was worried about was my woman and daughter. When I got them back, Fabian and Leonid would pay. I’d kill them slowly and make sure they experienced pain unlike anything they ever imagined. It had to be them. No one else had a reason to take them.

Just to be sure and to occupy myself until Agony got here, I searched the rest of the house. It was a bust. By then, I heard bikes come roaring up to the house. I ran outside to meet them. I went out through the breezeway that connected to the garage. I had to get my bike. They were all in the driveway by then. Agony was off his bike and coming toward me.

“I’ve gotta find them,” I told him unnecessarily.

“And we will, brother. I sent men to search the fence line and the property, but it’s a big ass place. Meanwhile, Dare is gonna talk to Atticus to see if he noticed anything odd.”

“We don't have time for this! My family is gone. They could take them anywhere, do anything to them. Fabian and Leonid have access to private planes. They could have them out of the fucking country within hours,” I screamed. I was about to lose it. I tore at my hair.

He grabbed me and gave me a hard shake. His gaze burned into me. “Listen, we’re not gonna let that happen. Wire is on the cameras as we speak, trying to see what the hell happened. Everyone is looking. Look, here comes Vex and Blitz. Maybe he can find something to help us.”

His words and shake made me focus, although it didn't take away my fear. All I could think about was, if I lost them, my life would be over. Vex ran up to me. Blitz was on his heels.

"I need something of Natalya's or Cara's. Blitz can track them if he has their scent," he said breathlessly.

They must've run the whole way here. Not waiting to hear more, I ran back into the house. I went to Cara's room. It was the closest. I grabbed her favorite sweater off her chair and ran back with it. I gave it to Vex. He hunkered down and held it to Blitz's nose. He sniffed it.

"*Faigh*," he ordered. He must've seen my puzzled look. "It means find in Irish. Blitz was trained to follow Gaelic commands, rather than the typical German ones a lot of trainers use. He'll tell us if they went somewhere else on the compound or not. Just let him go."

Nodding, I stepped back. Blitz took off. He went sniffing around the yard. I wondered how he'd figure out where to go. They had been all over this yard and the house for weeks.

"He'll follow the most intense scent, which will be the latest one. His nose knows," Vex assured me. He must've seen the doubt on my face and guessed what I was thinking.

It was agonizing to stand there and wait. As he worked, Agony's phone rang. My heart jumped. Has someone found them? He answered it and put it on speaker. It was Dare.

"Agony, I need you to hear something. Can you come to the clubhouse? Bring Knight."

"We'll be there in a shake," Agony said before hanging up.

I didn't waste time. I ran into the garage and got on my bike. Agony and I headed back to the clubhouse with Hulk following us. As we rode along, I wondered what Dare had found. Did Atticus see something? If he did, why hadn't he alerted any of us? When we reached it, I didn't wait. I ran

inside. In there, the place was empty except for the women, the babies, two guys left to protect them, plus Atticus and Dare. Atticus looked sick. I lunged at him.

“Where are they? What did you fucking not do? Answer me,” I screamed. Hulk and Agony held me back. Fury and Slash eyed me warily.

Atticus threw up his hands. “Knight, I swear, I didn’t know. I would never have let it happen if I knew.”

“Let what happen? Start talking or I swear to God, I’ll kill you right now. These men won’t be able to stop me,” I growled.

“I didn’t know who she was. She said she was one of the women from town and that she was expected. You didn’t say we couldn’t let them or the bunnies in. I don’t recognize all those women who come up here. They come and go, even during the day if one of you is off and feeling the urge. I let her in. Only she left ten minutes later. I thought it was weird but then figured whoever she was to meet changed his mind and told her to leave. I didn’t know anything was wrong until Dare came to find me.”

“What woman? Tell us what she looked like,” I snapped.

“Knight, it had to be Ciandra. He described her to me. It sounds like her,” Dare said, as calmly as he could.

Hearing that whore’s name and knowing she’d done this to get back at me for not giving her the goddamn money set me off. I shook off Hulk and Agony’s hands and tossed a nearby chair against the wall. It shattered into pieces. I was about to go for Atticus when Wire came running in the room. He had a laptop in his hands.

“It was Ciandra. I found it. I didn’t look at the feed from the gate first, since I knew we weren’t letting anyone in, or at least any men. I just found it when I heard you guys yelling. It’s her alright. I got a good shot of her face when she rolled down her window to talk to Atticus. From there, she went toward your house. I have no idea how she knew which was yours. We don’t have cameras set up around our houses, just the fences, and the clubhouse, so

I can't tell you more. Here, watch."

He sat his laptop down on the table. We gathered around to see it. He pushed a button and the video came up of her at the gate talking to Atticus. It was her. Then Wire tapped again, and it jumped to show the same dark green SUV leaving the compound. She went right out the gate. Atticus didn't have to open it for her. It was automatically set to open when the sensor was tripped by a large enough object. The windows were dark, so you couldn't tell if anyone else was inside. It turned away from town. There were so many dirt roads and smaller secondary ones around here. They could go to any of them. I was about to start in on Atticus again, since I had no one else to blame, when Vex came running inside with Blitz.

"They left right outside the house. Most likely, in a vehicle. Whoever it was, it wasn't a familiar scent. Blitz reacted to it. He does that whenever he discovers one he doesn't know. We've been here long enough he knows everyone's here."

"It was Cara's birth mom. She took them. Wire, did you get the license plate number of that SUV?" Agony asked. I was beyond words at the moment.

"I did. I've sent it to Laramie at the police station to put a BOLO out on it. He assured me he'd do it right away," Wire said.

Laramie was a detective at Cherokee PD, who happened to be a friend to the club. He was one of the ones who didn't automatically assume we were a bunch of outlaws selling drugs and running guns. I knew he'd do as he promised.

"What do we do in the meantime? They didn't head for town. It might take the cops forever to find it. We need to get out there and search for ourselves," I told them as I found my voice again. I'd never be able to sit here.

"We're not gonna just sit here, Knight. We'll go searching. We'll go in groups of three and head the way she left. I want four men to stay here to guard the women and kids. Fury and Iceman, I want you and King and

Gunner to stay. It's only because you don't know the area and you're all here already. The others will be paired up with at least one Cherokee guy. Dare, send out the notice to pull back here immediately, so we can get organized then go."

It became a hectic swirl of things as the text went out, the others made their way back, an explanation was given and then we were divided up. I could barely stand it. Every minute we took to get ready, the further they were getting from us. Ciandra had to be crazy to do this. And crazy people did terrible things. My hope was she'd stop somewhere and then make her demands. She wanted something more than to take them away from me. Yeah, she would do it, but she wanted money yesterday, and that had to still be the case. Which meant, she'd make a ransom call.

"Hey, Wire, Ciandra wanted money out of me yesterday at the bar. She must still want it. Can you do something to trace her call when she calls my phone?"

"I can and it won't take me long to set it up. I'll do that right now."

Eventually, we were divided out and ready to go. Wire would stay behind to monitor things and send us updates. Atticus was sent back to the gate with instructions to let no one in, unless it was us. He couldn't even look me in the eye when he left. I was still pissed at him.

Agony and Sniper were with me. Dare had Bandit and Coyote with him. Loki and Vex along with Blitz, went with Hulk. Pope, Animal and Styx made up team four. Team five was Cyclone, Bones and Ryder. Twisted, Mace and Chains were team six and team seven was Pyro and Nitro. We all roared out of the compound headed east. That's the way Ciandra had turned when she left the compound. East of us was Maggie Valley, Dellwood, Lake Junaluska, Clyde, Canton, and Candler. Beyond them was the city of Asheville.

She could be taking them to any of those places to hole up or any of the hundreds of houses, cabins and other places in between. Thinking of it made me feel hopeless. It would take us days if not weeks to search all possible locations. Despair filled me at the thought. I fought not to let it

consume me.

It was a slow process. While the others peeled off to start searching off the dirt roads and the structures nearby, me, Agony and Sniper kept to Highway Nineteen. It was the main road which ran through and past those towns. We were gonna see if we could catch up to her, if she stayed on it.

As the hours passed and it got dark, we kept going. Although in the dark, it made it so much easier to miss them, if they pulled off the road. Eventually, we had to start back. I wanted to keep going but Agony said no. We'd gone far enough. It was time to go back and regroup. The others had kept reporting in. No one had found anything. My hopes were dying, especially since Ciandra hadn't called to make a ransom demand.

It was a tired group of men who gathered in the common room around ten o'clock that night. They had been gone for eight hours. Laramie said there had been no sightings of the SUV. He still had people on the lookout for it. He promised not to call it off until we told him to.

Wire worked tirelessly hacking into camera feeds all over the towns east of us. He even got Smoke and Everly in Dublin Falls, Outlaw in Hunters Creek, Beast with the Ruthless Marauders, Spawn from the Iron Punishers, Shadow in Lake Oconee and Micro from the Horsemen of Wrath to help him. They were all computer geniuses and hackers like him. I knew I would never be able to thank all of them enough for doing this for me.

While we were gone, the women had been making sure we had something to eat when we got back. Since people came at different times and to make it easy, they made several kinds of sandwiches along with macaroni, broccoli, and bean salads. It was easy to keep, since they were all served cold. I ate because they insisted I had to, but I didn't taste any of it. Everything tasted like cardboard to me. As soon as I finished eating, I tried to leave to go out again, but I was blocked from leaving by Agony, Dare and several more guys.

“I need to get back out there. You can take a rest. I'm fine.”

“No, you're not. You're running on fumes like the rest of us. You

need to rest. You won't do Cara and Natalya any good if you collapse," Agony argued.

"If it was your wife and kids, would you sit on your ass and do nothing?" I yelled at him.

"We're not sitting on our asses doing nothing. The police from here to Tennessee are looking for them. Wire and the other hackers are searching for them. And I know I'd want to be out there too, but I would expect my friends and brothers to talk sense into me when I was being reckless. Which is what we're doing. Don't make me have Bones give you something to knock your ass out, Knight. I'll do it, if I have to," Agony threatened.

As much as I wanted to continue to argue, I knew deep down he was right and that he wouldn't hesitate to have me knocked the fuck out, so I shut my mouth. I sat back down. Plans were made for us to get a few hours of sleep, then meet back here at four and we'd head out again. That would give us about five hours of sleep. That was more than enough for me. Not that I expected to actually get any.

Rather than stay at my house, I went home only long enough to grab a shower and change, then I came back. I'd sleep on the couch or in a chair. I wanted to be close if something new was discovered. Slowly things got quiet. The lights were shut off except for a few to help see around if someone got up. I drifted, but never fully went to sleep. I couldn't do it. My mind wouldn't stop going in circles. I was running through places we'd checked and ones we still needed to check out.

When people began to get up and come back to the clubhouse, I got up and went to splash my face with cold water and brush my teeth. I looked tired. However, we were all used to running on little to no sleep when we needed to. I'd be fine.

Back in the common room, people were drinking coffee and eating leftovers from last night. Sandwiches for breakfast didn't faze us. God knows we've eaten a lot worse than that in our lives, especially those who had served in the military. I ate an MRE once to see what it was like. Not the best thing in the world, but it did give you calories, so that was a good thing. It

was their stories about things they had to eat in the field, when there were no MREs, that truly made me gag. Roasted lizards and snakes, common things they found in the deserts of the world didn't sound appetizing at all to me.

Again, we split up into teams and got our search areas mapped out then we were back out on the road. This time, instead of sticking to Highway Nineteen, Agony, Sniper and I headed off it toward Waynesville and Woodrow. Nothing said she stuck to the nineteen.

We checked the houses along the way, looking for the SUV. Lucky for us, most of the cabins and houses didn't have garages. They left their cars parked outside or under a carport. Unfortunately for us, there was no sign of the green SUV. We stopped to refill our tanks and grab a drink every once in a while, other than that, we searched and waited to hear something.

It wasn't until around eleven that we got a call. It came to Agony, which made sense since he was the head of the club and the search teams. He'd waved for me and Sniper to pull over. That's how we knew he had a call. He answered it and put it on speaker so we could hear.

"Talk to me, Hulk," he said.

"We need you to come to the address I'm about to send you. Tell Knight that we found something. It's not Cara or Natalya, but it's something."

He didn't bother to say more or stick on the line so we could. A second or two later, Agony's phone chimed with the address. We got back on the road. He rode back up to the nineteen and turned east. He didn't stop until we were outside of Lake Junaluska, at a small cabin off the main beaten path. There were bikes and a truck we knew parked outside. Shutting off our bikes, we didn't waste time getting to the cabin door. Hulk met us there.

"Don't touch anything. Come in," he said. I saw he had his riding gloves on. I took mine out of my cut and did the same. Agony and Sniper did too.

Inside was Loki, Vex and Blitz. They were standing by a couch. As

they moved, I saw a body lying on it. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was Ciandra. She was leaning over with her eyes wide open and a bullet hole in the middle of her forehead. There was no sign of Natalya or Cara. The size of the hole, I'd say it was a nine-millimeter round that did it.

“What the fuck happened? Where's my family? I asked.

“We found her like this when we began to search the area outside. Blitz alerted to her scent. He remembered it from the compound. We came up to the cabin and found her like this. There's no sign of Cara or Natalya. If they got away, they could be hiding in the woods or searching for help,” Hulk said.

“If they got away, why not go to the nearest house and call for help? There's one not more than a mile down the road.” I argued.

“I don't know, Knight. I'm just thinking out loud,” he responded.

I went to leave, but Sniper stopped me with a hand on my arm. “Wait. Was there a gun? Did you find the one they shot her with?”

“No, there wasn't one. Natalya must've taken it with her,” Loki said.

“What if this wasn't Natalya? How long has she been dead?” Agony asked the others. They all shrugged.

“It's hard to tell, but she's not in rigor mortis. That starts two hours after death and is fully complete six to eight hours later and lasts another twelve hours. It hasn't been twenty-four hours since she took them, so it can't be that it's come and gone, which means it's been less than two hours. And she's not that cool to touch,” Sniper muttered out loud as he examined her.

“How the fuck do you know that?” Vex asked.

“I was in the military. I saw a lot of dead people and I asked questions of the corpsmen and shit. They told me how it works for rigor mortis. That means we're less than two hours behind. Bear with me, this is going somewhere. If it was Natalya, you said she could've gotten to the house down

the road and called. With a small child, I don't think she'd head into the woods. It's cold and they aren't dressed for it. What if this was someone else? Someone Ciandra was working with, to get their hands on them and bring Natalya and Cara here? Or at least to bring Natalya."

Immediately, I stiffened. Sonofabitch! We'd been idiots. We'd been so caught up in it being Ciandra, we never thought it could be the men we were so worried about from the beginning. Somehow, I don't know how, goddamn Fabian and likely Leonid had found Ciandra and sent her to me or maybe they found her after her visit to the bar. Either way, she was their way to get someone inside to Natalya. I knew if Cara was threatened, Bright Eyes would go with Ciandra willingly.

"Call Wire. Tell him to get eyes on Fabian and Leonid, now. If they're still around, they won't stay long. Tell him to find the nearest airports and see if either man has a private plane there or set flight plans. They'll smuggle her out of the country. If they get her back to Russia or some other country that doesn't have extradition agreements with the US, we'll never see her again," I shouted.

Agony didn't waste time arguing or asking me how I came to that conclusion. He just did as I asked. As he talked to Wire, I paced the cabin. When he was done, he looked at me.

"Let's head out. Leave her here. Let whoever this place belongs to deal with her. We're gonna head back up to the nineteen and wait. Wire will call us. There are only two airports close to us. There's Asheville Regional, which is just under thirty miles from here. Or there's McGhee Tyson in Alcoa, Tennessee, which is just south of Knoxville. It's around seventy miles from the clubhouse. If either of them have planes or flight plans, he'll find it and call. This way, we're closer to Asheville."

Knowing he was right and it was a toss-up, and if they had gone to Asheville, I didn't want to waste time backtracking, I nodded. We shut the door and loaded up. Vex was in the truck since he had Blitz. We took off to wait up on the main highway.

Natalya: Chapter 18

Being thrown into the back bedroom of this cabin wasn't helping me to figure a way out of the predicament we were in. Or why Ciandra had driven all over the country for hours yesterday, before she finally stopped here late last night. She put at least three hundred miles on her SUV. I hadn't seen all the places we passed through, since she kept me and Cara lying down for a couple hours. It wasn't until I kept kicking the hell out of the back of her seat, that she stopped and pointed her gun over the seat at me.

“What the fuck is your problem, bitch?” she snarled.

I glared at her. It wasn't like I could speak with duct tape over my mouth. Boy, this one was a rocket scientist. If looks could kill and utter contempt could be felt, she had to get the vibes I was sending her. She turned around and started driving again. I went back to kicking the back of her seat.

I wanted her to help get Cara off the floor and seated on the actual seat. The poor thing was curled up on the hard floor and terrified. I knew Ciandra wouldn't untie my hands, because if she did, I'd find a way to hurt or kill her, so we could get away. For now, having her take off the tape would be enough, along with moving Cara.

She drove maybe a couple more miles before she stopped again. This time she got out of the SUV and opened the back door. I looked outside, hoping to see a person or something. All I saw was trees.

“What?” She screamed in my face, as she ripped the tape off my mouth.

Damn, talk about hurting. It felt like she'd taken ten layers of skin off my lips, but I didn't cry out or indicate she caused me pain. I wasn't giving her any clue that she was hurting me. I licked my sore lips before I answered her. Her face was red. I saw she had her gun in her other hand.

“Pick Cara up and put her up on the seat beside me and take off her

tape too. No one can see us through these dark windows and even if they could, they don't know us. Without the tape over our mouths, they won't know we're not in here because we want to be. She's cramped and scared. She's your daughter. Act like you give a damn."

"Fuck you, she can stay there. I don't care about that brat or you. She was just my way to get you." She went to close the door.

"If you don't, I won't stop kicking your seat."

"If you keep kicking it, I'll shoot you," she said with a smirk.

"Go ahead, shoot me and see what that gets you. Your only hope of making it out of this alive is to keep both of us alive and uninjured. Knight is gonna find us eventually and when he does, if he finds out you hurt us, I won't be able to stop him from killing you slowly and with lots of pain involved."

I knew there would be no way I could talk him out of killing her, nor would I want to. I just needed her to think there was a chance. She stood there for a bit, before she rolled her eyes and reached down to yank Cara up. She tossed her on the seat. Cara landed against my arm. She cowered there. Her eyes never left her mother's face.

"She needs her tape off too," I reminded her.

Giving me an ugly look, she reached over and tore it off. Cara cried out. "Now, keep your mouth shut and make her stop bawling. I don't want to hear it."

She shut the door and got back in the driver's seat. She pulled back out onto the hardtop road she was on. At least I could tell it was one of those, by the way the SUV ran smoothly over the road. Cara laid against me shaking and quietly crying. I wished I could hold her to comfort her, but without use of my arms, I couldn't, so I had to settle for talking softly to her.

"Buttercup, don't cry. I'm here and I'll make sure nothing happens to you. Daddy will come get us soon. All you have to do is be patient and do as I

say. Okay?”

“Okay, Mommy,” she said quietly, as she sniffed. I saw that she was trying to stop the tears.

“Mommy! She calls you Mommy. I’m her goddamn mom, not you,” Ciandra hissed. She was staring at me, using the rearview mirror.

“No, you might’ve given birth to her, but you’re not her mother. I am. I’m the one who has been loving her, helping to take care of her and spending time with her, not you. She’s mine and when Knight rescues us, I’ll continue to be her mommy. She’ll grow up as my daughter. You’ll just be a bad memory that hopefully, with as young as she is, she can totally forget.”

I knew I was egging her on, but I had serious doubts that she’d harm us. If she did anything to Cara, there went the one thing she could use to control me. If she shot me, there went a major bargaining chip to get Knight not to kill her when he caught up. I knew he’d find us somehow, and I thought she knew deep down he would too. Why she was stupid enough to try this, I didn’t know. Was it about the money she tried to get out of him yesterday?

“If you don’t shut up, I’ll shoot her,” she threatened, although without much heat.

“And if you do that, there’s no way you’ll be able to keep me from fighting you and finding a way to get free. Right now, you need her to keep me calm. Touch her and I’ll tear your head off,” I snapped back.

“Then I’ll shoot you,” she popped off again.

“No, you won’t. You need me to keep Knight from killing you, like I said. Why don’t you just drop us off at a gas station and go? We’ll call him to come get us and you can get away. This isn’t gonna get you the money you wanted out of him.”

“I don’t need that money anymore. I have other plans. Now, keep quiet. I need to concentrate.”

She kept driving. I talked in whispers to Cara, which seemed to calm her and eventually she fell asleep leaning against me. I watched the signs as they passed, trying to see where we were at. She made no sense with the way she was driving. She took us from North Carolina into Tennessee then back to North Carolina in a big loop. She had to stop to fill up once. When she did, she jumped out and slammed the door, after turning the music up loud. Our screams wouldn't be heard over it.

It was after dark by the time she pulled up outside a cabin that was off a dirt road. We'd passed a few houses, but none were within sight of this one. I estimated the last one I saw was at least a mile up the road. The cabin was dark and there were no other cars around. She left on the headlights, went to the door then unlocked it before entering.

A light went on inside, I could see it through the curtains. Moments later she was back. She grabbed Cara and tossed her out on the ground. She landed on her butt. She started to cry. Ciandra jerked her to her feet, slammed the back door, and marched her to the cabin, while berating and threatening her.

“Quit crying you baby. If you don't, I'll give you something to cry about.”

I was tense. I didn't want to let Cara out of my sight with that whore. She wasn't stable and there was no telling what she might do to her. She came back out a couple of minutes later. As she opened the back door again, she waved the gun at me.

“Get out. Don't try anything or I'll go in that cabin and I'll kill her. Without you, I'm dead.”

After threatening me, she shut off the SUV and slammed the driver's door shut, while she waited for me to get out. I didn't know why she was suddenly worrying about it now. I'd tried to tell her that before. I scooted across the seat and slid out. I'd been sitting for so long, my legs were half numb. I wished my hands were. They burned and hurt like they were on fire, from being tied like this for so long. Actually, my whole arms hurt, including my shoulders. I stumbled, but somehow stayed on my feet.

She poked me in the back with her gun repeatedly, as I walked drunkenly to the cabin. Inside, I didn't see Cara. My heart raced. I swung around to face her.

"Where's Cara?"

"Don't get bent out of shape. Your precious brat is in the bedroom. Go." She pointed to one of two doors that came off the living rooms we were in. Off to the left, partially open to the living room was the kitchen. When I reached the door, she reached around me and turned the doorknob. Stepping inside, I saw Cara was cowering near the bed. The way she was standing and the number of hours we'd been in the SUV told me she had to pee. I was about to burst myself.

"We need to use the bathroom."

"Forget it. Just lie down and be quiet."

"If you don't let us go, we'll piss ourselves then you'll have to smell it all night. Come on. You have a gun and we don't. Let us go to the bathroom for God's sake."

She stood there thinking for a minute. Snidely, I thought it was a miracle that smoke didn't come out of her ears. How she came up with the idea of how to get us off the compound, I don't know. I wanted to know how she got past Atticus. Finally, she relented. She pointed her gun toward another door in the room.

"You get in there until I get back with her. Don't try anything funny. I'm tired of you two and the money isn't worth the aggravation."

I walked over to the door and she opened it. It was a small closet. I stepped inside and she shut the door. I had to listen to Cara cry, as she was taken to the bathroom. Ciandra continued to yell at her. A few minutes later, she was back and we were switched out. I tried to block out Cara's screams as she was shut in the closet. I kept yelling back to her, trying to calm her down.

In the bathroom, I pointed out the obvious. “I can’t pull down my pants without my hands. Unless you’re gonna do it for me and wipe me after I’m done, then you have to cut off this zip tie.”

“And have you try to take the gun? No way.”

“Well, then I’ll just piss myself then.” I stood there glaring at her. After a minute or so, she swore again and snapped at me.

“Stay here.”

She left. I frantically looked around the bathroom for something I could use as a weapon when she came back and untied my hands, but it was bare as far as I could tell. When she came back, she had a pair of scissors in her hands. She cut the tie. The rush of pins and needles in my arms and hands when I moved them was so painful, tears filled my eyes. I shook them to get the feeling to go away. With them still painful and weak, I undid my pants and pushed them and my panties down. I detested using the toilet in front of her, but I acted like it didn’t bother me. After wiping, I went to wash my hands.

“There’s no need for that. Come here, so I can put another zip tie around your wrists.”

“You can’t put my arms behind me like that again. It’s gonna hurt me permanently, with the way it’s cutting off the blood flow. At least tie them in front of me. And Cara needs the same.”

She grumbled, but to my amazement she did it. Now, I had a better chance to get the drop on her. I was pushed out the door and back into the bedroom. Cara had gotten quiet. Before she took her out of the closet, Ciandra shoved me to the edge of the bed and then down on the mattress. I could tell it had been a while since anyone had been here. The mattress smelled musty. Quickly, she took out another zip tie and put it through the one on my wrists and secured them to one of the metal spokes on the headboard, then she went and got Cara.

When the closet door was opened, I saw her sitting on the floor curled

up. *“Buttercup, come here and lie down with me.” I called out to her.*

Ciandra roughly stood her up and brought her to the bed. Like she did with me, she tied her arms to the headboard too, except before she did, she undid the one around her wrists and retied them in front of her. Cara huddled up against me and shivered.

“I don’t want to hear anything else out of you tonight. I need to get some rest.”

She slammed the bedroom door when she left. As I laid there and tried to reassure Cara that her daddy was coming soon from us, I racked my brain to figure a way out of this. Surely, now that we stopped, she’d call him and make her ransom demands. I knew from her remark she was after money for sure.

As the hours crept by, the movements out in the living room died down. Eventually, I drifted off to sleep. Cara was already asleep. Hopefully, by morning we’d be out of here and on our way home.

Except, here we were. It was morning and there was no rescue. Once again she took us to the bathroom one at a time. After we were done, she left us both in the bedroom. I tried to get her to give us something to eat, but she sneered and walked out. I was starving, so I knew Cara had to be. By my calculations, we’d soon be at twenty-four hours since the last time we ate. It was hard to believe it had been that long since we’d been taken by her. Although, in other ways it felt much longer.

“Mommy, I’m scared. What if Daddy doesn’t find us?”

“Oh honey, Daddy will find us, don’t you worry. Nothing in the world will keep him from finding his Buttercup and Bright Eyes. Your daddy loves us so much. He’ll be here soon.”

As I kept talking to her to distract her, I listened in between words, to what was going on in the living room. I heard pacing and Ciandra’s voice. She was talking to someone, it had to be on her cell phone. I couldn’t hear what she said, but she did it more than once. About an hour later, by my

calculations, I heard what sounded like a car pull up outside.

I grew excited and relieved. It had to be Knight. He was here. I didn't hear any bikes, but I bet the guys were hiding somewhere or right behind him. I knew if he had money with him, it was only to fool her into thinking she won. I'd hate to be her right now.

There was a knocking on the door and then I heard male voices. Through the thick wooden door and walls, I couldn't make out what they were saying. As I anxiously waited for him to come free us, I heard her voice get louder, then she screamed. A split second later, there was a gunshot then nothing. Shit, he hadn't bothered to wait until he got Cara out of here before killing her.

The doorknob rattled as it turned. I smiled toward the door. As it swung open and I got my first look, I couldn't believe it. Standing there wasn't Knight or any of the men from the compound. Instead, it was two men and I recognized them. Instantly, fear consumed me. It was my father and Leonid. What were they doing here? My father gave me a mocking look as Leonid walked over to the bed. Cara was cowering against me. He looked down at me and gave me a cold smile.

"I told you. You're mine, Natalya. No one can keep us apart. It's time to get out of here."

He reached into his jacket and then withdrew a knife. He cut my arms loose. I didn't try anything since Cara was with me and at their mercy. He roughly jerked me to my feet and started to half-drag me behind him toward my father.

"Wait! Untie Cara. You can't leave her here. She'll die."

I knew they had killed Ciandra. That was the only explanation for the gunshot and her not in here gloating. My mind was whirling, trying to figure out how to save us and how they knew Ciandra. And if they didn't, how did they find us before Knight did?

"I don't give a damn about that biker's *parshivets*. She can die for all

I care.”

Him calling her a brat pissed me off. I knew he was a cold man by the way he looked at me, but to leave a child to die... that was inhuman.

“If you don’t bring her and drop her off where she can be picked up by her father, I won’t go with you peacefully or willingly. Wouldn’t you rather have a woman who you don’t have to fight for every little thing?”

I was grasping at straws. He might not care to have a willing woman. He probably would like the fight. All I knew was I had to find a way to get Cara to safety. Who knew how long it would be before she was found? She could die.

“Do you think I care if you come willingly or not, *moy pitomets*? I have ways of making you obey me, and pain only makes it better.”

I hated him calling me my pet, but I hated more the way he cupped his crotch when he told me pain only made it better. Any doubts that he was a sadist went out the window. Oh God, what could I do? I began to panic big time. Help came from the most unlikely place.

“Leo, let her take the child. It’ll help to get her to where we need her without a fight. After that, it won’t matter if she fights or not. She’ll be within your control a hundred percent.”

“Whatever, let’s go. I want to get out of this fucking place and country.”

He reached over and cut Cara’s ties. I leaned down and picked her up. She buried her face in my shoulder. Leonid pointed to the door. I didn’t balk. I knew if I did, he’d leave Cara behind.

“Keep your eyes closed, sweetheart,” I told her as we left the bedroom.

In the living room were my father’s men, Troy and Lyle. They grinned evilly at me. With them were two men I didn’t recognize. They must

be Leonid's guys. They gave me a passive look. As we passed the couch, I saw Ciandra slumped on it. She was dead from a bullet in her head. Her glassy eyes stared at nothing. I shivered as I sped up. No way I wanted Cara to look up and see her. She'd never sleep again. What had happened so far was more than enough trauma on a child.

Outside, there was a dark limo and another SUV. Both were black with the same tinted windows as the green one. "Get rid of that car. I don't want anyone to find us through it. We need time to get away. Dump it then catch up to us," Leonid ordered the men I thought were his.

They nodded and one went back inside the cabin. Lyle and Troy opened the back doors on the limo and waited for the rest of us to get in. I slid in and as far away as I could from either of them. I held Cara on my lap. They got in and sat opposite of me. The doors closed, and the bodyguards got in the front seat. Troy was behind the wheel. He winked at me before closing the privacy screen and starting the car.

As we pulled away, I prayed that I'd find a way to save Cara. As long as I could do that, then I'd die peacefully. One thing I knew for sure was, if they succeeded in getting me out of the country, I would find a way to end my life. There was no way I'd live with Leonid. If I couldn't have Knight and the life I had envisioned with him and Cara, then I didn't want one.

"Where are you dropping her off? It has to be somewhere she'll be safe until Knight can pick her up," I told them. My father avoided looking me in the eyes. Leonid didn't have that problem. His smile chilled my blood.

"Who said anything about dropping her off? She's coming with us. I think she'll come in handy. After all, I can think of so many delicious ways to make you hurt, and she'll help me do that. I love mental as well as physical pain, *moy pitomets.*"

"You can't do that! She'll only make him follow you for sure. If you leave her behind, he could decide to let me go. After all, we haven't known each other long. However, if you take his daughter, he'll never stop."

"Oh, I think he'll stop no matter whether we have both of you or not.

After all, once we get you to Russia, there's nothing a hick biker can do to find you, even if he does suspect where you are. Plus, Leo has homes in other countries. He can move you over and over," my father told me.

"You're a heartless monster! I'm your daughter. Your flesh and blood and you gave me to this man. How could you?" I yelled at him. This caused Cara to whimper. I kissed her head to quiet her. She never lifted her face from my chest.

"Yes, you're my daughter, but this is a debt of honor. I owe Leonid you. I'm sorry, but to not give you to him would mean he'd kill me. My life is worth more than yours," he explained coldly.

"A debt of honor? What honor? You don't have any. What could you possibly owe him that would require you to give me to him?"

"He owes me a wife for a wife," Leonid answered.

"What does that mean?"

"You see, twenty-seven years ago, your father came to Russia on business. While he was there, he met a young, beautiful Russian girl. He wanted her desperately, but she wasn't the kind of woman who would fall into bed with a man. Her father was a Russian diplomat who wouldn't allow his daughter to be dishonored like that. I'd approached her father and asked to marry his daughter. He didn't care for me. It seems he was one of the few honest men in my homeland and he knew the kind of man I was. When Fabian showed up, her father saw it as a way to prevent me from having his daughter. If she wouldn't marry me, I planned to have her as my mistress.

"He saw that his daughter seemed to really like Fabian, so he made him a deal. If he married her and took her back to the States, he'd ensure your father got the lucrative deal he was trying to make in Russia. The man who could make it happen was a friend of her father. Of course, I knew nothing of this at the time. It wasn't until much later, after she disappeared, that I found out who took her. Even when I tortured her father and mother, they never told me. There were a few distant cousins, but they knew nothing."

I stared at both of them in shock. It was my mom Leonid had been planning to marry before she left Russia. Wire had been right.

“How did you find out? When? That was close to thirty years ago. Why come for me now?”

“I married another woman a year after your mother disappeared. I didn’t love her, but I thought she’d meet my needs. I was wrong. She never even came close. When I was tired of her whining and her failure to give me children, I killed her. That’s when I resumed searching for your mother. It took three more years to find out who took her and where they went. However, I wasn’t able to go after her. I didn’t have contacts in the States to help me, so I waited and watched.

“Your father was smart and stayed out of Russia, even though he did business here. I tried to stop it, but the man he was in business with had strong allies and friends. I couldn’t do it. As the years passed, I kept amassing my fortune and waiting for my chance. Unfortunately, I found out she died before I was strong and wealthy enough to come for her. Knowing I couldn’t have her, I carried on. I had mistresses over the years. Finally, I decided it was time to marry again and have heirs. I had a fortune to leave behind. I didn’t want it to go to someone else. However, my second wife turned out to be just as disappointing and unable to have children as the first one. I killed her last year.”

“That doesn’t explain how you got my father to agree to this insane plan.”

“After my second wife died, I knew I had enough power and money to force your father to do what I wanted. I knew he had a daughter, and that you were beautiful. You look just like SaSa. So, I made my arrangements and made contact with him a couple of months ago. I told him what I wanted. He said he’d make it happen, but what he really did was try to find you another man to marry. Your refusal to do so is what led him to finally give in. Well, that and my threat to not only ruin him financially, but to also kill him. He was more than eager to give his daughter to me then.”

“You coward. So, to save your own neck, you’re giving me to him.

You make me sick. Did you ever love me or my mom?" I spat out at my father.

"Your mother was a gorgeous woman, and she helped me to draw in people to invest with me. They loved her sweet nature. I ended up caring for her, as much as I ever have a woman, although I wouldn't call it love. As for you, no, I've never loved you. For me, you were merely someone I could use to further my wealth at some point or to gain a son-in-law I could leave my fortune to one day. I would've never left it to you given a choice. You're lucky your mother forced me to set up that trust fund when you were born. However, she was smart and got legal advice to make sure I could never touch it. Your job now is to be Leo's wife and to provide him with heirs. If you do that, he might even let you live."

A wave of fury along with stark terror filled me. As the miles sped by, the chance of a rescue shrank and my despair increased. It didn't look like Cara or I would get out of this. I either had to find a way to escape, be rescued or kill us, because there was no way I was letting him take us to Russia.

Knight: Chapter 19

As we raced to Asheville Regional Airport, I knew that I could never thank Wire and the other hackers enough. It was because of them we knew where to find my daughter and Natalya. The hours since they were taken had been utter hell. Finding out that Leonid had a private plane at Asheville Airport and his pilot had filed a flight plan to leave today at three o'clock in the afternoon had been in the nick of time. Seeing how me, Agony, and Sniper had stayed in Lake Junaluska, it would take us only a half hour to get there. The others were on their way and would meet us. It would take them just over an hour. I didn't want to wait, but I knew we had to. Unless he tried to take off early, I had to be patient. We had no idea how many men he might have with him and we didn't want to rush in and get my family hurt or killed.

The others should get there around one thirty or so. Since the three of us would get there earlier, we would check out the place and find the plane. I wasn't sure how easy that would be. Wire and the others were getting us information to help with our search. There were only seven gates at the airport. Getting through security without tickets would be impossible. We had to find the hanger the plane was in and take it out that way. It would be better if we found where they were holed up, until it was time to go to the airport. No way did I see them standing around where people could see them.

We were almost to the airport when Agony indicated we should pull over. I stamped down on my impatience and did it. He wouldn't do it unless it was important. When we came to a stop and shut off the bikes, he didn't waste time.

"They found them. They're at a house not far from the airport. They found it had been rented a few days ago by her father. Smoke tapped into a nearby camera, I have no idea what kind and it showed there was a limo and an SUV there right now. It has to be them. He sent the address. We're gonna go there and check it out. The plan is we'll still wait for the others to get there before we enter. I know you wanna rush in, but we can't Knight. We might be outnumbered and it could get us all killed, including Natalya and Cara,"

Agony warned me.

“I know, believe me, I know. I hate the idea of waiting, but it’s the safest thing to do. I just hope they don’t force us to go in before the guys get here.”

“Me too. Okay, let’s go.”

We followed him and it wasn’t long before we were pulling over to park. We were on a residential street. We got off our bikes and checked the directions on our phones. The house we were looking for was up the street a quarter of a mile, then down what looked like a shorter street. We took off on foot.

It being the middle of the day, there would be less chance of eyes seeing us, but we still took off our cuts and left them in our saddle bags. No need to advertise who we were. When we got to the correct street, I saw it had very few houses on it. It wasn’t a place you’d ever think to see a limo, except there was one at the far end of the street, parked in the driveway of a small blue house.

Circling his finger in the air, we followed Agony and worked our way down the street. Fortunately for us, these houses didn’t have their yards fenced in like a lot of houses did in town. We were able to make our way through the backyards. I kept praying no one would spot us and call the cops. If they did, we’d lose our chance.

I worked at not thinking about what if they did get away. It would be hard as hell and take a lot of help from the Dark Patriots to get into Russia and mount a rescue, but that’s exactly what we’d do if it happened. I was determined to get my woman and daughter back or die trying.

Finally, we made it to the blue house. The windows were covered with blinds. After checking the back, I took the left, Agony the right and Sniper headed to the front. He was the most at risk. If one of them came outside, they’d spot him. It didn’t take long for us to meet back in the backyard. They had bushes planted around the edge of the property. An attempt to provide a barrier between them and prying eyes, I imagine. We

hide behind them.

“All the windows are covered. I didn’t hear anything from inside. It’s one o’clock,” Agony reported. My report and Sniper’s were the same.

“So, we have no idea how many are inside. Shit,” I snapped.

“Let me make my way to the front. I’ll knock on the door,” Sniper said.

“And what’ll you do when they open it?” Agony asked, as he stared at him like he was nuts.

“I won’t be there. I can run fast and I know how to blend in. They won’t see me, but it should give us at least an idea of numbers. You have to figure Leonid and Fabian are in there. It’s the number of bodyguards we need to know. You said Fabian is usually with two of them. That’s four. Stay here. I’ll be back.” He took off before we could stop him.

It was nerve-racking to hunker down there and wait. It felt like it was an eternity. We heard voices coming from the front not long after Sniper left, but there was no shouting or gun fire, so we assumed that meant he had gotten away. When he rejoined us, he was smiling. He held up his phone.

“Three men came out. Tell me if any of these are the ones you saw with her father.” He showed me the photo.

I pointed to one of them. “That’s Lyle. He’s joined at the hip with Troy. There’s no way if he’s there, that Troy isn’t. The other two must belong to Leonid or are other men of Fabian’s. Fuck, that doesn’t tell us how many more there is.”

“Send it to Wire and ask him to check it against known men who work for Fabian. He has a whole file on them.”

Sniper sent a text while I looked at Agony. “Since when? He never said anything to me.”

“I asked him to compile it, in case we needed to know. He finished it

last night while we were sleeping. He told me and I told him to hang onto it. You had enough on your mind.”

It didn't take long for us to hear back. Wire confirmed it wasn't any known men of Fabian's. Taking that into account and for them to need many more men for a child and a woman, we assumed there were no more than six bodyguards inside the house. That put us at three against eight, not the best odds.

As we waited, I kept checking my watch. When it hit one thirty, I was done. They would leave soon for the airport. We had to take them out now. I looked at Agony, who was on his phone texting.

“They're here. Give them a couple minutes to get to this street and then over to us,” he said quickly.

“If they're not here in five minutes, I'm going in.” I told him. He nodded.

They made it with one minute to spare. Quickly, since he knew I was ready to lose it, Agony and Sniper filled them in on what they knew. The whole club wasn't with them. That would attract way too much attention. The others were near our bikes or parked further down on the main street. They had been smart and not all of them had ridden their bikes. The rest came in trucks. It was Hulk, Dare, Bones, Cyclone, and Twisted from our club along with Gunner and Ryder who joined us. Dividing up into two teams, we headed for the front and back doors.

We were almost ready to breach the doors as Agony was counting it down while Dare did the same in the back, when we heard shouting coming from inside. Not wasting time, Agony signaled and Hulk kicked in the door. I was right behind him. Agony, Bones, Cyclone, and Ryder were behind me. As we all got inside, there was more yelling coming from upstairs. In absolute terror, I raced up the stairs first. Dare and the others were to clear downstairs.

As we mounted the stairs, I caught movement out of the corner of my eye. I verified it was male and shot instantly. The man went down and he

didn't get up. In anticipation of there being shooting and possibly being where there would be innocent people, we'd brought our suppressors. They wouldn't keep others in the house from hearing the shots, but it was very unlikely that anyone outside would hear them.

There were four doors up here. The one the guy I'd shot came out of was open. Ryder went for it. The other three, all closed, were covered by Hulk, Agony, and me. Bones was hanging back. He'd back up whoever needed help. He could and would fight, but he was here more as our doc than as a fighter.

Just as we were about to open all three doors at once, Ryder came out shaking his head and joined me. Agony counted down from three to zero on his hand then we kicked them in. I heard exclamations and more gun fire from down the hall and downstairs. I didn't have time to worry about it, because I'd found the correct room. Inside was Natalya and Cara. However, they weren't alone. With them was Natalya's father and Leonid. Fabian had Cara in front of him holding a gun to her head. Leonid was doing the same to Natalya. Both of them looked scared to death.

"Daddy!" Cara screamed as she tried to get away from Fabian. He held her tighter, which made her scream more.

Ryder had his gun on Fabian, so I turned mine on Leonid. He was giving me a cold look. "You can't win. If you and your men let us leave, I'll let you have your daughter. I don't really need her. All I want is Natalya. You can do whatever you want with Fabian."

Fabian gave him an incredulous look. "That's not the plan here, Leo. We both get out with Natalya. He can have the brat, I agree."

"No, Fabian, it was never my plan to actually let you live. You were gonna die as soon as I got Natalya on that plane. My men had orders to kill you. Did you really think I'd let you live after what you did to me? You fool, no one makes Leonid Vasilev look weak or stupid. Your daughter won't miss you. And, I know for a fact, you haven't changed your will. Everything still goes to her and her descendants, which means it becomes mine."

Fabian forgot all about Cara as he turned toward Leo. When he did, his gun moved away from her. Ryder took him out immediately. As he fell, Ryder ran over, snatched up Cara and ran out of the room with her. She was screaming. I had to let him comfort and calm her down. I still had to get Natalya to safety and take out this piece of shit.

“Aah, aah, aah, don’t think about it. Sure, you might get me first, but I’m most likely going to twitch my fingers and that means bye-bye for *moy pitomets*.”

“Fuck you, I’m not your pet,” she snarled at him.

He tsked her. “Such a foul, unladylike mouth. I’ll enjoy teaching you other things to do with that mouth. Who knows, you might come to enjoy the pain I’ll give you. Please me and give me children and you’ll live a long and comfortable life.”

The thought of him touching her in any way, let alone sexually made me see red. It was all I could do not to pull the trigger.

“Shoot him, Knight. He’s not gonna let me go and I’m not going with him. I’d rather take the chance and die than have him touch me. If you don’t, I’ll die anyway. I’ll kill myself the first chance I get,” she said. I could see by her expression she was telling the truth.

“Bright Eyes, I won’t let him take you. I promise. He either puts down the gun or I’ll make him.”

I couldn’t take the chance he was right about spasming and shooting her if I shot him. Which meant he either got careless and I took the shot or something else happened. We were risking discovery the longer we stayed here. Not hearing anything else in the house, I assumed the men with them had been killed or taken captive.

“It looks like we’re in one of your famous American standoffs. Who do you think will break first?” he taunted me.

“It won’t be Knight. It’ll be you. Do you know how I know? It’s

because he's a real man, not a coward like you. He doesn't hurt innocent women and children. He knows how to woo a woman and make her fall head over heels in love with him. He doesn't need to threaten and cause her pain to get off either. Only a man like you does that. A spineless, pencil dick trying to compensate for what he doesn't have," she said mockingly.

The anger that washed over his face was instantaneous. I wanted to yell at her not to instigate him like that, only I couldn't, because she took him and I both by surprise. He had one arm around her waist, holding her close. She lifted her feet off the floor. This put her weight on his arm and he couldn't hold her. She dropped like a stone and this removed the gun from her head. It was a reflex that had my finger pull the trigger at the same time. He fell back, as a hole blossomed in the middle of his forehead. In almost the exact spot as the one that was in Ciandra's. Natalya cried out. I ran to her.

I gathered her in my arms, as men stormed in the room. A quick glance told me it was my guys. Bones went over to check Leonid. Finding him dead, he checked Fabian too. The others gathered close to me and Natalya. I was too busy kissing her and letting the tears run down my face. The relief at having her and Cara safe was indescribable. I felt weak. A hand on my shoulder was what made me look up. Agony was smiling down at us.

"I think our job here is done. The others have all been neutralized. We checked while you were in here having your chat and there are no security cameras in here. I think if we go out the back and sneak out the way we came in, in small groups, we can get out of here without being spotted. If that's the case, then we'll let an anonymous tip to the local police tip them off to the bunch of bodies here."

"I think that's a great plan. Where's Cara?"

"She's been taken to the others by Sniper. She didn't need to see or hear any more of this shit. Do you think you can walk, Natalya, or should Knight carry you and I get someone to bring a car to wait outside on the other street?" Agony offered kindly.

"I can walk. If it means getting out of here, I'll crawl, if I have to," was her shaky response.

I stood up and brought her to her feet. Instead of her walking, I swept her up and headed for the door. She protested, but I didn't listen. I had to get her out of here and to safety. We weren't scot-free yet.

It went faster and better than I thought it would when we got to the backyard. In no time, we were back out on the other street and to our bikes. Bones had brought a truck. I loaded Natalya and Cara, who mobbed us when she saw us, into the truck with him. I hated to leave them, but I had to ride my bike back. We took off in pairs. Once we got further away, the rest of the guys joined us. I rode the whole way back to the compound beside the truck, so I could look in at them.

Natalya:

The ride back to the compound I passed in a daze. I couldn't believe we were free and Leonid and my father were no longer a threat. In the end, it had come down to their money couldn't buy them men who could truly protect them and they couldn't negotiate with good men.

I didn't feel an iota of remorse for the death of my father. He brought it all on himself. Learning how he and my mom had met and to find out he never really loved her, it hurt. She deserved so much more than that. However, she could've ended up with Leonid, so my father had been the lesser evil.

The whole way back, Knight rode right beside the truck and he kept looking at us. Cara had settled down, and she kept waving at him until she dropped off in an exhausted sleep. I blew him kisses, which he returned. The drive wasn't terribly long, but it felt to me like it took hours rather than barely over an hour. I sagged in relief when we pulled into the compound. Bones stopped the truck outside our house, not the clubhouse, like I expected him to do. I glanced over at him. He smiled.

"I think you two have earned a rest and not to be mobbed by everyone. I'm gonna check you over and make sure you're both alright, then I'll get out of your hair."

"Bones, you don't need to do that. We're fine," I told him, as my door opened and he got out to open Cara's. Knight undid my seatbelt and helped me out. Bones got Cara out of her car seat and carried her to us.

"There's no way my brother will let me not check on you two and I'd never be able to leave without doing it either, so don't give me any trouble. It shouldn't take long." He held up his hand that wasn't supporting Cara, and I saw he had a bag with him.

"He's right. I can't let him go without doing it," Knight told me. Knowing I wasn't going to win, I gave up.

Inside, we were taken straight to mine and Knight's bedroom. As they went to lay us down, I shook my head. "No, we'll get the bed dirty. Throw a sheet or towels or something over the covers."

"No one cares about the damn covers, Bright Eyes," Knight growled as he scowled.

"I do. I love this comforter and I don't want anything to ruin it."

He sighed, but he did set me on my feet long enough to go into our bathroom and grab several towels. He spread them out then Bones put Cara down while I sat on the bed. Bones got straight to business. He checked our vital signs, asked us if we had pain or discomfort anywhere. He examined us for broken bones by feeling our legs, arms and along our ribs. The last thing he asked he said softly, so Cara wouldn't hear him.

"Natalya, I need to know. Do you need me to do a pelvic exam or prescribe you something?"

Instantly, I understood his meaning. I shook my head. "No, you don't have to do either of those. Nothing happened. He was too busy trying to get out of the country. He didn't have time for that. And his men, along with my father's, were never left alone with us."

Both of them gave me relieved looks. Bones bid us goodbye after he told Knight to call if we needed anything. As soon as he was gone, Knight went into caregiver mode. He insisted on bathing Cara and I together in our tub. After we were clean, and dressed in our pajamas, he pulled down the comforter and sheets and tucked us in our bed. Cara was already closing her eyes, when he took off his boots and got into bed with us. He curled his arms around both of us.

"Sleep baby. I'll be here when you wake up."

"Thank you for finding us. I love you, Elijah," I whispered.

"I'll always come for you and our children. Never doubt that. You're my life. I love you too, Bright Eyes," he whispered back.

The kiss he gave me showed me he meant every word he said and more. When he was done, we closed our eyes to go to sleep. Man, was I tired. Kidnapping sure took the energy out of you.

We slept for six hours. When we woke up, it was to find someone had brought food to the house and left it in the kitchen. Knight warmed it up. We were all starving. It had been over thirty-six hours since Cara and I ate. Everything tasted great and we inhaled it. Once we were done and the mess cleared away, he sent a text message to the guys. Cara went back to bed. I knew the guys were eager to hear what happened, just like he was. I was the one to insist he get them to come over tonight. I only wanted to tell this tale once.

When Agony and the others arrived, they entered quietly. Knight had told them Cara was asleep. It was all of his club and several of the guys from the other clubs. The ladies and kids weren't with them.

“Natalya, this can wait until morning,” Agony offered.

“I know it can, but I'd rather get it over with. I only want to do it once.”

“Okay, then we'll get it done so you can go back to bed. We'll fill in the rest who aren't here. We didn't want to totally overrun your house. Go ahead, tell us what happened from the point you brought Cara home to change her clothes until Knight reached you at that house,” Agony asked kindly.

“I can do that, but before I do, were the cops called in Asheville with that tip?”

“They were. And according to what Wire and the other computer geniuses are saying, there's no chatter about us. A few guys stayed behind to wipe down any prints although you're not in any database and no one would think of Cara. I should expect them to contact you soon, to inform you that your father is dead. You'll have to act surprised and maybe upset, to make sure they don't suspect anything,” he coached me.

“I’ll tell them whatever you want. As long as none of you get arrested, I’m fine with whatever we have to say or do.”

Getting his nod of understanding, I got started. It took me a good fifteen or twenty minutes to tell them the whole thing. When I was done, they asked me some questions. Mainly about if they contacted anyone when I was around. Which, the answer was no. When they got done questioning me, they all told us good night, after sharing with me how glad they were we were home and for me to not do something like that again. I laughed as I assured them I had no plans to ever do it again. Once they were gone, Knight shut out the lights, we checked on Cara and then he took me to bed. We ended up making love before falling asleep. It was so good to be home.

Knight: Epilogue Six Months Later

I watched as Cara and Vixen ran around the yard. They were best friends already. We'd gone to see Vixen at the Flynns' farm a few times. I swear it was love at first sight for those two. She seemed to love me and Natalya, but not like she did Cara. Vixen came home with us a month ago. They were inseparable. Although she was a guard dog and not just our pet, she didn't stay outside. I wanted her in the house with my family. She slept in Cara's room in her own deluxe doggie bed that our daughter insisted we get her. However, by morning, she could be found in bed with Cara.

The whole club had been busy with a bunch of stuff these past months. For one, we cut back those trees that we were worried about providing cover, and a sniper vantage point into the compound. On top of that, we helped Wire to install all the extra cameras we wanted inside the compound, to cover all buildings and the major outside areas, not just the fence and clubhouse. It took a load off our minds to have them.

We'd dealt with some not so good things too. A big one was what to do with Atticus for allowing Ciandra into the compound. His biggest defender turned out to be Natalya of all people. When I explained how that bitch got on the compound and Atticus was facing possibly being kicked out as a prospect, she'd begged me not to do it.

Her argument was that we never explicitly told him not to allow any women into the compound. That he'd been doing it all along, while she was on lockdown and no one had objected, was her real defense. Why would he question another one? While it was true, I still couldn't see letting him get off with a slap on the wrist. She insisted I let her talk to the guys before we held church to decide. She did argue for him eloquently. After she was done and left, we talked it over. We eventually agreed that kicking him out wasn't right. So the real debate was what would be a punishment for not at least coming to one of us, to ask why the woman left so soon. He admitted it didn't seem right to him. We wanted him to question things and to listen to his gut. We didn't want mindless drones as members or prospects.

We came up with three options. One, we make him prospect for a year and a half before deciding whether to make him a member or not. That had been done to Thorn in Dublin Falls when he screwed up. It had ended well and he was a stronger brother for it. Two, he could pay a monetary fine. Since prospects only got a small salary while they prospected, that would hurt. We decided three thousand dollars would be a nice reminder. Three, he could be made to babysit for one of the three of us with kids once a week for the next three months. We couldn't say assign him shit jobs around the compound or in the clubhouse, because as a prospect, he already did those.

In the end, the vote was in favor of the babysitting option. He knew how to take care of babies, so they weren't in any danger if he babysat the little ones and he was good with all of them. The look on his face when we announced to him and the ladies what his punishment was, had been comical. He had been a combination of relieved and afraid at the same time. I knew it was because he feared doing something to piss us off. I was happy to see at the end of those three months, he performed great.

Since he had once a week babysitting duty and his work would have to be done by someone else, we got lucky and found two more prospects. One was Bodhi Donnelly. He worked at the garage for Dare and Mace. They both vouched for him immediately when he asked them about prospecting. The other one was actually a friend of Atticus, Rune Evans. We had good vibes about both of them.

One thing that plagued us, even now although it was much better, was the nightmares that Natalya and Cara had. Cara had them the worst, and she woke us up almost every night for the first two months. Gradually, they got better until now, she had one only a couple times a month. Natalya had them occasionally too. I couldn't wait for them to go away altogether. It had been traumatic. Hell, I even had a few myself, thinking about what if we hadn't gotten to them in time.

Thankfully, there was no fallout on the club for all the bodies we left in that house in Asheville or Ciandra's in the cabin. The police did come out to notify Natalya of her father's murder and to ask her if she knew of anyone who might want to harm him. I was so damn proud of her. She played her part like a pro. It was the right mix of shock, grief and scared. They went

away promising they'd let her know if they found who did it. As for Ciandra, I got a visit from Laramie to tell me she had been found. He knew she was Cara's egg donor and there was no love lost, but as far as he knew, I never wanted to hurt her. I told him she'd come to see me upset a couple of days before her death.

The reason I did was I knew if he asked around, someone would tell him what happened at the bar. By telling him, it threw off suspicion. I told him the last thing I knew was she'd left town. There was nothing to tie me or my club to her death, even if he did suspect me. However, her reputation for whoring worked in my favor. There were a number of men and women in our town and the ones around us, who had reason to hate her and wish her dead.

And one of the absolute best things to happen in these past six months was I wed the love of my life. The day I got to say I do in February, was one of the three happiest days of my life. Even more than the day I joined the club. We celebrated with our family and all our various friends. She'd been thrilled to meet the other clubs and their old ladies and their swarm of kids. Although she joked it would take her three years to learn and remember the names and by then there'd be more to remember.

As if all this wasn't enough, we had two more happy events. One was more for one of my club brothers, rather than us. Twisted had found his lady. She was making his head twirl, but we all knew he was loving it. I couldn't wait to see what this year brought for them and who knows, maybe one or more of my other brothers might find their forever women too.

The final event was one that made me smile every day, as soon as I woke up and rolled over in bed, to look at my beautiful wife. Just like I was doing right now. Slowly, Natalya's eyelids fluttered then opened. When she saw me staring at her, she smiled.

“Why're you staring at me, Elijah?”

“I'm staring at you because you're gorgeous and I love you so damn much. I'm staring because you make me wonder what I did to deserve you. I'm staring because I can't believe that on top of everything else you give me, you're giving me this.” I laid my hand on her flat stomach.

We'd found out not long ago that she was pregnant. She'd gone off her birth control not long before the wedding, in the hopes that she might get pregnant by summer. It took some couples a long time to get pregnant and there was no way to tell if you would be one of those or not. Once the drama with her father and Leonid was over and we got through the holidays, she informed me she was ready if I was. Her shot was up the second week of January. I jumped on it and her.

“So, is Daddy dreaming of what this baby will be? I bet you want a son, don't you?” she teased.

“I don't care what we have, as long as he or she is healthy. I told you that. You'd better stop saying I want a son,” I growled mockingly. It was true, I didn't care.

She laughed as she scooted closer to plaster herself against me. “Make me,” she said coyly before she kissed me.

That was all it took. All thoughts of whether our November baby was a boy or girl flew out the window. We'd find out when it was test time, if she wanted to know. If not, we'd likely find out a few days before Thanksgiving when the baby was due. As we kissed greedily, my cock grew hard. Hell, it was already starting to thicken and lengthen before she opened her amber eyes. This kiss just finished the process.

Slipping my hands down her body, I teased her nipples. She moaned and jerked. Extra sensitivity in her breasts had been our first clue she might be pregnant. Tweaking and gently kneading them, I had them hard beads in seconds. She rubbed her body against mine, which had her pussy grazing my cock.

Groaning, I eased my hand from her breasts to her pussy. She spread her legs quickly. One dip into her folds and I knew she was ready for me. She was drenched in her own cream. Rubbing up and down her folds, pressing circles on her clit, then thrusting my fingers in and out of her tight hole, got her begging after she tore her mouth from mine.

“Hurry Elijah, I need your cock. I can't handle your teasing this

morning. Please, put your delicious cock inside of me right now,” she practically growled.

“I don’t want to wait either. If that’s what my Bright Eyes wants, then that’s what you get. How would you like it? Hard, soft, slow or fast? And where would you like it? In your pussy or ass?”

Her breathing sped up. Ever since our wedding night, when she finally said yes to letting me try full on anal with her, she loved any time I asked for it or even suggested it. Hell, she asked me sometimes to do her in the ass. Sometimes I couldn’t decide which hole to fuck her in first. When that happened, we’d toss a coin. However, whichever one I didn’t do first, I made sure to do on round two.

“Which is it? I’m about to decide. I’ve gotta be inside you, baby,” I warned her.

She waited a couple more seconds then answered me. “I want you in my ass, but later, I want you to pound my pussy.”

Giving her a taunting grin, I rolled over and got out of bed to get the lube out of the drawer. Turning back, I found her on her stomach. Smacking her ass, I issued my order.

“On the edge of the bed, up on your knees, and put that ass in the air. I want your breasts on the mattress, so your nipples can rub back and forth on the sheets. I know how much that turns you on.”

She whimpered. It would make her nipples sensitivity go into overdrive. She didn’t raise up fast enough, so I lowered my head and nipped her ass cheek with my teeth. She yelped then did as I said. Seeing her plump ass in the air, I coated my fingers on one hand in lube.

“Spread your cheeks so I can see your tiny, puckered ass and your dripping wet pussy.”

She did it immediately. I groaned. Fuck, what I wouldn’t do to have two cocks instead of one. As I eased my fingers inside and got her nice and

slick, I told her that.

“Jesus, baby, what I wouldn’t do to have two cocks, so I could fuck you in the ass and pussy at the same time.”

“God, Elijah, every time you say that, it makes me almost come. I love it when you do one with your cock and the other with a dildo or vibrator. If you had two cocks, it would kill me. I love the real thing the most.”

As she told me that, I slicked my cock up with the lube. Her last word rose higher than the rest, because I was pressing into her ass as she said it. I took it slow, even though I wanted to pound in hard and fast. I always made sure to give her time to get used to me. I didn’t want to hurt her. As soon as I was all the way in, I paused to savor it. She truly felt unlike anyone I’d ever been with, no matter where I took her. She flexed her hips, pulling away from me then thrust back fast and hard, sinking my cock back in her ass. We both moaned. I slapped her hip.

“Keep doing that and I’ll have no choice but to teach you a lesson and pound your ass until you scream.”

I grinned because I knew what her response was going to be. I was right. She looked over her shoulder at me. Her eyes smoldered and she licked her lips.

“Then teach me a lesson. I’ve been bad and I need to learn to listen. Take this ass and make me scream and beg, Elijah,” she purred.

That broke my tenuous hold on myself and I started to let go. The first couple strokes were softer than I knew she wanted and slower, but I still wanted to make sure not to hurt her. When all she did was moan and wiggle her hips, I let go completely.

Her ass and my pelvis slapped together loudly, as I stroked in and out of her. She was moaning almost constantly right out of the gate. She would thrust back as I stroked forward. Watching my cock sink in and out of her ass made me swell bigger, I think. It didn’t take long to be climbing closer and closer to her orgasm. I was gonna hold out until at least the second one before

I let myself blow.

A few minutes or so later, she tensed up and cried out my name as she came. Her ass tightened down like a vise and my vision blurred. I kept going. I didn't let her rest. I pushed her through her orgasm and then started on the next one. I knew she'd come faster this time.

As I powered in and out, I gripped her hips and panted out. "Play with your pussy. I wanna feel you touch it. Rub that clit hard."

She moaned as she slipped her hand between her legs. I felt her graze my balls and the base of my cock, as she frantically began to finger herself.

"That's it. Come for me, Bright Eyes. Give your Knight what he needs. To fill your ass with my cum," I grunted as my toes curled and tingles shot up my legs to my balls.

I was so damn close I could almost taste it. A few more thrusts then she screamed as she came again. This time I went with her. I bellowed out her name, as I pumped and pumped jet after jet of my cum deep in her ass. When we both finally stopped coming and couldn't stay up any longer, I slipped out of her and fell on the bed beside her. She was lying there with her eyes closed and a huge, satisfied smile on her face.

Chuckling, I kissed her mouth then closed my eyes. Damn, she knew how to turn me inside out and still want more. And if Dare and Agony were telling me the truth, there would be a lot more to come. Pregnant women seemed to get hornier the further along they got. God, I hoped I could survive it. If I couldn't, well, nothing said a man died happy more than to go in the middle of sex. Since I survived this round, I'd better regain my strength for round two. I was nothing if not a daring man and an ecstatically blessed and happy one.

The End until Book 4 of the Pagan Souls of Cherokee: Twisted's Storm