



The
RYAN
boxset

The complete New York Ruthless series
SADIE KINCAID

NEW YORK RUTHLESS

BOOKS 1-5

RYAN RULE, RYAN REDEMPTION, RYAN
RETRIBUTION, RYAN REIGN & RYAN
RENEWED

SADIE KINCAID

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RYAN RULE

NEW YORK RUTHLESS: BOOK 1

For all of you incredible, devoted, smut loving, feral Ryan fans.

Thank you for the love you have shown Jessie and her boys.

Love Sadie xxx

CHAPTER

ONE

JESSIE

My lips curl into a smile as Nikolai runs the pad of his thumb down my cheekbone and along my jawline until it's resting on my lower lip. He pulls southwards, opening my mouth slightly. The smell of him, of whisky and cigars, assaults my senses, making my eyes water. Leaning forward, he towers over me. "You did good," he smiles.

"Thank you," I whisper with a flutter of my lashes.

"*Moya Kroshka*, I will give you your reward later." *My little one*. His pet name for me.

I smile at him because I can't trust myself to speak. Grabbing hold of my wrist, he bends his head lower, pressing a soft kiss against my temple. He's so close that I can see the vein pulsing in his neck. I imagine slicing a cold steel blade across it and how I would stand over him and smile as he clutched at his throat, desperately trying to stop his life from slipping away from him.

I hate Nikolai Semenov with every fiber of my being.

Suddenly, the sound of an explosion rocks the whole room, making my ears ring in my head. It's quickly followed by rapid gunfire and it makes us both look up to the door. My heart races in my chest and my pulse thrums with energy as I try to wrench myself from Nikolai's grip.

"Ivan!" he snarls to his bodyguard who nods solemnly as he draws his own weapon.

I can only stand and stare at them in shock until the adrenaline kicks in and I manage to wrench my wrist from

Nikolai's hand. The action unfolds as though I'm watching a movie and I'm not really a part of it. Before Ivan can even reach for the door handle, it blows off its hinges with a deafening boom. *Shit, Jessie. This is no movie!*

Instinctively, I cover my ears and dive beneath the desk. The room fills with flying splinters of wood, and smoke that catches the back of my throat. I cough into my hand as Nikolai barks orders in Russian, and then my heart almost stops when I look up from my hiding place. They walk into the room like the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Each of them fills the doorframe as they pass through it. Two of them hold semi-automatic weapons aloft as they scan the room for any signs of life.

Everything that follows happens so fast, but despite that, I see it as if in slow motion. Nikolai takes the first bullet. It flies straight through his neck and he drops to the floor, coughing and spluttering as the blood gushes out of the wound. Ivan takes the next two in his chest and stomach and he slides down the wall he was standing beside, leaving a trail of blood on the expensive damask wallpaper.

I crouch further behind the desk, covering my mouth to stop me from coughing, and praying that whoever those men are, they don't see me through the dust and smoke-filled air.

The one who is so obviously in charge walks straight toward my hiding place. All that's visible are two black shoes and black suit pants. He crouches down until he's looking directly at me with the greenest eyes I have ever seen. "You missed one, brother," he says in a voice that makes me think of rich velvet. I detect the hint of an Irish accent and realize that Nikolai has far more enemies than I had been aware of.

One of the men who's holding a semi-automatic approaches and aims the gun at me. I can't see the face of the gunman, only the muzzle of his weapon.

"Please. I'm not one of them," I protest.

The one crouching in front of me cocks an eyebrow. "You weren't working for the Semenovs?"

I swallow hard. I'm here in Nikolai Semenov's inner sanctum, dressed in jeans and a hooded sweatshirt, so I am clearly not one of his many whores. Not to mention, I'm sitting under a desk that has half a dozen computers on it.

"I was working for him, yes," I say, running my tongue over my lip. "But not exactly by choice. I have no allegiance to the Semenovs. I swear."

"You understand that we can't just let you walk out of here? You've just seen us kill your boss and his bodyguard," he says with a nod to his brother, who moves his gun closer to me.

"Wait," I shriek. "I can help you."

He narrows those incredible green eyes at me. "And how exactly do you think *you* can help *us*?" he asks with a smirk.

"I'm a hacker. That's what I did for Nikolai," I say as I edge forward and climb out from under the desk. I will not cower or hide away any longer. That's never been my style. I'm damn sure I'm as strong as any man in this room.

He stands too and steps back, allowing me some space. I pull my shoulders back, craning my neck so I can look him in the eye. "And I'm the best."

He laughs out loud as his brother beside us repositions his gun. "You think?"

"I know," I snap back at him. "Let me prove it."

"How?" He runs a hand across his jaw and then nods to his brother, who lowers his weapon.

"Whatever you need. I can hack into any security system anywhere. Banks. Casinos. I can access personal records. There is nothing I can't find out as long as I have enough time. Take me with you and if I don't prove my worth in two weeks, then you can do whatever you want with me."

"Why do you assume that taking you with us is a better outcome than ending your suffering right now?" He narrows his eyes at me again.

I tilt my chin and glare at him. "I'll take my chances."

“So? Two weeks? You just allow me and my brothers to keep you hostage for two weeks?”

“I’m not exactly a hostage if I’m not being held against my will, am I?”

He frowns at me. “Don’t you have any family who might be looking for you, Little Hacker?”

“No. I have no-one.”

He looks behind him at the men I now know to be his brothers. they’re the biggest men I’ve ever seen in my life and they’re clearly identical twins. The sight of them makes my heart hammer in my chest as they bring so many buried memories rushing to the surface of my brain. I take a deep breath. *They are not them, Jessie!*

“She wouldn’t be the worst house guest we’ve ever had,” one of them says with a shrug and the other nods his agreement.

“She might come in useful, Shane,” the one beside me with the gun adds.

Shane scowls and turns to the one who just spoke his name. “Or she might turn into a massive pain in our asses, Conor. And we could save ourselves a lot of trouble by ending this right now.”

I look at the man he called Conor, who sucks in a breath before he responds. “It’s your call. But it can’t hurt to see what she’s made of. If Nikolai had her working for him, she must be good.”

I watch Shane’s jaw working as he considers what to do with me. My life is literally in his hands and I wonder what else I can do to convince him to spare me. I heard the Irish accent when each of them spoke and go with my last resort. “I also make an amazing soda bread,” I offer. I worked in an Irish pub for six months when I was nineteen and home-made soda bread was one of our most popular sellers.

The hint of a smile plays on Conor’s lips while Shane shakes his head in apparent annoyance. “Fine. Bring her,” he

snaps to Conor before turning around and walking out of the door.

CHAPTER

TWO

JESSIE

I sit in the back of the SUV, sandwiched between the twins, who I now know to be Liam and Mikey. The two of them are so huge, their thighs are pressed tightly against mine as the three of us share the back seat. They're identical twins, but I can already tell them apart by virtue of the small scar below Liam's left ear and the fact that he's about an inch taller than his brother. I have an eye for detail and I'm a quick study. They're skills that have helped me to survive for so long on my own.

Apart from telling them my name, I've said nothing else since we left Nikolai's house. I have listened though, to every single thing that they've said. It doesn't take me long to realize I'm in a car with the Ryan brothers—the heads of the New York branch of the Irish Mafia. These guys are ruthless, and they own half of New York, but I've never come across them personally before. I suppose the Russians and the Irish don't gel that well?

Shane is the oldest of the four, and everything about him, from the way that he talks to how he holds himself, tells me he's their leader. Conor drives the car. He's Shane's second—the closer. Smooth talking and charismatic. The twins appear to be quite a few years younger and, from what I can gather, are largely the muscle.

"You okay there, Jessie?" Liam turns and says in his soft Irish lilt. He has a twinkle in his dark brown eyes and what seems to be a genuine smile on his face. "We're almost home."

“I’m good. Thanks,” I say with a nod. In fact, I’m not sure how I feel. I’m incredibly relieved to still be alive. I’m happy that Nikolai Semenov and his most loyal soldiers are all dead. But I was so close to finding *him*. And now it feels like I’m taking ten steps backwards.

“You’ll like our place,” Mikey says on the other side of me.

I turn my head to him and offer him a faint smile.

The brothers begin to talk amongst themselves again. They’re discussing their nightclub and how they plan on dealing with the trouble they’ve been having there for the past few nights. I half listen, keeping an ear out for any snippets of information that might be useful to me, but my mind wanders. What the hell is my next move? It took me almost two years to get close enough to Nikolai that I was allowed into his inner circle—even if it was the seventh circle of hell.

I look at the two oldest Ryan siblings sitting in front of me. Like their brothers either side of me, they wear the finest Italian leather shoes and impeccably tailored suits. They’re all tall, dark, and stacked, as well as very easy on the eye. Besides any of that, though, I get a good feeling about them and I’ve learned to trust my gut. It rarely lets me down.

They are notorious. They do bad things, but that doesn’t always mean that they’re bad men. I imagine there are lots of people who would disagree, but I suppose I have a different morality barometer than most people. The things I’ve seen and lived through have taught me that sometimes good people do terrible things to get by in this world.

I lean back in the leather seat and close my eyes. The warmth of Liam and Mikey on either side of me is strangely comforting. Their conversation washes over me, and I absorb it all. Perhaps a few weeks or months working for the Ryan brothers, because I *will* prove my worth to them, will be a good thing. I can lay low and regroup. Gather more intel while I decide what to do next.

Because I am so close. I know he’s out there somewhere.

Waiting.

I can almost feel him.

CHAPTER

THREE

JESSIE

The Ryan brothers' apartment is freaking huge. It must cover the entire top floor of the building. I look around me, with my mouth hanging open as I follow Liam and Mikey along the hallway. Their older brothers went into the nightclub that makes up the ground floor and basement of this building. Or part of it, at least. From what I could see when we drove in, half of it is used as a parking lot for the building. It's packed with top end, high spec cars, and I wonder if they all belong to the brothers or whether someone else lives in this block.

"You want something to eat? Or maybe a drink?" Liam asks as I walk behind him, my sneakers making a satisfying soft squeaking sound on the solid wooden floor.

"A cold drink would be good," I say as I hoist my backpack further onto my shoulder.

"This way." He cocks his head, and we turn left and into the biggest kitchen I have ever seen in my life.

"What do you fancy?" Mikey asks as he opens the massive refrigerator and sticks his head inside. "Soda? Juice? Water?" He pulls his head back out and looks at me with a grin on his face and, for a moment, I almost forget that I am basically their prisoner. I could be here on a date the way they're both so at ease and casual about the whole thing. My mind wanders for a few seconds. A date with one of these hot brothers? Or both of them?

"What's it to be?" Mikey asks again.

“Uh?” I blink at him. “Oh, water. Please.”

He hands me a bottle before tossing one to Liam and grabs himself a can of soda. I take a long drink and the cool liquid feels like heaven against my raw throat. When I look up, they’re both sitting at the kitchen island watching me. I shift uncomfortably under their gaze. I know that I asked to come here, and I know they seem like good guys, but I can’t help wonder what the hell I’ve let myself in for here. I mean, what the hell do I do now?

Sensing my unease, Liam smiles at me. “We won’t bite, Jessie.”

“Not unless you want us to.” Mikey flashes an eyebrow at me and laughs and the sound makes me shiver in a not unpleasant way.

“I was just wondering what happens now?” I say with a shrug, trying to appear tough and confident while my heart hammers against my ribcage.

“It’s up to you. We have plenty to do here. A games room, gym, a huge TV in the den. We also have a library and a rooftop pool,” Mikey says before taking a long swig of his soda.

I don’t answer as I stand there staring at them. What the hell is this place?

“Or we could just show you where you’ll be staying?” Liam offers.

“Yeah, that would be great,” I reply, wondering if maybe they’ll chain me up in a room with no windows.

“You’re in the room next to ours,” Mikey says as he jumps off the stool.

“You guys share a room?”

“Shared a womb, we can share a room,” Liam laughs.

“Oh?” I blink at them. I don’t know why that surprises me.

“Hey. We share a room, not a bed,” Mikey adds.

“Well, unless we have good reason to,” Liam says and they both laugh out loud.

“I don’t understand,” I say, aware that I’m frowning at them now.

Liam rounds the island and bends his head close to my ear. “Sometimes, we share *everything*, Jessie,” he says with a low growl that turns my insides to jelly.

“Come on,” Mikey adds as he saunters past us and out of the kitchen with his can of soda in his hand.



I THANK the twins for showing me how to use the electric window blinds and the TV and close the door behind them before taking another look around. If this is the guest bedroom, then I can’t even imagine what the brothers’ rooms must be like. A king-size bed dominates the space in the center and vast floor to ceiling windows make the room bright and airy. There’s a huge TV on the wall and a small bookcase complete with full shelves of books. I kick off my sneakers and realize the floor is warm to the touch. Damn, they must have underfloor heating. This place is fancy!

Throwing my backpack onto the bed, I can’t help but smile. I could get used to living in a place like this. Shaking my head, I catch myself before I get too comfortable with that thought. There is no getting used to a place like this for me. No getting used to anywhere. It’s been that way for as long as I can remember, and I can’t imagine a time when it will ever be any different.

Sitting on the bed, I open my backpack, take out my laptop and open it up. Relief washes over me as it fires to life when I turn it on and the document I was working on is still there on the screen. It’s a list of the bank details of some of Nikolai’s contacts. Both his enemies and the people he considered his friends. He was an incredibly suspicious man, and it didn’t take me long to convince him that one of the best ways to monitor his associates was to monitor their money. Everything always leads back to the money in the end.

It gave me the perfect cover to delve into the financial history of almost every member of the Russian mob. Almost. I still haven't found what I was looking for, and I still have some work left to do. Nikolai was reluctant to give me the details of some of the top names, but he was getting close. I whispered in his ear every chance I got, reminding him how his enemies were trying to topple him, feeding his paranoia and suspicion like a loving owner feeds a pet. But I was so focused on the rest of the Russian mob, that I didn't even see the Irish one coming. And now I'm at a dead end. I'll have to start back at the beginning of this list and follow each individual money trail until it leads me to the top. It will be a much longer process, but time is something I have plenty of.

A soft knock at the door makes me jump. "Come in," I say, expecting one of the brothers. But it's not one of them who pops their head inside the room. It's a woman who looks to be in her late thirties, with dark curly hair.

"Jessie?" she asks.

"Yes," I reply, closing my laptop over and nervously rubbing my hands on my jeans.

She steps inside the room carrying a medical bag. "I'm Dr. Adams," she says with a smile. "But you can call me Lisa."

"Oh? Hey, Lisa." I blink at her.

"Conor called me and asked me to check you over. Make sure you're okay while you're staying here?"

"Okay," I say with a frown. This is either the highest level of consideration in hostage taking, or there is a hidden agenda here.

Lisa walks toward the bed and places her medical bag down beside me.

"How are you feeling?" she asks.

"Is that a trick question?" I reply. Does she know why I'm here, or that the Ryan brothers almost killed me earlier?

She tilts her head slightly and smiles at me. "No. I believe there was some sort of explosion? I know the Ryan brothers

well, Miss Heaton.”

I roll my eyes, wondering just how well, and she chuckles softly. “I was also told you asked to come here?” She takes a blood pressure cuff from her bag and indicates that I should hold out my arm.

“I suppose so,” I say as I pull off my hooded sweatshirt until I’m sitting in only my tank top. I don’t add that I didn’t feel I had much choice at the time.

“Shane and his brothers will look after you. I know what they are, but they’re good men,” she says as she places her stethoscope in her ears. “They just want to make sure you are fit and well and don’t need any medical treatment, especially after what happened today.”

“Huh!” I snort.

“Well, if you have some sort of internal bleeding and die in bed tonight, it would be a bit of an inconvenience for them to find somewhere to bury your body, wouldn’t it?” She flashes an eyebrow at me and I burst out laughing. Dr. Lisa has a dark sense of humor and I decide immediately that I like her.

“So, you know the brothers well, then?” I grin at her.

“I’m their physician,” she replies with a knowing smile. “Nothing more.”

Dr. Lisa gives me a thorough medical and confirms I don’t have any internal bleeding and am unlikely to die in my sleep tonight. I figure she’s about done when she pulls a huge needle from her bag.

“What the hell is that for?” I ask. “I hate needles.”

“I need to take some blood and run some tests.”

“What kind of tests?”

“To make sure you don’t have illnesses that the brothers need to be aware of.”

“Such as?”

“Blood-borne diseases you could infect them with should you ever cut yourself, for instance. STIs. And also, I’ll do a

pregnancy test too.”

“Jesus!” I hiss as I hold out my arm. “What are they planning on doing with me?” I attempt a joke, but my insides are churning.

“It’s just a precaution, I assure you,” she replies.

I smile at her and nod. *Never let anyone see how afraid you are, Jessie.* A lesson from my father. A sudden surge of grief almost overwhelms me as thoughts of him and my mom and my little brothers force themselves into my consciousness. I haven’t thought about them for a long time, but seeing Liam and Mikey today flicked some kind of switch and now I can’t stop thinking about them. I do whatever I can to keep my memories of them at bay because it hurts too much not to. But, as painful as it is to think about the night they were taken from me—slaughtered in front of my eyes—it destroys me when I remember the happy times. When I recall how much I loved them. How much they loved me. When I remember what a team the five of us were.

I blink away a tear and focus on the sharp scratch of the needle piercing my skin. Pain grounds me. No matter what might happen here at the hands of the Ryan brothers, I know without a doubt that I have endured worse. I was sixteen years old when I learned that monsters were real, and unlike the princesses, maidens or the damsels in distress in the fairytales my mother read to me, there was no-one left to rescue me.

CHAPTER

FOUR

CONOR

I sense Shane's irritation with me as we walk through the corridors of our nightclub. I know he expected me to back him up earlier when the twins had suggested bringing a hostage home was a good idea. My younger brothers are like excitable toddlers. To them, Jessie is a shiny new toy for them to play with. It's not often we have visitors or guests to our home, and the idea of having a new person actually living with us is tantamount to a kid getting a puppy for Christmas. At least for Liam and Mikey.

I had some altogether different motives for agreeing to her request, though. I've been unfortunate enough to have more dealings with Nikolai Semenov and his family than my brothers. Notoriously vicious, paranoid and straight up crazy, anyone not related to him by blood, who could gain his trust and also have the backbone to work with him, obviously has something special about them.

I hadn't even noticed her when we'd first walked into the room. The smoke from the twins blowing the door off had blurred my vision. Shane had gone straight to her, though. When I'd heard a woman's voice, I'd assumed it was one of Nikolai's whores. I didn't particularly enjoy the thought of putting a bullet in her head, but she had seen us and we couldn't afford any comeback. I'd been ready to kill her at Shane's word. Then she crawled out from under that desk, dressed like a teenage boy, but unable to hide those incredible curves, and with long flaming red hair tied up in a ponytail. She squared up to Shane, all five foot four inches of her, and

challenged him. Nobody spoke to Shane like that. Never. And especially not with a semi-automatic in their face.

I don't believe in love at first sight or any of that shit, but this woman made my heart pound and my dick hard. She is a tiny fucking powerhouse and all I could think about was how she has bigger balls than most of the men I'd ever met. If she wants to work for us, then we should fucking let her.

Shane glances at his watch and frowns. "We need to make this quick. I don't like having some stranger in our house and not being there."

"Relax. The twins will keep an eye on her. I'm pretty sure she's not exactly jumping for joy at the prospect of us kidnapping her."

"We didn't fucking kidnap her. She asked to come with us," he snaps.

"Yeah. Because it was either that or die. What choice did she have, really?"

"Semantics," he says with a dismissive wave of his hand. "We have no idea who she is or why she was working for Nikolai, or if we can trust her at all."

"Well, like she said, if you're not happy in two weeks, you can go back to your original plan," I say with a shrug. I already know that Jessie Heaton is going to impress us. You don't get to work that closely with one of the top Russian faces if you're not shit hot at what you do.

"If she hasn't murdered us all in our beds before then," he snarls.

"What? She's about one hundred and twenty pounds wet through. You're really worried she can take you?" I laugh and he scowls at me.

"Just call Henry and get him here now. I want this dealing with, so I can keep an eye on our little hacker upstairs."

I take my cell from my pocket and call our head bouncer to find out where he's at and leave Shane pacing the corridors in annoyance.



AN HOUR LATER, Shane and I walk into the penthouse apartment on the top floor of the building we own. We've just finished our meeting with our head bouncer, Henry, and his team, putting plans in place to deal with the recent trouble that's been happening in our clubs.

Shane is still pissed. "Make sure the hacker is settled and she isn't causing any trouble," he snaps before stalking off to his office.

I shake my head and bite back a smile before heading down the hallway to the kitchen, where I find my two younger brothers.

"Where is our house guest?" I ask.

"She's in her room. Lisa got here about ten minutes ago to check her over."

I nod. "You asked her to do the full range of tests, yeah?"

"Yes," Liam says with a grin and Mikey chuckles.

"What's so funny?" I snap. Between Shane's moodiness and the twins goofing around like teenagers whenever they get the chance, I sometimes feel like I'm the only sane one living in this place.

"Just you asking for the whole nine yards, that's all. You planning on having some alone time with her, Bro?" Liam says, his grin widening further.

"Grow the fuck up," I snarl as I stalk toward the refrigerator and take out a beer. The twin's juvenile behavior doesn't usually bother me at all. At twenty-six, they're eight years younger than me and they're both pretty funny most of the time. But today they've touched on a nerve. Because I have been thinking about Jessie Heaton, and what she would look like naked and tied to my bed since the moment I laid eyes on her. It's taken me by complete surprise, because I haven't looked at a woman like that for a long time.

"Hey, I'm not judging you, Con," Liam goes on. "She is a fiery little pocket rocket and I totally see the attraction. I

wouldn't mind a piece of that ass for myself.”

“Hmm,” Mikey nods his agreement.

“Fuck you,” I say as I turn to face them. “Both of you.”

Mikey laughs out loud. “We’re just fucking with you, Conor.”

“Yeah,” Liam agrees. “To be honest, it’s nice to see you taking an interest in her. It’s been a long time.”

“I have no fucking interest in our new hostage,” I snarl at them before taking a swig of my beer.

“Good to know,” Liam says as he stares at me. “Leaves the pathway open for me and Mikey then.” He grins at me.

“Stop fucking with him.” Mikey nudges Liam on the arm. “He can’t help it if he’s got a hard on for her.”

I down the last of my beer and slam the bottle onto the counter. “You two are a pair of assholes!” I snap and then I stalk out of the kitchen and along the hallway. I almost bump into Dr. Lisa when I do.

“Hey, Conor.” She takes a step back and sucks in a breath. A few years after my brothers and I came to New York, and she was fresh out of med school, she saved Mikey’s life. A fight broke out in our club one night and someone stabbed him in the gut. He lay bleeding out on the dance floor and Lisa knew exactly what to do. She’s been our personal physician ever since. She asks no questions. She is loyal, and she is fucking good at her job. Whenever we need her to, she patches us up and makes sure we’re always at the top of our game. I don’t know what we’d do without her.

“How is she?” I nod toward the door she has just come out of.

“Surprisingly well for a woman who has just been kidnapped,” she says with a flash of her eyebrows.

“I guess she’s pretty tough. We found her working for Nikolai Semenov.”

“Shit! She must be then. Is that where you all went today?” she asks, her eyes full of concern.

“Yes.”

She reaches out and places a hand on my arm. “I know it must have taken a lot for you to go there. Are you okay?”

I swallow hard. I don’t want to have this conversation, and especially not with her. She’s desperate to fix me. If I gave her even the slightest suggestion that I’d consider speaking to one, she’d have a shrink in here within five minutes. She doesn’t understand that what Nikola Semenov did to me can’t be fixed—not like that anyway.

“When will you have her results back?” I ask, ignoring her question.

She stares at me, her eyes searching my face as though she might find the answer to her question written there. Eventually she shakes her head and sighs. “I’ll have them in a few days. I’ll send them over to you as soon as I do. I can tell you now that she’s not pregnant though.”

“Oh? How?”

“She has a contraceptive implant in her arm. And she’s on her period. Do you have any provisions here for her?”

“No.” I shake my head.

“I could have some sent over. But, she’ll need clothes too.” She shoots me a look of disapproval and I can tell she’d like to yell at me for being so dumb.

“Thanks for the offer. But, I’ll sort some stuff out for her. And, she was kind of a surprise. We had no idea she’d be there, and we certainly didn’t plan on kidnapping her and bringing her back here.”

“So, why did you? Kidnapping isn’t exactly your style, Conor. Not women, at least.”

“She asked to come with us. And I don’t know.” I shake my head. “But there was something about her. The way she stood up to Shane. You should have seen her.”

Lisa smiles at me and I realize it's because I'm smiling too. "She seems like a woman who can handle herself. But, just be careful. You have no idea who she really is."

"You sound like Shane."

She shrugs. "Well, maybe that's because we both care about you, and those knuckle-head little brothers of yours."

"Well, I think I'm pretty capable of handling a five-and-a-half-foot computer geek," I arch one eyebrow at her.

She laughs out loud. "Oh, Conor. I'm pretty sure she could turn you and your brothers inside out if she wanted to, sweetheart. So don't say I didn't warn you."

Then she pushes up onto her tiptoes and gives me a soft kiss on the cheek. "Take care of yourself, handsome. I'll be in touch as soon as I have those results."

I watch her walk to the elevator and lift my hand to my cheek to wipe away the lipstick stain she will have left there. She's wrong. I can handle Jessie Heaton. But just how much I'd like to handle her might become a problem.

CHAPTER

FIVE

JESSIE

I sit on the enormous bed in the guest room and stare at the blank screen of the TV with no idea what the hell I'm doing. Why on earth did I ask to come here? I should have pleaded with them to let me go instead.

My stomach growls, and I look down in annoyance. Food would be great right now, but I don't know if I'm allowed to leave this room. I have awful cramps too. The first two days of my period are always the worst. Of all the days for it to arrive! I have two tampons in my backpack, but nothing beyond that.

Soft knocking at the door interrupts my train of thought. "Come in," I shout and a second later Conor walks through the door, holding a brown paper bag in one hand and what looks like a clothing store bag in the other.

He walks in and despite the vast space, he somehow manages to dominate the entire room. Still dressed in his suit pants and a crisp white shirt, he has his sleeves rolled up and there's a tattoo of some kind of bird peeking out from beneath the material. My heart flutters in my chest and I'm not entirely sure it's purely through fear. In fact, I doubt it has anything to do with fear at all.

"I thought you might need some things," he says as he places the bags on the bed beside me.

Sitting up, I swing my legs over the edge as I take the brown paper bag and peer inside. It contains five boxes of tampons in various sizes as well as two different types of pads, a box of Advil and a huge bar of Hershey's. The flush creeps

unexpectedly across my cheeks as the realization that he knows I'm on my period hits me.

He clears his throat. "Lisa said you needed that stuff and I didn't know which type, so..."

"You got this stuff yourself?" I blink at him.

"Yeah." He shrugs. "It seemed the quickest and easiest option."

"Thank you," I say with a sudden rush of gratitude to him.

Get a grip, Jessie! He only bought you some freaking tampons and a bar of candy!

"It's not a problem. There's some basics in there too." He nods to the large clothing store bag. "I know the owner of the store and she picked those out for you."

I drop the brown bag and open the large pink and white one. It contains panties, at least two bras, socks, jeans and t-shirts. I pull out a pair of jeans and look at the label.

"How did you know my size?"

He shrugs. "Sizing people up is kind of my thing."

I nod and wonder how he has honed those particular skills. "Thanks," I whisper.

"We can get you some decent stuff in the next couple of weeks, but that should see you through until then."

I smile at him and my stomach growls loudly.

"You want to come join us for dinner?" he asks as he indicates the open door with his head.

I chew on my lip as I consider his question. Do I just go sit and eat dinner with the men who have essentially kidnapped me?

"We won't bite, Jessie. I promise. And Mikey has cooked."

"Mikey cooks?" I arch an eyebrow at him.

"Yep. He's good too. He trained to be a chef for two years," he says as he holds out a hand to me. "Come. Eat."

The gnawing hunger pains in my stomach decide for me. I reach out and take his hand and the spark from the touch of his fingertips on my palm almost makes me pull back. I look up at him, wondering if he felt that too. But, if he did, he hides it well.

I allow him to clasp my hand in his and then I follow him out of the room and toward the kitchen, where the smell of Mikey's cooking makes my mouth water.



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, I'm sitting at the table with the four Ryan brothers eating a delicious chicken parmesan. They laugh and joke and talk about things that I imagine brothers must talk about. The new film one of them wants to watch on Netflix later, the amazing pizza place that just opened up in Brooklyn, the new waitress in their club who has been flirting with both Liam and Mikey separately, while thinking they're the same person. They include me in their conversation too, as though I'm an old family friend or a welcome guest. And I realize after a few mouthfuls of Mikey's excellent food, that I'm smiling as I listen to them chat.

Shane is quieter than the other three and I suspect he listens more than he speaks, but every so often I catch him staring at me and I know he's sizing me up. He is the protector, and I am an intruder into their world.

I look down at my food every time I catch his eyes on me. If he knew who I really was, I doubt he would have invited me into his home so willingly.

CHAPTER

SIX

CONOR

It's been three days since Jessie came home with us and she's been the perfect houseguest so far. She walked into the kitchen about two minutes ago and doesn't seem to have noticed that I'm here. I take the opportunity to watch her. The tight jeans and tank top I had my contact at the boutique in Manhattan pick out for her fit her perfectly. She stands on her tiptoes to reach the cereal from the top shelf of the cabinet and the tank rides up, revealing her full round ass and a glimpse of the tanned skin on her back. I got her size spot on, but then I've hardly stopped looking at her curvy little body since we left Nikolai's house.

"Damn!" she curses as her fingers barely brush the edge of the box.

I watch her as she jumps, but she doesn't quite have the co-ordination right to grab the cereal at the same time. "You need some help there, Angel?" I ask, suppressing a smile.

Turning sharply, she stares at me. "I didn't see you there," she stammers, and then she glances at her watch. "What are you doing skulking around in the kitchen at this hour of the morning?"

Pushing my chair back, I stand up and walk over to her. "I could ask you the same thing?"

She blows a stray strand of hair from her face and shakes her head slightly. "I couldn't sleep, and I was hungry. You?" She crosses her arms over her chest and I can't help but laugh. I have almost a foot and one hundred pounds on her, but she

glares at me with such defiance in her eyes that it makes me want to put her over my knee and spank her ass. My cock twitches at the idea.

Reaching above her, I take the box of cereal from the shelf before handing it to her.

“Thank you,” she whispers, as though she’s momentarily forgotten that she’s supposed to be annoyed at me. It’s obvious that she was raised to have good manners.

“You’re welcome. And I’ve just finished work,” I finally answer her question. “Our club is open until six am.”

“Wow! And you work there every night?” she asks as she shoves her hand into the box and pulls out a fistful of Lucky Charms.

“No. Just a few nights a week. Would you like a bowl?” I arch one eyebrow at her.

“No, thanks.” She grins before tossing some dry cereal into her mouth and walking over to the table with the box.

I watch the way she moves. She calls herself a computer geek, and she dresses like a teenage boy, as though she wants to give off an energy that she’s clumsy or awkward. But she’s not at all. She is graceful and sexy. Every sway of her hips only accentuates her delicious curves. I wonder for a fraction of a second if I’m welcome to sit with her. But, fuck it! This is my house and I’ll sit where I want.

“Why can’t you sleep?” I ask as I sit on the chair opposite her.

She swallows the mouthful of dry cereal. “My mind is in overdrive. I need something to distract me.”

Her words bypass my brain and go straight to my dick. *No, Conor, that is not the kind of distraction she is talking about!*

I close my eyes and draw in a breath before I answer her. “Read. Watch TV?” I suggest.

“I’m too hyper to read right now. And there’s only so much TV a gal can watch, you know?” She flashes one eyebrow at me.

“You’ve been here for three days. You’re really bored already?”

“Out of my mind! I promise you I’m really good at what I do. Give me a chance to prove it to you. Give me something. Please?”

The way she says the word please makes my cock start to fire on all cylinders. Jesus! I’ve only been talking to her and watching her eat some fucking cereal. How the hell am I going to live with this woman and keep my hands off her?

Avoidance. That’s how.

“Please, Conor?” she says again, this time with a flutter of her eyelashes and all the blood rushes straight to my groin.

“Keep batting those eyelashes at me like that, Angel, and I can promise you I’ll distract you so hard you won’t even know what day it is,” I growl at her, the words coming out before I’ve even considered the implications of what I’m saying.

It doesn’t seem to scare her off though. She narrows her eyes at me and leans forward. “I bet you would, big guy. But, all I’m looking for is some work to keep me busy. Promise.”

I stare at her, licking my lips as I fall into those bright blue eyes. “You any good with hacking into security systems?”

“Yes. It’s my specialty.” She grins.

“Good. There’s a club downtown. I need the footage of a fight that broke out in there two nights ago. Can you get that?”

“If it exists, I’ll get it for you. What’s the name of the club?”

“Angelino’s.”

“Consider it done,” she says with a satisfied smile as she sits back in her chair and stuffs her hand back into the box of Lucky Charms.

“You should really use a spoon and a bowl. Mikey won’t be happy if he catches you manhandling his Lucky Charms like that.”

Her blue eyes twinkle as she bursts out laughing, and I realize the massive double meaning inherent in that statement.

“On second thoughts, maybe he would?” I laugh too. “Now, I am going to find me some sleep. You think you can get me that footage before I go back to work tonight?”

She stands up, wiping the cereal dust from her hand on her jeans and walks around the table until she’s standing so close to me, I can smell that she’s used the vanilla body wash I bought her. “I could probably get it before you even fall asleep,” she purrs, and my cock throbs in appreciation.

I bend my head low, so my lips are close to her ear. “Well, by all means, Angel, if you do, feel free to come in and tell me all about it. I don’t need much sleep anyway.”

Her breath catches in her throat and the sound only makes me harder. But she doesn’t step away from me. “I’ll get onto it as soon as I can,” she says softly, and it’s only then that she steps back and looks up at me, chewing on her bottom lip. I can’t tell if she’s trying to look like a sex kitten desperate to be fucked, or if that’s just her default setting.

I am so damn tired, I can hardly think straight. But Shane would lose his shit if I start fucking our hostage and even my frazzled brain realizes that.

“I’d appreciate that, Jessie,” I say as I straighten up and walk out of the kitchen.

CHAPTER

SEVEN

JESSIE

Walking along the hallway toward the gym, I can't stop my thighs from trembling with each step. Shane told me this is where I'd find Conor and the thought of seeing him working out makes that warm, wet heat build in my core. As if he isn't hot enough in regular clothes. He left me a quivering hot mess after our encounter in the kitchen earlier this morning when he was openly flirting with me.

I'd been so freaking horny that I'd gone straight back to my room and had to relieve myself before I spontaneously combusted. Imagining it was his fingers on me rather than my own had seemed like a good idea at the time, but now, I'm not so sure. Certainly, it's not going to help me feel any less flustered around him. If it's not bad enough that he is possibly the hottest looking man I have ever come across in my life, with his chiseled jaw, dark beard and his deep brown eyes, he's also funny and charming too. The perfect Jessie trifecta!

I push open the door to the gym and step inside. The room is silent except for the sound of his heavy breathing. He's wearing just his shorts and sneakers while he does pull-ups about twelve feet away from me. He's wearing his ear buds and obviously hasn't heard me come in.

I stand here and watch him. His muscular back and shoulders flex each time he moves and his powerful forearms bulge with the effort. A sudden image of him holding himself over me flashes before my eyes. I wonder how good those muscles would feel beneath my fingertips. He has ink all over

his back and shoulders and I tilt my head to try to make out some of the images as he moves. I can see some Celtic symbols, an angel and a phoenix.

I'm almost in a trance watching him when he drops to his feet and pulls out his ear buds.

Clearing my throat, I let him know I'm in the room and hope that he doesn't realize I've been ogling him for the past five minutes. He spins around and grins at me. "You got something for me?" he nods toward my laptop in my hands.

"Yeah," I say, trying to sound really cool and calm while my heart races like a Bugatti and my pussy begins to throb with need. "That footage is here when you want to see it. Shane said you were heading straight out after your workout, and you said you wanted it today, so?" I shrug awkwardly.

He nods before picking up a nearby towel and wiping the sweat from his face. Then he begins to rub the towel over his shoulders, chest, and abs. I know I should look away, but I can't. Never before have I felt so jealous of a square of Egyptian cotton as I do right now.

"Great. Let's see it then." He beckons me toward him and I walk over, opening the laptop and pressing a button to bring the footage onto the screen. I pass it to him, but he continues drying himself off. So instead, I stand there awkwardly holding it for him as he leans close to me and watches the action unfold, and I'm forced to smell his fresh sweat mixed with his expensive cologne. And damn, if it doesn't make me feel like jumping his bones right now.

The footage was easy to find, and it means nothing to me. It's just a bunch of guys having a fight, but it obviously means something to Conor. His eyes narrow and his jaw clenches while he watches. "Fuckers. I knew it!"

"Is everything okay?"

"Yeah. Just some people back in the city who aren't supposed to be, that's all. Nothing me and the twins can't take care of later."

“Oh. I see,” I say as I shift my weight from one foot to the other. He smells so freaking good! How can someone smell so damn good when they’ve just worked out? Dear God, my ovaries are about to explode.

“You did good, Jessie,” he says with a smile before he leans down to pick up a bottle of water from the floor.

Pride swells in my chest. I am good at what I do, and maybe now that he knows it too, I might get my hands dirty around here. I wasn’t lying earlier this morning when I told him I was bored. Looking for the man who killed my family has brought me to a complete dead end. The only files that might have held some information were destroyed by the Ryan brothers when they torched Nikolai’s house after we left. Not that I held out much hope of finding anything. The man who killed my parents and my brothers seems to have disappeared.

Although, I know he hasn’t. He didn’t just disappear that day. But I haven’t seen him for almost eight years and there is no trace of him anywhere. I know he’s alive, though. Even if I wish I didn’t.

“You okay?” Conor asks, snapping me from my thoughts. “You look like you’re in another world?”

“What? Sorry!” I shake my head. “I was thinking about something, that’s all. Is there anything else I can do for you?”

“I’m sure Shane will find you plenty to keep you busy once I tell him how easily you got this.”

“Good. Thanks,” I say absent-mindedly.

He reaches out and cups my chin with his hand and I almost jump back with a jolt at the feeling of his warm skin on mine. I can’t remember the last time anyone touched me with such concern or tenderness. It makes the tears prick at my eyes.

“You sure you’re okay? Did you see something on here that bothers you?” He nods toward my laptop.

I snap it closed and shake my head. “No. Nothing. And I’m fine. Seriously.”

He drops his hand, but he continues to stare at me. “Okay,” he finally says. “I need to grab a shower before I head to work.”

“Of course,” I nod a little too quickly, as though to convince him I’m not currently picturing him naked in said shower and imagining the water running over all the hard contours of his body.

“Thanks again, Jessie,” he says softly before he throws his towel over his shoulder and walks out of the gym.

CHAPTER

EIGHT

SHANE

I watch Conor walking out of my office and sit on the edge of my desk. He's just finished telling me how quickly Jessie got the footage that he requested from Angelino's club. I know how good their security systems are, and the fact that she got what he needed so quickly impresses me, as much as I hate to admit it. Maybe I'll have some use for her after all? I still don't trust her, though. And I don't like the effect she's having on my younger brothers. They're like dogs on heat around her, and sooner or later one of them is going to fuck her. I can smell it in the air.

Closing my office door, I take my cell out of my pocket and walk back to my desk. The soft leather creaks as I sit and lean back in my chair while I scroll through my contacts for the number I need. As soon as I find the name I'm looking for, I press dial and listen to the ring tone.

Jax answers on the fourth ring. "Hey, amigo. Long time no speak."

Jackson Decker is the human equivalent of a highly trained sniffer dog. There is no information, no skeletons in any closets, that this man cannot find. When me and my brothers first moved to New York, we did some work for Jax's boss, Alejandro Montoya, and we impressed him so much that he recommended us for more jobs. Before we knew it, we were the go to men for arms in the New York area, and because of our roots and our father's name, we made a successful challenge for the top. Alejandro and Jax are two of the few men I consider to be friends.

“Hey, Jax. It’s been far too long, buddy. I have a trip to L.A. coming up soon. We should catch up.”

“I’m still recovering from the last time I met up with you and your brothers, Shane,” he laughs, and I can’t help but smile at the memory of the weekend in Vegas he’s referring to.

“I promise no whiskey this time. Okay?”

Jax laughs again. “Deal.”

“I was wondering if you had time to help out a friend?”

“For you, of course. What do you need?”

“You sure Alejandro won’t mind me distracting you?”

“Hey, you know me. I never sleep anyway. Besides, he’s a lot more chilled these days now that he’s a family man.”

“Of course. How old are his boys now?”

“Almost nine months. A right handful. But fucking adorable,” Jax chuckles. “So, what is it you need me to do?”

“I want you to look into someone for me. I’ll send you her picture and the information I have, which isn’t a lot, but I think she’s lying to me about who she is, and I want to know why.”

“Okay. Send it on over. When do you need it by?”

“As soon as possible, buddy. She’s living in my house right now.”

“Oh? You finally looking to settle down, amigo?”

“Not a chance. I don’t even know how to describe what she’s doing here. A willing hostage, maybe?” I shake my head at the words as they come out of my mouth.

Jax laughs down the phone. “Sounds complicated. But I’ll get on it.”

“Thanks. I owe you one.”

“A bottle of that fine Irish whiskey when you visit will do just fine. I’ll let you know when I have anything.”

I thank him again and end the call just as there's a knock at my door. I assume it's the hacker as my brothers don't knock.

I sit up in my chair and straighten my jacket. "Come in."

She opens the door and sticks her head inside. "You wanted to see me?"

"Yeah, I do." I nod, and she walks into the room. She's dressed in her own jeans, paired with one of Conor's t-shirts, which dwarfs her petite frame. But even the oversized top does little to disguise her incredible curves.

My cock twitches, and I curse under my breath. What the fuck? It's not like I've never seen a beautiful woman before, but something about her and the way she looks at me makes me want to bend her over my desk and fuck her until she screams my name.

She hovers uncertainly by my desk and a part of me contemplates leaving her standing there and watching her fidget under my gaze. But I'm not sure that would help my cock behave itself and so I indicate the chair for her to sit down. She takes the seat and crosses her legs, tossing her long red hair over her shoulder and training those bright blue eyes on mine.

CHAPTER

NINE

JESSIE

Shane sits behind his desk, wearing one of his impeccably tailored suits that fits the contours of his body so perfectly, it could have almost been painted on him. His hands are steeped under his chin as he stares at me, his eyes running over my face and body as he appraises me. I lick my lips as I sit opposite him, waiting for him to tell me why he has summoned me to his office this afternoon.

“Conor tells me you hacked into the security feed of that hotel within a few hours?” he eventually asks.

“It wasn’t a complicated system,” I say with a shrug, immediately shifting to my default mode of playing down my talents. Now that I have his attention, I’ve shown him all I need to for now. Stay humble. Don’t let people know just how good you are until you absolutely have to. Then they will always underestimate you. Another lesson my father taught me that I will never forget.

Shane narrows those incredible green eyes at me and I shift uncomfortably under the heat of his gaze. “How exactly does a girl from ...?” he flashes an eyebrow at me and waits for me to fill the blank.

“Minnesota,” I remind him of what I told him and his brothers a few days earlier. I’ve told so many lies that I used to worry that one day I’d forget the truth myself.

“How did a girl from Minnesota end up working for Nikolai Semenov?”

My heart starts to hammer in my chest, but I perfected the art of lying under pressure a long time ago. Now, it comes as easily as breathing. I look at him calmly. Time to bring my A game! “I hacked into a college system for the daughter of one of his men. I impressed him with my skills and he offered me some work. I guess he just kept being impressed because within six months, I was living in his house and I was his go to tech person.”

“You lived with him?”

“Yep.”

He frowns at me. “How did that happen?”

“He was a very paranoid and suspicious man. Before long, he was in need of my services on a daily basis. It made sense for him that I would move in.”

“And did it make sense for you?”

“Well, Nikola Semenov was a hard man to say no to,” I say with a shrug. “I didn’t have much choice.”

“So, you were his personal hacker? That was all?”

I shift in my seat again. “No,” I reply as I look down at the floor.

“He fucked you too?” he says, and I flinch at the ease at which he asks me that question.

“Sometimes,” I admit. This is the truth, at least.

“And you were okay with that?” He tilts his head to one side as he stares at me.

“Again. He is a hard man to refuse. So, I didn’t,” I say with a shrug as I glare back at him. I won’t allow him to use my body and my choices to intimidate me.

His green eyes roam over my body, reminding me of a panther sizing up its prey. But something about the way he looks at me has the heat searing between my thighs. The truth is, Nikolai Semenov made my skin crawl, and I hated every moment of his hands or his lips on my skin. But I needed him, and I’m not against using any means at my disposal to get

what I want—or to simply survive. The prospect of Shane Ryan, or any of his hot brothers demanding anything from my body, however, makes me shiver in an altogether different way.

He clears his throat. “Rest assured, there is no expectation that you provide those services around here,” he finally says.

I nod at him and experience an unexpected twinge of disappointment. That would certainly make my time here more interesting.

“That’s not to say my brothers won’t try,” he adds with the flicker of a grin. “But you’re under no obligation to agree. They were raised right. So, don’t feel bad about turning them down. They can have their pick of any woman from our club downstairs.”

I nod again, and it takes all of my effort not to scowl at him. He’s just made me feel completely worthless, and incredibly small, and I expect he knows it. I wonder if that was his intention. From the little I’ve managed to find out about the Ryan brothers, they’re all business and little pleasure. I know that can’t be completely true. Men like these have to blow off steam sometimes, but whatever they do, they’re discreet about it. No relationships to speak of. No scorned exes waiting to dish the dirt. No jilted one-night stands who are desperate for revenge.

The Ryan brothers have many business enemies for obvious reasons, but very few people who seem to hold a grudge for any personal ones. At least, none that I could find. I’ve hardly been able to dig up anything at all on their personal lives, other than the fact that they moved to New York about ten years ago, quickly rising through the ranks until they became the undisputed heads of the Irish Mafia. Their reign has been challenged many times, but never successfully. Perhaps Shane Ryan is worried that if I get too close to his brothers, I might get too close to him.

I sit up straighter in my chair. “That’s good to know. Thank you,” I say with a forced smile.

He rubs a hand over his jaw and his tongue darts out to lick his lower lip. An image of him using that tongue somewhere else on my body forces itself into my mind and I squeeze my thighs together to stem the rush of heat there. *Behave yourself, Jessie!*

Shane picks up a brown folder from his desk and hands it to me. “I want you to get access to this man’s life. Bank accounts. Medical records. College. High School. Employment. I want to know everything about him.”

Taking the folder from his hand, I resist the urge to peer inside. “Who is he?”

“Someone I am very interested in,” he replies coolly. “Do you have what you need?”

“I have my laptop, so I can get what you need. But I could do it faster with access to a desktop too,” I reply as my eyes flicker to the computer on his desk.

“I’ll arrange for a desktop to be delivered for you tomorrow. You can set it up in the library.”

“Okay. When do you need this information by?”

The noise of his cell phone ringing interrupts our conversation, and he pulls it from his pocket, frowning as he glances at the screen. “As soon as possible,” he snaps. “I need to take this.”

I realize I am being dismissed and stand up with the folder in my hand. “There’s no rush for the desktop. I’ll have the information to you by tomorrow,” I say before turning and walking out of his office with a deliberate sway of my hips. This is my chance to show Shane Ryan exactly what I’m made of and prove to him I can be an indispensable asset to him and his brothers. It offers me the perfect cover while I continue my true goal in life, to find the man responsible for murdering my entire family.

CHAPTER

TEN

JESSIE

I finish writing the last page of notes and snap my laptop closed. Stretching my arms above my head, I stifle a yawn and check the time on my watch. It's a little after 3 a.m. I've been in the library looking into Shane's mystery man for the past six hours. Although he made it clear there was no urgency to his request, I want to get it to him as quickly as possible. I sense that he has the last word on whether I get to stick around here, and I want to prove my usefulness. Strangely, I want to impress him too. I'm not usually driven by my ego, but something about Shane Ryan and his brothers makes me want to show off my talents.

Closing my notebook too, I pick up my laptop and head out of the library toward my temporary bedroom. As I pass Shane's office, I notice the light is still on. I pop my head through the door. He's sitting at his desk and the soft glow of the computer screen illuminates his handsome face.

I clear my throat to announce my presence, and his head snaps up. He frowns. "Hacker?"

"Hey. You never told me that guy was in Ireland," I say with a tilt of my head.

"Take a few more days if you need to," he says with a shrug.

"Oh, I have your information. I was just surprised to find he doesn't live in the States. I was surprised by a lot of things actually." I arch one eyebrow at him.

“You have the information already?” He leans back and rubs a hand across his jaw.

“Yep, it didn’t take me long.”

If he’s impressed, he gives no indication of that fact. “What did you find out?”

I stride into the room and sit down opposite him. “Why are you so interested in a schoolteacher from Cork, anyway?”

“Why I need the information is of no consequence to you, Hacker. The sooner you learn that, the better. Now, what do you have for me?” he growls.

I place my notepad on his desk. “He’s a schoolteacher. Two sisters. His mom is still alive, but his dad died three years ago. He lives alone. He’s never been married but he does have a girlfriend. They have no children. He studied at the University of Liverpool and teaches at the local high school in Cork. He has no criminal record. He broke his collarbone playing rugby when he was seventeen and he has two fillings. Every other piece of mundane information about him is in the notepad. Is there something I’m missing here?”

He scowls at me. “You tell me, Hacker. Isn’t that the whole fucking point?”

I stare at him as I go over the information I discovered today in my head. Unless Noel Callaghan is really a deep cover MI5 agent with no past, then I got everything there is to know. But even if he were, I’d have found something. “No. That’s everything,” I say, sitting up straighter in my chair. “He’s as clean as they come.”

Shane nods and picks up the notebook. “I’ll take a look at this anyway.”

“Right. I’m off to bed then.” I stand up and yawn. “Goodnight.”

“Night,” he says absent-mindedly as he goes back to his computer screen.

I shake my head and walk out of his office. A thank you would have been nice.

Since I'm so annoyed by Shane, I don't even notice Conor standing in the dark hallway until he speaks. "Working late?"

When I look up, he's leaning against the kitchen doorframe, his legs crossed at the ankles and his arms folded over his chest.

"You could say that," I reply as I walk toward him. "You?"

"You could say that," he grins as he mimics my response. He doesn't move out of the doorway as I reach it and I stand and look up at him. His eyes are so dark and intense. I feel the tightening in my abdomen as I stare into them. He is so freaking handsome.

He narrows his eyes at me. "What were you and Shane up to at this time of night?"

"He asked me to look into someone for him. I just finished up. Now, I'm off to bed."

Something flickers in his eyes and then he bends his head low. He smells of whisky and expensive cologne. He lifts his hand to my hair, taking some and curling it around two of his fingers. "You could come back down to the club with me?"

"I have nothing to wear. Besides, isn't it almost closing time?"

"No." He smiles. "A few hours to go yet."

"Well, you'd better get down there and see to your customers. Or maybe there's a special someone down there waiting for you?"

He laughs softly. "A special someone?"

"Hmm. Shane tells me you and your brothers can have your pick of women at the club."

"Is that so?"

"Can't you?"

"What do you think, Jessie?" he says, his voice low and husky as he inches closer to me until his warm breath skates over my cheek. "Can I have *any* woman I want?"

I swallow as his dark eyes burn into mine and the heat sears between my thighs. “I’m sure you can,” I breathe.

“But what if the one I want is off limits?”

My pulse thrums against my skin as he edges closer. “Then you’ll have to find another one. I’m sure there are plenty of women who would be happy to share your bed, Conor.”

“You might be right about that, Angel,” he growls. “Most of the women at the club would die to come up here.”

“So, why don’t you bring them up here, then?” I raise my eyebrow at him.

He shakes his head. “I don’t really do that kind of thing.”

“Why not?” I purr, feeling a strange sense of satisfaction and happiness that he doesn’t bring randoms home from the club every night.

He presses his lips lightly against my cheek. “It’s complicated.”

“Isn’t everything?” I groan as he drops one of his hands to my hip. His fingers press into my flesh and I lean into him. My breathing grows faster as my heart pounds in my ears. He moves his head slightly, lightly dusting his lips across my skin and my insides turn to molten lava.

“Jessie,” he growls.

“Conor!” Shane’s voice slices through the air. “Chester is looking for you.”

The moment broken, Conor straightens up and I take a step back. “I’m on my way back downstairs now,” he says and then, without even a glance in my direction, he walks down the hallway toward the elevator.

Shane disappears back into his office and I lean against the wall, letting out a long slow breath as I try to calm my racing heart and the throbbing between my thighs. Living with the Ryan brothers is going to be more of a challenge than I expected.

CHAPTER

ELEVEN

SHANE

Eighteen days. That's how long it's been since Jessie came into our lives. Somehow, she has slipped into our world and our daily routine seamlessly and effortlessly, as though she's always been here. It's a skill to both blend into the background while also making yourself indispensable.

My brothers are calmer and more content with her around. Mikey and Liam's usually boundless energy and their constant trawling for trouble whenever and wherever they can find it, is lessened, dampened by their late-night talks with her, and her laughter. She loves to listen to their stories and they love to embellish them for her entertainment. I see the biggest change in Conor. That haunted look in his eyes disappears when she's near him. I've been worried about him since his ordeal last year. I was even coming around to Lisa's idea about getting him some sort of therapy. Who knew all he needed was a curvy red-head with a smart mouth?

My brothers watch her. No matter what she's doing, they're looking at her. And I watch them watching. There's a sexual energy that's growing with each passing day, and something soon is going to have to give. It seems to vibrate through any room that she's in. I wish my brothers would go out and get laid just to defuse the tension. Maybe then I could stop watching her as well.

I watch for other reasons too. I'm waiting for her to put a foot out of line. Although she hasn't yet. Her two-week trial period passed without acknowledgement from any of us. I suspect that neither her nor my brothers wanted to bring my

attention to the fact, and they've done their best to avoid any mention of how long our intruder will be staying with us.

The truth is, Jessie has proven herself repeatedly. She's skilled and efficient, leaving me with no doubt that she is one of the best at what she does. Since that first assignment I gave her when I asked her to look into my cousin's fiancé back in Ireland, she's asked no questions about anything else I've given her to do.

If I were to bring her in to my office and review her two-week trial, I'd have nothing but good things to say about her. I'd have to tell her that she's made our lives easier, and has proven herself an asset to our business. I would tell her that she seems to be the perfect addition to our team. She brings something to our close-knit unit that I didn't even know was missing. She appears to be the perfect fit.

Except that she's not. Because Jessie is a liar.

Jax has been looking into her for two weeks, and all he's discovered so far is that she's a ghost. She's definitely not Jessie Heaton from Minnesota, although she covered those tracks well. The fact that Jax is still following the trail of dead ends and false leads tells me we're dealing with someone who has worked damn hard to cover up who she really is. I have no idea who I've allowed into our home. I don't know who she's really working for, or who or what she's running from.

And that makes her the most dangerous person I know.

CHAPTER

TWELVE

JESSIE

I sit at the kitchen table opposite Liam— me working on my laptop and him scrolling through his phone—and it’s nice not being alone in a room. He and I seem to spend a lot of time together and we’ve developed an uncomplicated relationship where we can sit in comfortable silence. I’ve probably spent more time with the twins than anyone else since I got here, and they’re both such enjoyable company that I often forget I’m practically a prisoner here. If I asked to go somewhere, I doubt the brothers would stop me, but they’d damn sure escort me there. Entry to this apartment and the garage downstairs is via an electronic fingerprint system. I could hack it and override it if I really wanted out, and I guess they know that. But the truth is, I’m happy here.

When I’ve finished what I’m working on, I close my laptop with a snap, making Liam look up from his phone.

“You fancy some lunch?” I ask him.

He tilts his head and looks at me. “What you making?”

“Me? Nothing. I was thinking we could ask Mikey to rustle us up a grilled cheese.”

Liam grins at me and nods. “He does make the best grilled cheese.”

“Let’s ambush him when he comes in after his workout, then?” I flash my eyebrows at him.

“Deal,” Liam agrees as he puts his phone down on the table.

“So, what did you do while Mikey was training to be a chef then?”

He sucks in a breath and runs his hands through his hair. “I’ve only ever worked for Shane,” he says with a shrug. “But Mikey always wanted to be a chef.”

“Why didn’t it work out? He’s a great cook.”

Liam nods. “Yeah. But it’s kind of hard to be anything other than what we are when you’re a Ryan.”

I nod at him because I know all about not being able to escape the shackles of a name. I’d like to know more, but I don’t want to push him. Liam is the quietest of the twins and although he and I get on great, I figure it takes a lot for him to open up to people and he’ll talk to me when he’s ready.

“Shane did his best to help us live a different life, don’t get me wrong,” Liam goes on, feeling the need to defend his older brother. “He never wanted to leave Ireland, but he came here for us. Mostly for me and Mikey.”

“Oh?”

He shakes his head. “Some shit went down. We were sixteen. He brought us here. Mikey trained to be a chef. But me, well...” He looks down at his hands and starts picking at his fingernails.

“You what?”

“Shane is the boss. Conor is the negotiator. Mikey is the funny one who cooks great food and can also make a bomb out of the ingredients of most people’s pantries. And me, well, I guess I’m just the fuck-up.”

I blink at him. Wow! “Well, that’s not how I see it,” I say as I pick up a grape from the fruit bowl on the table and pop it into my mouth.

He arches an eyebrow at me. “And how do you see it, Jessie?”

“You’re the buffer.”

“The what now?” he says with a frown.

“The buffer. The person who stops Conor and Shane from killing each other, or Mikey from blowing too much shit up. You’re the one who keeps them all that little bit calmer.”

Liam narrows his eyes at me. “You think?”

“That’s what I see anyway.” I shrug just as Mikey bounces into the kitchen.

“We got this place to ourselves tonight, kids. The folks are going out.” He grins at us as he rubs his hands together. *The folks* are how he sometimes affectionately refers to Shane and Conor.

“Where are they going?” Liam asks.

“The O’Malley’s wedding. They forgot all about it,” Mikey replies. “And they’re staying over at the hotel too.”

“Who are the O’Malley’s?” I ask.

“Old family friends.” Liam pulls a face. “Boring fuckers, the lot of them.”

“Why aren’t you two going then?” I take another grape and watch as Mikey pulls off his sweaty gym shorts until he’s standing there in just his skintight boxer briefs, and I try not to choke on the grape I’ve just eaten. I’ve seen them both bare-chested plenty of times. They constantly walk around shirtless and my ovaries are just about getting used to it, because they are both huge and ripped. But, damn, if there isn’t the outline of the hugest cock beneath the gray cotton of Mikey’s underwear.

Dear God, these boys are fine!

“You checking out my tattoo, Jessie?” Mikey asks with a chuckle, referring to the tattoo of a phoenix that he has on the very top of his right thigh.

“Yeah,” I reply as calmly as I can. “That’s some nice ink.”

He nods to himself as he walks toward the utility room and disappears inside. I swallow hard. If he comes out of there naked, I might just pass out. But my modesty is spared when he walks out a few seconds later with a white towel wrapped around his waist.

“So, why aren’t you two going then?” I ask again.

Liam and Mikey share a look, and Mikey shakes his head and winces.

“We’ve been banned from any weddings because at the last one, Mikey here got caught fucking the bride in the restroom. At the reception.” Liam laughs.

My hand flies to my mouth. “Mikey?” I stifle a laugh. “Really?”

He nods as he walks over to the table and sits down. “Yeah, but...”

“But what?” I gasp. “That’s awful!”

“So, why are you smiling then, Red?” He flashes an eyebrow at me.

“Because it’s just so... so bad.”

He shrugs. “What can I say? She only married him for his money. And I was young, dumb and full of—”

I hold my hand up to stop him talking. “Yeah, I don’t need to hear the end of that sentence, thanks. But, wow! No wonder you’re banned from weddings.”

He nods proudly.

“But why aren’t you allowed to go?” I turn to Liam.

“Oh, me? Well, when the groom found Mikey balls deep in his new virginal wife, he tried to cut off his head with a butter knife. So, I might have knocked him unconscious and then used his brand-new Maserati as our getaway car.”

I hold my hand over my mouth as I burst out laughing. “You boys are so bad,” I say with a shake of my head when I’m able to talk.

“You have no idea, Red.” Mikey arches an eyebrow at me. “So, what are we doing tonight? All night rager?” he suggests.

Liam sighs and rolls his eyes.

“How about a movie marathon?” I offer, and both of their eyes light up.

“You’re not going to make us watch any more where the dog dies, though, are you?” Liam says. “That fucking cut me up that.”

“No more dogs dying.” I smile as I recall them both sniffing, watching *Marley and Me* with me a few nights earlier. “How about *Fast and Furious*? We could stay up all night and watch all eight?”

“Or, we could watch two, and then crack open the tequila and play some poker instead?” Liam suggests.

“Strip poker?” Mikey grins.

“What? You two hardly wear any clothes as it is. The game would be over in like, five minutes.” I pop an eyebrow at him.

“Makes it easier for you to win then, doesn’t it, Red?” he fires back.

“You don’t exactly wander around here fully clothed yourself.” Liam laughs, and I shoot him a look of mock indignation. “You keep stealing my shirts and wearing them.”

“I know.” I bite my lower lip. “But they’re so comfortable. Plus, they’re so big on me, they’re just like a dress.”

Mikey leans onto the table and props himself up on one elbow. “Yeah, but do you wear anything underneath it, Red?” He winks at me.

“Well, I guess you’ll have to beat me at poker to find out,” I say with a grin.

“Fuck!” he chuckles. “You’re going to get us in a whole load of trouble, Red.”

I open my mouth to respond, but just then Shane and Conor walk into the room and the conversation changes to the O’Malley’s wedding.

CHAPTER

THIRTEEN

MIKEY

“Are you sure you’re okay if we stay out all night? You won’t do anything stupid?” Shane asks as he fastens his watch.

I look over at my twin and roll my eyes, and he stifles a laugh. Shane is in a foul mood and if we piss him off too much, then he might just stay home and put a stop to our planned night of fun with our new house-mate.

“We’ll be fine. I’m pretty sure me and Liam are capable of looking after a one-hundred-pound computer nerd for the evening.”

“She’s not a nerd,” Liam snaps in her defense, and I shake my head at him. My twin brother has it bad for Jessie. Not that I blame him. I mean, she is pretty cute, has an ass that I could happily eat my dinner off, and she’s funny too. Hence, our planned night of popcorn and movies, followed by tequila and poker. If we’re really lucky, we might just get to play strip poker.

“He’s just kidding,” Conor says as he walks into the kitchen. “Aren’t you?” He narrows his eyes at me.

I nod in response to his question. “Shane thinks we can’t be trusted to keep an eye on our hostage for the night.” I arch an eyebrow at Conor and he does his best to hide his smile while shaking his head in exasperation.

“They’ll be fine. Now let’s go so we can get this over with. I hate spending time with the O’Malley’s. I can’t believe you’ve agreed we’d stay at their hotel,” Conor snaps.

“Oh, quit your whining,” Shane barks. “Let’s go. You can drive.”

“Have fun.” I smile before shoveling a spoonful of Lucky Charms into my mouth.

“Just behave yourselves,” Shane warns.

“Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do,” Conor adds with a smirk.

“Well, that’s a pretty vast range of shit we can do then,” Liam says as he takes a can of soda from the refrigerator.

“We’ll be back first thing,” Shane says before they walk out of the kitchen.

“Don’t rush!” I shout after them.

“You think Jessie has finished her bath?” Liam asks me as soon as our brothers have disappeared from sight.

“Why don’t you go find out?” I flash my eyebrows at him.

“Don’t be such a perv.” He punches me on the arm.

“I mean like go knock on her door or something, numbnuts.”

He takes a drink of his soda and stares at me for a few seconds. “I’ll go check.”

“I’ll get the popcorn ready.”



HALF AN HOUR LATER, Jessie sits between Liam and me on the sofa while we watch *Fast and Furious*. She sits cross-legged, holding the bowl of popcorn on her lap as the three of us eat.

Once the bowl is empty, I take it from her and put it on the floor, but she doesn’t shift her position. She’s wearing one of Liam’s old baseball shirts and she was right earlier, it is as long as a dress on her small frame, but only a very short one. I try to focus on the movie, but my eyes are constantly drawn to that space between her thighs. I imagine what it would be like to put my hand there. What she would feel like? Smell like? Would she taste as good as I think she would? My cock grows

harder with each passing minute and the more I try to stop thinking about all the filthy things I'd like to be doing to her, the more difficult it becomes.

I don't know if Jessie is aware of the growing sexual tension on the sofa, but Liam is looking at that space where the popcorn bowl was a few minutes earlier too, and I know that it's no longer popcorn he's thinking about eating. Maybe she does know, because she wiggles her ass slightly and that damn t-shirt rides up even higher.

When I realize I'm staring, I close my eyes and suck in a breath. But fuck if I don't feel her warm, soft fingers resting on my leg. The heat of her skin on mine makes my cock stand to attention. I open my eyes and place my hand over hers. She turns hers palm side up, threading her fingers through mine. Then she gives me a quick smile before she pulls our joined hands into her lap, until they're right where that bowl just was. The heat from the space between her thighs is so fucking obvious now that my hand is there, and it's driving me crazy.

Liam slides an arm around her shoulders and then we all just sit there like that for a few minutes watching the movie—or at least I'm trying to. I am so fucking aware of the fact that my knuckle is about one inch from her pussy. If I straightened out my little finger, I could touch her through her panties.

My cock is getting so hard it's becoming painful and I use my free hand to discreetly shift it into a more comfortable position. When I glance sideways at her to see if she's noticed, she has her head turned toward Liam. I stare at them as he reaches out his free hand and cups her cheek. Then he's leaning into her, pressing his lips over hers. She kisses him back and his hand drops to her leg. My eyes are drawn to his fingers as he gently squeezes the inside of her thigh while the two of them continue to tongue each other. I suck in a breath as my dick feels like it is about to explode.

She squeezes my hand tightly and I don't know if it's the effect of Liam kissing her, or she does it on purpose, but she groans and drags our joined hands closer to her body, until my knuckles are pressed against her panties.

Fuck! They're already damp. My cock twitches because all I can think about is how wet she must be beneath them. I graze the back of my fingers over her pussy through the fabric, and she groans into Liam's mouth as she untangles her fingers from mine.

Double fuck! I figure this is my cue that I'm not a spectator here. Turning my body to hers, I reach up and pull her hair back from her face, planting a kiss on her neck and making her moan softly. I keep kissing her there, sucking and nibbling at the tender skin as I pull up her t-shirt with my free hand. My fingertips brush over her stomach, down to the band of her panties. Her breathing grows faster as I continue kissing her neck, while my fingers dip beneath the waistband of her underwear, sliding lower until I reach her slick folds.

I brush two fingers between them. "Fuck! You're so wet, Red," I breathe against her skin.

Her clit is already swollen, and I rub it softly as the groan of pleasure rumbles through her throat. She presses herself against my palm and I increase my pressure while I keep sucking on her neck. Listening to my brother swallowing her whimpers and moans as he kisses her, while I play with her pussy, makes me want to make her moan even more. I slide two fingers lower and my cock throbs as I realize just how much she's fucking dripping for me.

For both of us.

Edging myself closer to her, I push two fingers inside her and she gasps out loud as she wrenches her lips from Liam's. Her slick heat drips all over my fingers as I push deeper inside. She squeezes me tight, pulling me deeper into her, and I know there is no way I'm leaving this room without feeling this pussy on my cock.

CHAPTER

FOURTEEN

LIAM

I look down at my brother's hand in Jessie's panties as he finger-fucks her and it might just be the hottest thing I've ever seen in my life. The stain of her arousal is visible on the scrap of black fabric as the room fills with the wet sound of him pumping his fingers in and out of her dripping pussy. My cock feels like an iron bar and I palm it through my shorts to get some relief.

She's still looking at me, her eyes dark with lust as she bites on her lip and tries to stop herself from moaning.

"I can smell how wet you are, baby," I chuckle as I slide my hand up the inside of her thigh. "You like Mikey touching you like that?"

"Yes," she breathes.

"She's fucking soaking, Liam. If she smells this good, can you imagine how good she tastes?" Mikey groans as he thrusts his fingers in and out of her.

"Fuck!" I grunt as I imagine just that. I look into her eyes. "I want to taste you, baby."

She nods and my cock throbs in anticipation.

Mikey looks at me and winks, and I reach down and grab her hips, swinging her around until she's lying on the sofa. Mikey turns too, so that her back is pressed against his chest while he still has his fingers inside her, working her for me.

She holds onto his forearm with both hands. "Mikey," she moans, and my cock twitches at the sound. I'm going to make

sure she's moaning my name pretty soon.

Taking hold of her panties, I peel them slowly down her legs as Mikey keeps playing with her. The top of her thighs and his hand are slick with her arousal and I lick my lips at the realization that I'm about to taste her. I have wanted her from the minute I laid eyes on her.

Placing my hands on the inside of her thighs, I smile as they tremble beneath my touch. Mikey slides his fingers out of her and a rush of her cum trickles out of her opening, making her moan loudly.

"Fuck, Jessie. You are soaking wet, baby. You really like Mikey's fingers, huh?"

She can't answer me, because Mikey tilts her head up and kisses her as I push her thighs wide apart. I should probably take my time and savor this, but I can't wait a minute longer. Dipping my head, I push the flat of my tongue against her hot entrance and her hips jolt upwards. I suck her delicious juices and she bucks against my tongue so much that I have to wrap my forearms around the back of her thighs to hold her in place.

She groans loudly, but when I glance up, Mikey has his hand on the back of her neck, crushing her face to his as he devours her mouth and swallows her sounds of pleasure.

I dip my head low again and lick the length of her folds before I swirl my tongue over her clit, and then I stay there, sucking and nibbling the swollen bud of flesh until Mikey can't swallow her screams any longer. I slide a finger inside her as she comes for me and coats me with the sweet release of her juices. Her thighs tremble violently, and I look up at her. She's so fucking beautiful when she comes. Her blue eyes burn dark with lust and her cheeks are flushed bright pink.

"Liam," she moans as her eyelids flutter.

Mikey chuckles softly. "We've hardly even started yet, Red."

CHAPTER

FIFTEEN

JESSIE

My head spins and the blood thunders in my ears as I lie with my back pressed against Mikey's bare chest and his arms wrapped around me. Liam lies with his face still only inches from my pussy after he's just given me the most incredible orgasm of my life. Although, I suppose he can't take all the credit—Mikey did get things started pretty nicely. I was already on the edge by the time Liam got his magical tongue anywhere near me.

I had no idea the twins saw me that way. I've spent so much more time with them than with Conor or Shane since I've been here. They're fun and easy to be around, and they're both pretty hot. But I always thought they saw me as a buddy, or an annoying kid sister they like to make fun of.

Until tonight when I was sandwiched between them on the sofa. I've seen them shirtless before. I knew they were ripped, but being wedged between those muscular biceps and forearms made me feel all kinds of things that I'd never felt about them before. Whether it was the weeks of flirting with Conor that had me all on edge and horny, I don't know, but all I could think about was sex.

"You ever been with two guys before, Jessie?" Liam growls, reminding me that I am still sandwiched between two super hot dudes and I am dripping onto their sofa.

"No," I say as a thrill of pleasure shoots through me. I mean, who hasn't fantasized about being with two guys, right? Especially when they're as gorgeous and attentive as these two.

“You want to?” Mikey asks as he brushes my hair back from my face.

“Yes.”

“Good, because you’ve got me as hard as iron here, baby,” Liam growls as he kisses the inside of my thigh.

Mikey presses his lips against my ear. “You ever been fucked in the ass?”

“Yes,” I breathe as I look down at Liam between my thighs just in time to see him flashing a wicked grin at his twin brother.

I’m about to ask what that was about when Mikey reaches down and lifts my t-shirt up. “Let’s get you naked, Red,” he says softly, and the tone of his voice makes my insides melt like butter.

I raise my arms in compliance and he peels the oversized shirt over my head and throws it onto the floor. I snake my arms back and around Mikey’s neck as his hands slide over my breasts, down over my stomach and between my thighs as he rubs my clit with the fingers of one hand, while he pushes one of my thighs flat to the sofa with the other. Liam leans over me and trails kisses in the opposite direction, working his way up until he reaches my breasts and he sucks one of my nipples into his hot mouth while he rolls the other one between his finger and thumb.

The pressure of Mikey’s fingers and Liam’s mouth has me panting with need. I try to grind against them both, but they hold me still between their hard bodies. All I can do is look on helplessly as they tease me, bringing me close to the edge over and over again.

“Look at me, Jessie,” Mikey growls.

I tilt my head to him as he leans down and kisses me while he keeps rubbing my clit and pressing my thigh to the sofa, so I am open wide. There is so much flesh pressed together that it’s becoming hard to tell where one of them ends and one begins. I’m vaguely aware of Liam’s hand moving from my breast. It skates over my stomach and then brushes over his

brother's hand before he pushes two thick fingers inside me, and suddenly the two of them are bringing me to another intense, earth-shattering orgasm.

I buck and shudder between them as their mouths and their hands coax the last tremors of my climax from my body.

"I think she's ready, Mikey," Liam breathes against my skin.

"I think you're right," Mikey agrees, and I lie between them feeling completely boneless, wanting to ask what the hell they mean whilst barely being able to form a coherent word.

Liam pushes himself up onto his knees and holds out his hand. "You okay, Jessie?" he asks.

I nod as I allow him to pull me into a sitting position. Behind me, I'm aware of Mikey sliding off his shorts and then he lays back down on the sofa and places his hands on my waist. "Turn around, Red," he says, and I oblige, catching my first glimpse of his cock as it stands thick and tall and glistening with pre-cum.

Without thinking, I bend down and take it in one hand, licking his arousal from the tip and he groans out loud. "Don't, Red," he groans. "I'm already on the edge, and I don't want to come in your mouth. Not yet, anyway." He arches one eyebrow at me.

I lift my head up and look at his handsome face. "Do you have a condom?"

"We do. But I promise you I'm clean. We both are. We get tested every six months and our last one was four weeks ago. There's been no-one since."

"Don't you ever wear condoms?"

"Always," he breathes as he brushes my hair back from my face.

"So why not now?"

"Because the doc told us you're clean and you're on birth control. And I really want to feel that pussy on my cock, Red." I feel a sudden rush of wet heat at the thought and I move to

straddle him. “So, please, slide yourself onto it before I come just from looking at you,” he adds.

I take his hard length in my hand and then guide it into my wet entrance. I slide down, my walls squeezing him as I take him all the way. He’s big, but I’m so wet from the orgasms that there’s only a slight burn as he stretches me wide open. I roll my hips and smile as his eyes roll back in his head.

“Damn, you feel good on my cock, Red,” he grinds out the words as he places his hands on my hips. “But you need to keep still until Liam gets back.”

I only just realize that Liam is no longer here.

“Where ...” I start to ask but Mikey sits up and sucks one of my nipples into his mouth and I get completely distracted.

“God, you have a hot mouth,” I groan as I try to buck my hips against him.

He bites my nipple just a little too hard and I yelp in half pleasure, half pain.

“Be still,” he growls.

The sound of footsteps behind me alert me to the fact that Liam is back. The snap of a cap opening makes me realize exactly what’s about to happen next, and my legs start to shake at the prospect.

Mikey lays back down, pulling me with him so I am flat against his chest. He keeps one arm wrapped around me, while his free hands fists in my hair and he pulls my mouth to his, slipping his tongue inside and kissing me deeply. The sofa dips behind me and Liam’s warm hands are rubbing gently over my skin.

“This will be cold, baby,” he says as he squeezes lube over the seam of my ass. “But necessary,” he chuckles as he slips one finger over my dark entrance before pushing the tip inside. I gasp at the intrusion, pulling my lips away from Mikey.

He strokes the back of my neck. “Relax, Red. We can stop whenever you want to. Okay?”

“Okay,” I breathe.

Liam keeps edging his finger inside me until he's all the way to his knuckle and then he gently pumps it in and out as I get used to the feeling of being full of him.

"Jessie, try to stop squeezing me so much, baby," Mikey groans.

"Okay," I pant but how the hell am I supposed to stop? Having these two sexy guys fucking me at the same time is mind blowing.

Liam withdraws his finger and I let out a breath. I suck in another one as he presses the tip of his cock there instead. "Help me out, Bro," he growls to Mikey who wraps both arms around me.

"I'm going to hold you still, Red. Once he's inside, you can move all you want, okay?"

"Okay."

"I'll go slow. I won't hurt you," Liam says softly from behind me and my body relaxes. Because I know that's true. I am completely safe here.

Liam pushes deeper inside and the burning stretch is pleasurable too.

"Fuck!" Liam grunts. "She's too fucking tight."

Mikey releases me from his grip and cups my face in his hands. He kisses me again, his tongue swirling against mine, and my body melts into his as Liam is able to push further inside me.

"Damn, Jessie, your ass is so fucking hot," he grinds out as he starts to move his hips.

"You should feel her pussy," Mikey chuckles as he lets me up for air. "Now, do you want to move or you want us to?"

"You," I breathe.

He looks past me and winks at his brother and then they start to move in a perfect fucking rhythm that makes my body thrum with an energy like I have never felt before in my life. Liam peppers my back with kisses while Mikey nibbles my

neck and all I can do is moan their names as they work my body like they've known it forever.

I'm so close to the edge for so long that I feel like I might fall into oblivion.

"You feel so fucking good, Red," Mikey breathes in my ear.

"You're fucking perfect, baby," Liam growls as he thrusts his hips harder.

I plant my forearms on the sofa beside Mikey's head and push myself up slightly, and then something catches my eye from the corner of the room. I turn my head and gasp as I realize Shane and Conor are standing there, staring at the three of us.

"Oh, God," I whisper. "They're back early."

"I'm not stopping, Red," Mikey groans, as he tightens his grip on my hips and pumps into me. I'm still looking at Conor and Shane and the heat flushes my cheeks as they watch us, but all my body can focus on is Liam's lips on my neck, Mikey's hands on my hips and the exquisite feeling of being filled by the two of them at the same time. Shane shakes his head and storms down the hallway away from us. But Conor takes a seat and continues watching us, and that makes it even hotter.

Mikey turns my face back to his. "I want you to look at me while you come, Jessie," he pants as he pulls my hips downwards at the same time he thrust upwards. "Fuck!" he roars as he spills his seed inside me.

The look on his face, Liam's soft kisses on my neck, his cock twitching in my ass, and knowing that Conor is watching all of it, makes my body sizzle with energy. The vibrations ripple out from my core to every nerve ending I have.

"Damn, Jessie," Liam groans as he loses himself too, just as I do.

My head is spinning. I pant for breath as I lay back down on Mikey's hard chest. Liam lies on top of me and plants a

kiss between my shoulder blades. “You’re incredible, Jessie,” he whispers.

“Hmm,” Mikey agrees as he brushes my hair from my damp forehead. “You are.”

I smile as I lay my cheek against his chest. Liam slowly slides out of me, but he holds himself up on his powerful forearms and rests his body against mine. The three of us are slick with perspiration and cum, but I realize I don’t care. I’m not ashamed to admit that I’ve used my body as a weapon in the past. But, as a sixteen-year-old girl at the mercy of a monster, it was the only weapon I had. The men in the circles I’ve always run in, powerful men with too much money and not enough conscience, are used to taking what they want anyway. I always figured it couldn’t hurt to get out in front and give them what they want on my own terms. And if that means I get to use it to my advantage sometimes, then so be it. But I cannot remember a single time in my life when I have ever felt this desired, this wanted, or this cared for. Yes, Liam and Mikey and I just did something that I’d never in a million years thought I’d be down with, but I felt completely cherished by them the whole time.

I blink away a tear as it pricks at my eyes and it rolls down my cheek onto Mikey’s chest.

He places his index finger under my chin and tilts my head up. “Hey, are you okay, Red?”

“Yes.” I smile at him. “More than okay.” I lay my head back on his chest and snuggle against him and his twin. I had almost forgotten what being cared about feels like. It’s only now that I realize Conor has disappeared.

CHAPTER

SIXTEEN

CONOR

I knock on the door to my younger brothers' room and wait for them to answer. Why the fuck am I fidgeting like a nervous teenage boy?

“Yeah?” one of them shouts.

Opening the door, I stick my head inside. They're in their own beds, with no sign of our house guest in there. “Where's Jessie?”

“She's taking a shower,” Liam says with a yawn.

I look toward their bathroom and frown. There's no water running.

“In her own room, bro,” Mikey adds. “She said something about going shopping?”

That she has remembered our shopping trip makes me smile and I silently curse myself. She spent last night being railed by my two younger brothers and that tells me all I need to know about me and her.

Despite that, I can't stop thinking about her. I can't get the image of her incredible body shuddering as she came loudly for my brothers out of my goddamn head. When I went to bed last night, I jerked off twice to it, but it did nothing to relieve the tension. I close the door and leave the twins to go back to sleep before walking along the hallway to Jessie's room.

I knock. And wait.

“Come in,” she shouts, and I open the door wide as she's putting her hair up into a ponytail. She's wearing those skin-

tight jeans and a tank top, and I start to have second thoughts about today. How will I spend the whole fucking day with her? Because I can't stop replaying last night's highlight reel in my head. When I look at her now, all I can see is her being fucked by my brothers, and instead of making me back off, it only makes me want her more. What the hell is wrong with me?

"Hey," she says breathlessly as I walk into the room. "I'm almost ready. We're still going shopping, right?" She gives me a huge, genuine smile and I can't help but wonder if it's for me, or it's because she's still on a high from her exploits last night. But how the fuck do I say no to her?

"Yeah. Course we are. Meet me in the basement in ten."

"Great," she says with another megawatt smile.

I walk out of her door and close it behind me, resting my forehead against the cool wood and letting out a long sigh.



JESSIE IS quiet during the car ride. She seems nervous. I suppose I can't blame her when she is fully aware that I sat and watched her being fucked by my brothers last night.

We arrive at the boutique forty-five minutes later. The owner, Callie Thomas, is an old friend of mine, and she's closed the store for the afternoon for me. This isn't the first time I've brought a woman clothes shopping here, and I always make sure Callie is well compensated for her trouble. This is the first time I've ever brought a woman I'm not fucking, though. I shake my head in exasperation at that realization as we reach the door where Callie is waiting.

"Conor," Callie says with a smile, wrapping her arms around me and enveloping me in a cloud of sweet perfume. "It's so good to see you, darling." She pulls away and looks at Jessie, who is hovering nervously behind me.

"This is Jessie." I place my hand on the small of Jessie's back and guide her toward the entrance. "She's staying with us for a while and she needs a whole new wardrobe."

Callie nods. "You have a beautiful figure. I'll enjoy dressing you today," she says as she openly looks Jessie up and down. "I have some beautiful pieces for you to try."

Jessie seems even more nervous now as I gently push her through the doorway and into the shop. Callie shows us to the fitting room and I sit in one of the huge, plush velvet chairs. At least I'll get to enjoy today's show if I'm lucky.

"What's your style, Jessie?" Callie asks as she whips out her measuring tape and starts measuring her waist and hips.

"Um. Casual, I suppose. I like jeans. T-shirts. A few hooded sweatshirts would be good. I don't need a lot."

Callie looks at me and frowns, and I can't help but laugh. The women I've brought here in the past rarely have such simple tastes.

"Bring some dresses too," I say.

"Yes. Dresses!" Callie claps her hands together.

"I don't really wear dresses," Jessie protests.

"But you might need one if you ever want to come to the club? Or go out somewhere? Just try some?" I suggest, hoping that I might be the one to take her to such places.

"Okay. Dresses," Jessie agrees.

"And some underwear too, Callie," I add, and I watch in perverted satisfaction as the flush creeps over Jessie's cheeks.

"Of course." Callie winks at me, and then she disappears out of the dressing room.

Jessie turns to me with a slight frown on her beautiful face. "What kind of place is this?"

"It's a boutique. Callie owns it and she's an old friend."

She nods. "So, you do this a lot? Bring women here and watch them try on clothes? Is that, like, your thing?"

"I used to do it. Not so much anymore. I don't have to watch if you don't want me to. There's a curtain over there." I

nod toward the corner of the large room. “But I have already seen you completely naked. So?” I shrug.

She blushes deeper. “About that...” she says, just as Callie walks back into the room.

“I pulled some of these for you earlier. Conor told me your size, and these are a few pieces I thought you might like.” She says that last part to me rather than Jessie. She knows my tastes well.

Jessie takes the clothes from her, and Callie leaves again. She holds up the first item of clothing. It’s a short black mini dress with leather and mesh panels.

“You think this is me?” She arches one eyebrow.

“You won’t know until you try it on.” I sit back in my chair, hoping that she’s going to try it on right here in front of me, while also wondering how the hell I’ll hide my raging boner when she does.

“Here goes,” she says with a grin as she peels her tank-top over her head.

My mouth goes dry as I watch her undressing, stripping down to her tiny black cotton panties and her bra. I can’t take my eyes off her and I know that she knows I’m staring at her. When she finally has the dress on, she gives me a twirl.

“What do you think?” she asks with a smile.

“It looks fucking incredible,” I answer honestly, and completely unguarded.

She blushes again, but she’s smiling widely. “I haven’t worn anything like this for a very long time,” she says, almost to herself.

“What do you think?” I ask her.

“I like it. It makes me feel...”

“What?”

She bites her bottom lip as she looks at me, her cheeks flushed pink. “Sexy? Is that big-headed to say that?”

“No,” I laugh. “Especially not when it’s one hundred percent true. You look hot, Angel.”

She sucks in a breath and I’m sure I feel something pass between us. My cock is growing harder with each passing second, and I’m not sure I’m going to make it through this afternoon without burying myself in her.

The moment is interrupted by Callie coming back into the room, armed with lots more clothes, and piling them onto the empty chair. She stays with us, helping Jessie try on various outfits. I continue watching Jessie. She gets more relaxed with Callie and me as the day goes on. She complains good-naturedly every time Callie insists she tries on something that’s not her usual style, but she does it anyway, and she likes almost everything that Callie has chosen. The woman has good taste.

After two hours, Jessie has tried on almost all the clothes and I have a raging hard on from watching her shimmy her incredible body in and out of them all afternoon. Callie looks at the small pile remaining, which comprises only underwear. She picks up a matching red lace bra and panties and holds them out. Jessie chews her lip and looks at me, and I almost pass out with the rush of blood to my cock.

“Leave us,” I growl to Callie and she nods before slipping silently out of the door.

“You want me to try these on too?” Jessie asks, her voice sounding like the purring of a kitten.

I could ask her what she wants. I should ask her. But I am too far gone. I need to see her naked. “Yes.”

“Okay,” she breathes as she reaches behind her and unclips her bra. Her heavy breasts spring free. Her nipples are already hard, and they seem to pebble further under my gaze. She hooks her fingers under the waistband of her panties and then slides them slowly down her legs before kicking them off her feet. My eyes roam over her entire body greedily, in case I never get this opportunity again. She takes the red lace set and puts it on just as slowly, and I don’t think I have ever been this turned on by a woman putting her clothes *on*.

“Well?” she stammers as she holds her arms out wide.

“You look fucking beautiful. I would say that you know that, but I’m not sure you do?” I arch one eyebrow at her and she bites her lip nervously.

My dick is going to bust out of my zipper any second, and I groan in frustration. Sitting forward, I put my head in my hands. “Fuck!”

“What is it?”

I sit back up and run my hand over my face. “You’d better get dressed, Jessie. Or…” I swallow. I can’t even finish the sentence.

“Or what?” she asks, and I swear she must know exactly what she’s doing to me. How could she not?

Standing up, I walk over to her until we’re standing just inches apart. Her body trembles slightly and I bend my head lower. “You know what, Jessie. So, stop playing games with me.” I reach up and brush her cheek with my knuckles.

“I’m not playing games, Conor,” she whispers. “I thought after last night.” She lowers her head.

“You thought what?” I demand.

“That you wouldn’t…” She shakes her head and sniffs as though she’s about to cry.

Placing my hands on her shoulders, I turn her around until she’s facing the mirror. I wrap one hand around her throat, holding her head upright.

“Look at me,” I growl in her ear, and her eyes flicker over my face in the mirror until they lock on mine. “Do you think that just because I watched my brothers fucking you, filling you with their cocks, that I don’t want you still?”

Her whole body trembles as my hand slides over her hip and down to her panties. “You look so fucking beautiful when you come, Jessie, it only makes me want you more.”

She draws in a shaky breath as my hand slides beneath the band of her lacy red underwear and onto her shaved mound.

She keeps her eyes locked on mine and my cock throbs painfully. I grow even harder as I look at our reflection. I have one of my hands on her throat and the other one in her panties, and damn if it isn't the hottest thing I've ever seen in my life.

"I want to see you come for me, Jessie. I want to make you come on my fingers, and then my mouth, and then my cock." I say in her ear and she whimpers. "But I'm not as gentle as my little brothers. I know you believe that I'm a pussycat, but that's because you haven't seen the real me, Angel. He is an animal. I keep him safely locked away in a cage, but you make me want to let him loose."

Her throat constricts under my hand as she swallows.

"Conor," she groans.

Sliding my fingers through her pussy lips, I stifle a groan as I find her soaking wet for me. I hope she wants this as much as I do, because I'm edging past the point of no return here. My whole fucking body is screaming to be inside her. My mouth waters at the prospect of tasting her—her mouth, her skin, the sweet cream that she's dripping all over my fingers.

Come on Jessie. Let me in!

I drop my hand from her throat to one of her breasts, tugging on her hard nipple through the delicate fabric of her bra while the fingers of my other hand slide further into her folds, until I'm at the entrance of her hot, wet heat. The only sound in the room is our breathing. Fast and shallow, matching each other's breath for breath.

I pause and close my eyes, savoring the sensation of her in my arms. Our bodies pressed together so closely we're almost like one.

I need her to want this as badly as I do. Because once I get a taste of her, once I get any part of my body inside her, I know I'll never be able to stop. Her heart hammers against my hand and her juices coat my fingers as her breathing grows even faster. Perspiration beads on my forehead as I use every ounce of self-control I have not to drive my fingers into her.

"Jessie?" I hiss against her ear.

“Please, Conor,” she gasps.

“Please what, Angel?”

“I want you,” she breathes and as soon as the words are out of her mouth, I push two fingers deep inside her and groan as she releases a rush of wet heat.

She places her palms flat on the mirror, her breath fogging the glass as she rocks against my hand while I pump in and out of her dripping channel. Her walls clench around me, sucking me in further and my eyes almost roll into the back of my head as she whimpers my name.

“Fuck, Angel!” I growl in her ear as I finger fuck her. “You feel even better than I imagined you would. I can’t wait to feel this hot pussy squeezing my cock.”

“Conor,” she groans my name as I slide my other hand from her nipple down inside her panties too, until both of my fists are stretching the delicate fabric. I rub the pads of my index and middle fingers over her swollen clit and suck in a breath as they slide easily over the swollen bud of flesh. She writhes beneath me, wriggling so much that I press my body against her until her top half is pinned to the glass. Her pussy squeezes me tighter as she gets closer and closer to the edge.

“Spread your legs wider,” I order, and my cock almost busts my zipper as she obeys me without hesitation. I slide a third finger inside her and her body shudders as she rocks against me.

“You like that, Angel?” I growl in her ear.

“Yes,” she pants as her head drops low.

“Look at me! I want to see that beautiful face when you come apart for me.”

Lifting her head, she looks at me through the mirror and the desire in her eyes matches mine. I need to make her come soon so I can fuck her hard. No more teasing.

I press my fingers hard against her clit, and she cries out as her orgasm hits. Her juices pour over my fingers and my cock weeps in appreciation. When she finally stops shuddering, her

body sags against mine as I rub the last tremors from her body with one hand while wrapping my other arm around her waist to steady her.

She tips her head back against me with an enormous smile on her face and I plant a kiss on her neck. When her legs stop trembling and she can stand unaided, I drop my hands to my pants and undo my belt and zipper, pulling down my boxer shorts until my cock springs free. I press against her as I tuck my fingers into the waistband of her panties.

“How many women have you fucked in this room?” she asks as she meets my eyes in the mirror, her face flushed and her eyes dark with desire.

“Plenty. Is that a problem?” I arch an eyebrow at her.

“No. But do you use protection?” she breathes.

“Always,” I growl.

“So, do you have a condom?”

“No, Angel,” I grunt as I pull her panties over her juicy ass and down her legs. “And there is not a fucking chance in hell I’m wearing one with you.”

She blinks at my reflection. “Why?”

“I promise you I’m clean. I know you are. My brothers are. I also know you have that implant to prevent any accidents. And I want to feel your cum on my cock when I make you come apart again. I want you to feel every inch of me, Angel, just like I’m going to feel every bit of you. Okay?”

“Okay,” she breathes.

“Good. Now, turn around.”

She turns and faces me, snaking her arms around my neck as I slide my hands to her ass. I lift her until her legs wrap around my waist and she’s pressed against the mirror. Pushing my hard length against her folds, I coat myself in her slick heat as I press my lips against hers, swallowing her groans as I slide the tip inside her.

Fuck! I'm going to blow my load in her right now if I'm not careful.

"Conor," she gasps as she wrenches her lips away from mine.

"You want this?" I growl as I edge my cock in another inch.

"Fuck, yes!" she pants as she rolls her hips forward.

I have wanted this since the minute I saw her in Nikolai's house. I slide myself all the way inside her. She moans like a porn star while all I can do is growl like an animal. She's so wet that I slide in easily, right to the hilt as her pussy squeezes me.

"Jessie," I hiss. "Stop milking my cock, Angel, or I won't last five minutes."

"I can't help it Conor," she breathes as she leans her head back against the mirror. "You feel so good."

Fuck!

I bend my head and take one of her pebbled nipples into my mouth, sucking on the delicate bud as I thrust in and out of her soaking channel. I'm so fucking close to losing myself in her. But I need to make her come first. I need to know how she feels when I'm buried inside her. I let her nipple go with a wet sucking sound, plant my hands on the mirror beside her head and seal my mouth over hers as I rail into her, driving at the spot inside her that's got her thighs trembling around my waist. She moans, and I swallow the sound.

And then I feel her. Her pussy contracts around my dick and she almost sucks the breath from me as she comes again, taking me over the edge with her while she rakes her nails down my back.

CHAPTER

SEVENTEEN

JESSIE

I wrench my lips from Conor's as my legs tremble and the last waves of my orgasm roll through my body.

"Fuck, Angel," he groans as he presses his forehead against mine. "Your pussy should come with a health warning."

I don't have time to reply because we're interrupted by a knock at the changing room door. His head turns toward the noise and he frowns. "Give us five minutes," he shouts. "And we'll be taking everything."

"Everything? I don't need this many clothes, Conor."

He pulls out of me, letting my feet drop to the floor until I'm standing against the mirror. "They all looked good on you. You should have them," he says as he steps back from me and starts fastening his pants and belt. "Now, get dressed."

My hands drop to my side and there is an unexpected lump in my throat at the coldness of his tone after what we've just shared. But then he looks up at me, his eyes burning into mine as he frowns again before lifting his hand to my face and running a finger along my cheekbone. "I need to get you home, so I can take you to bed and fuck you properly, Angel," he growls. "So, move your ass. Now!"

I bite back a smile and stoop to pick up the red panties from the floor.

"Actually, I don't think we should take them," Conor says with a grin as he snatches them from my hand. "I'll tell Callie to put them back in the store."

“Conor!” I gasp as I reach out to snatch them back. “Of all the things we can ask her to put back, those panties are not among them.”

“Why?” He grins at me as he holds them out of reach.

“You know why.” I glare at him. “Now hand them over.”

He holds them to his face and inhales deeply. “On second thoughts, I’m not sure I want random strangers smelling how sweet you are,” he laughs as he hands them back to me.

“You have a filthy mind.” I flash my eyebrows at him as I begin to dress.

“Says the woman who’s been fucked by me and my two brothers in less than twenty-four hours.” He arches an eyebrow right back and I can’t help but blush.

“You make that sound really bad,” I whisper.

He steps closer to me and tucks a strand of hair behind my ear. “It’s not, Angel. It’s fucking hot. Now get your damn clothes on or I’ll carry you out of here in that bra and panties.”

CHAPTER

EIGHTEEN

JESSIE

Conor drove us back to the apartment in record time, flooring the accelerator every chance he got. We take the elevator to the top floor and I'm thankful that none of his brothers are around because he presses me against the wall and starts unbuttoning my jeans as soon as we're in the hallway. His warm hands glide over the skin on my stomach and I suck in a deep breath.

"Didn't you say something about a bed?" I ask with a smile.

"Yes," he growls as he steps back and takes hold of my hand, pulling me along the hallway toward his room. When we reach the door, he pushes me through it and kicks it closed behind us. I turn to face him as I walk backwards toward his enormous bed.

"You are very impatient." I flash my eyebrows at him.

"Impatient? Me?" He grins. "Oh, Angel. You know you're going to regret that, don't you?"

"Really?" I pull my tank top over my head and toss it onto the floor. "We'll see."

He crosses the room and pulls me into his arms before I can take another step. "Don't tease me, Angel. I've been playing nice with you today."

"Then show me naughty."

"Don't," he growls as he runs his teeth along my jaw.

“I can take whatever you can throw at me, Conor. I’m not made of glass.”

He lifts his head and his eyes burn into mine, making the heat sear between my thighs. Then something changes in him. The playful grin on his face disappears. The vein throbs in his temple. “Take off your clothes,” he orders, his breath skittering over my cheeks.

Goosebumps prickle along my forearms, but I unzip my jeans and slide them down my legs, kicking my sneakers and socks off with them when I reach my feet. Standing tall again, I look up at him as I unhook my bra and let it fall from my shoulders. His eyes drop to my nipples and a low growl rumbles in his throat.

“The panties too,” he snaps.

I swallow hard as I slide the red lace panties down my legs until I’m standing before him, completely naked.

He runs his hands up my arms and then down over my breasts and onto my stomach, sliding one hand between my thighs before bending his head low until his lips are pressed against my neck. “I can smell how wet you are already, Angel. I can smell it dripping out of you while you stand there waiting for me to fuck you. I’ve waited three long weeks to have you in my bed, and you tell me I have no patience? Maybe I should teach you about patience?”

I shuffle from one foot to the other as he starts to trail soft kisses along my neck. The sound of his belt being unbuckled and the soft leather sliding against the fabric as he pulls it off makes me squirm in anticipation.

“Hold out your hands,” he orders.

I hesitate for a moment, until I remember that I asked for this. I want to see the real Conor, not the mask he wears to protect himself.

As I hold out my hands for him, excitement ripples through my body, and I watch as he loops the belt around them, pulling the leather so tight that it pinches my skin. But I don’t flinch. I’ve experienced so much pain that sometimes it

feels like I'm almost immune to it. Certainly, I have perfected the art of masking it, at least.

Conor tugs on the belt and leads me to the bed. "Lie down," he snaps, and I do as he tells me. He tugs my arms above my head and ties the end of the belt to one of the metal spindles of his bed-frame. Then he stands up and looks down at me, licking his lips. "Patience?" he growls.

I feel a flash of panic, but I swallow it down. Surely, he's not going to leave me here naked and tied up? But then he starts to undress and relief washes over me. When he's naked too, he crawls onto the bed, trailing soft kisses up from my ankles to my inner thighs. He blows a cold stream of air over my folds and I lift my hips up to his face.

"Conor," I pant.

He doesn't reply. Instead, he trails kisses over my stomach, up toward my breasts, before sucking one of my hard nipples into his hot mouth. He nips me gently, and I feel the rush of heat between my thighs. One of his hands wraps around my throat as the other one slides up my inner thigh, so close to where I ache to feel him, but stopping before he reaches that spot.

"Please?" I breathe.

He pushes himself up and sits back on his haunches, before grabbing my hips and flipping me over like I'm a rag doll, until I'm lying on my front and my wrists are bound even tighter to the bed. Grabbing my hips, he pulls me up until I'm on my knees with my ass in the air and my head pressed against the pillow. I arch my back in pleasure as he runs a warm hand up my thigh, making me purr with anticipation. Then his hand disappears, and without warning, he brings it down on my ass.

Smack.

I don't flinch.

Smack! Smack!

This time I groan, but only in pleasure.

“You like having your ass spanked, Angel?” he growls.

“By you I do, yeah,” I giggle, and he sucks in a deep breath.

He leans over me, pressing his lips against my ear. “If you’re laughing, clearly I am not doing this hard enough.”

“Oh, you are. In fact, I think you might have bruised my poor ass with that last one.”

He leans back and rubs over the burning skin on my ass. “No. Not yet,” he growls, but he doesn’t spank me again. Instead, he slides one of his fingers into my wet channel before spreading my ass cheeks apart. He takes the same finger and slides it over the puckered hole before slowly pushing the tip inside.

“Oh, fuck. Conor,” I gasp.

He pushes two fingers inside my pussy at the same time he slides one all the way into my ass and I moan out loud. He moves them slowly in and out until I’m bucking against him. As I draw closer to the edge, he pulls out of me and I cry out in frustration. I look behind me to find out what he’s doing but I’m bound so closely to the bed, I can’t quite see him. I close my eyes and feel him instead. His hands on my knees, pulling my legs wider apart. His warm breath on my thighs. Followed by his tongue, his delicious tongue, licking the length of my folds.

“Fuck!” he growls against me and the vibrations go directly to my clit. “You taste so fucking good, Angel.”

His fingers dip inside me again and my walls squeeze around him, trying to pull him in deeper and keep him there. A few seconds later, he pulls out again. I don’t know how much longer this goes on for; him taunting my pussy and my ass with his fingers and his mouth.

“Conor. Please,” I cry out when I can’t take his maddening teasing any longer.

“What do you want, Angel?” he growls. “Tell me.”

“Fuck me,” I’m almost crying in desperation. “Please, just fuck me.”

He doesn’t. He leans over me and unties my hands before pushing himself back onto his knees. I pull my hands free and rub the skin on my wrists before turning over until I’m lying on my back, looking up at him. Have I completely screwed this up? And if so, how?

He gets up from the bed and turns on a lamp on the nightstand and I realize it’s almost dusk outside. My insides feel like they’ve turned to liquid as I lie here, my legs shaking from the many orgasms he almost gave me. His body is covered in a thin sheen of perspiration, and I can’t help but lick my lips as I stare at him. From his thick shoulders and bulging biceps, to his chiseled abs and thick thighs. Not to mention the incredibly impressive erection he’s sporting.

“You are freaking beautiful,” I say and then I blush, realizing I’ve said that out loud when I meant to only think it.

He doesn’t reply anyway; he crawls back onto the bed and nestles himself between my thighs until his hard length is nudging at my opening. “Wrap your legs around me, Angel,” he growls.

I do as he tells me and shudder as he slides himself into me, filling me so completely that it almost makes me want to cry. “You feel that, Angel?” he growls. “Your pussy is fucking made for me. You fit me like a fucking glove.”

“Yes,” I breathe.

He fucks me slowly and I rake my nails down his back as I feel every bit of him pumping in and out of me.

“You feel so fucking good, Jessie. I’m going to fuck you all night long, because this pussy is so damn sweet.”

The tears roll down my cheeks as he slides himself into me over and over again, pushing against the spot deep inside me that makes my insides melt like warm butter. He seals his mouth over mine as he fucks me to a long, intense orgasm that almost makes me pass out. As I release a torrent of wet heat,

he sinks his teeth into my neck and drives into me until he finds his own release.

I'm still trembling when he rolls onto his back and pulls me into his arms. "I don't think I have ever fucked anyone like that before, Jessie," he pants.

I place my hand on his chest, right over his heart, where it pounds beneath my fingers. "Like what?"

"Like that. Slow. Soft. With my tongue in your mouth when we both come. Fuck. What are you doing to me?"

I snuggle closer to him, draping my leg over his. "What happened to that animal you told me about?"

"I think you tamed him, Angel," he laughs softly.

"Well, it was amazing."

He hugs me tighter. "Hmm. Amazing."

CHAPTER

NINETEEN

CONOR

The pins and needles in my forearm wake me from a deep sleep. I flex my fingers to try to bring some feeling back, but there's something heavy on my arm.

Shit! Where am I?

My eyes snap open just as she speaks.

“What is it?” she asks sleepily, and I suck in a deep breath. Jessie fell asleep in my arms and is currently lying on my left one. That's why it feels dead. I'm in my bed. I'm safe.

I shift my arm from beneath her, but I wrap my other one around her even tighter and pull her closer. Her body is so warm and soft, and she smells of vanilla and sex.

“Nothing, Angel. Go back to sleep,” I whisper against her ear.

“What time is it?”

I glance over her shoulder at the clock on the nightstand. “A little after 6 a.m.”

“Hmm. Too early,” she breathes as she snuggles closer to me, pressing her juicy round ass against my groin, making the blood that's just been thundering around my body rushing straight to my cock.

I think about sliding myself into her again, but I spent hours fucking her last night and we could both do with a rest. I close my eyes again and breathe in the scent of her hair as I drift back off to sleep.



IT'S ALMOST midday by the time Jessie and I finally emerge from my bedroom, both of us freshly showered and dressed, and looking, I hope, like we haven't just spent at least half of the last twenty-four hours fucking.

"Can you make a start on some breakfast while I check on Shane? I want to make sure he hasn't been looking for us," I say as we step into the hallway.

"Sure," she says before she heads off in front of me, leaving me to watch her beautiful figure walking away from me. I catch up with her in two strides and slap her ass on the way past.

"Hey!" she says with a grin and I can't resist grabbing hold of her and giving her a quick kiss on the lips.

I push open the door to Shane's office and find him sitting at his desk, his head bent low and a scowl on his face.

"Everything okay?" I ask as I walk inside and sit down.

He runs a hand over the stubble on his jawline. "Same shit, different day," he says with a sigh as he closes his laptop.

"Anything I can do to help?"

He tilts his head to one side slightly as he looks at me. "You could stop fucking the computer hacker for a start," he offers.

I wince instinctively. "You know?"

"Of course, I fucking know, Con. Your bedroom is right next to mine. I had to listen to both of you fucking all night. And this morning," he snaps.

"Sorry. I didn't think about you being next door."

"No shit! If it's not you shouting the place down because of your nightmares, I have to listen to you and her having a full on fuck-fest. Did you get any sleep at all?"

"Yes. In fact, I slept like a baby. Did I shout in my sleep last night?" I don't think I did, and Jessie never mentioned it.

“No.” He frowns at me. “I assumed you’d lost your voice.”

“Damn.” I smile. “I didn’t have a nightmare either, Shane, that’s the first time since...”

“I know,” he says with a sigh. “And I’m relieved for you, Con, but, I wish you could figure out another cure.”

My room is at the very end of the apartment, with only Shane’s room nearby. Because for the past eighteen months I’ve had nightmares that make me shout and sometimes scream in my sleep. I usually wake up covered in sweat and twisted in the covers.

“I promise we’ll be quieter tonight.”

He scowls at me. “Tonight? What the fuck, Conor?”

“Well, I mean. Unless she’s with the twins,” I say with a shrug.

“Since when do you share women with Liam and Mikey?”

“I don’t know, Shane. This isn’t me and you know that better than anyone. But it doesn’t feel weird. I’ve just spent almost the entire night inside her, but I wouldn’t care if I walked into the kitchen to find her with either of them. It kind of feels like she belongs to all of us.”

“But she fucking doesn’t Conor. She could belong to anyone for all we know. She could be a fucking spy.”

“She’s not a spy. Besides, if you really thought that, you wouldn’t have her here.”

“I would. Because a spy can be just as valuable as an ally, providing you handle them properly, and you think with your head instead of your dick.”

“Relax, Shane. It’s not like she’s pumping any of us for information or anything.”

“Not yet.” He frowns at me. “I assumed you had more self-control, Conor.”

I close my eyes and take a deep breath. Ordinarily, Shane’s bad moods don’t get to me. It’s just a part of who he is. It’s the way he deals with the constant pressure he’s under. A way to

keep the world at bay when everybody seems to want a piece of him. But, he has touched a nerve.

“Well, you would know all about that, wouldn’t you?” I snarl at him before I walk out of his office.

I feel like shit about what I just said. Shane is only four years older than me, but he’s always been more like a father to me and the twins. Much more than our actual bastard of a father ever was, anyway. I know what he’s given up for us, and the sacrifices he’s made. He even left Ireland for us. It was for the twins mostly. Even though he never wanted to. He would have been happy to live and die in the Emerald Isle. He never asked for any of this, but he took it on anyway. And he’s fucking good at it. He made his way straight to the top and brought us along with him. I owe him so much. We all do.

But that doesn’t mean he gets to preach to us about our life choices. Jessie is the best thing to have happened to me and my brothers in a long time. And she could be good for Shane too—if only he would let her in.

CHAPTER

TWENTY

JESSIE

The apartment is quiet as I walk along the hallway. It's after midnight but I can't sleep. My brain won't seem to switch off lately. I'm not used to having so little to occupy my time. Seeing the light in Shane's office, I wander along and knock lightly on the open door.

"What is it, Hacker?" he asks with a scowl as he looks up from his computer screen.

"I was wondering if Conor or the twins were around, that's all. I didn't mean to disturb you."

He runs a hand over his strong jaw as he glares at me. "They're working. That's what most of us do around here."

"Well, I'd like to be working myself if you'd just let me. I'm bored out of my mind here. Isn't there anything I can help you with?" I ask. So far, Shane has barely given me anything to do and I suspect it's because he doesn't yet trust me fully.

"I'm not sure the kind of work we're doing tonight is up your street, Hacker. Go back to bed."

I don't move. Instead, I stand in the doorway and stare at him. He's so damn prickly, but sometimes I enjoy trying to push his buttons. He's hot when he's angry. "Surely there must be something I can do for you?" I arch an eyebrow at him.

He pushes back his chair so fast that I take a step back in surprise. He stalks across the office toward me. "What do you think this is, Hacker? You think that my brothers are your friends, your fuck-buddies? You have no idea who we are, or what we're capable of. I suggest you remember that the next

time you walk around here in the middle of the night looking for trouble,” he growls as he pushes his face close to mine.

I tilt my chin up and stare at him. There is no way I’m going to allow him to intimidate me. “I think I have a pretty good idea of who you and your brothers really are.”

“Oh, really?” he snarls.

“Yes. Really.”

He narrows his eyes at me. “Fine. You want to work for us, Hacker, then it’s time you discover what kind of work we really do,” he snarls as he straightens his jacket. “Come with me.”

I glance down at my bare feet. “Are we going out?”

“We’re not leaving the building. You’re fine. Let’s go.”

I follow him to the elevator and we wait in silence for it to arrive. I step in first and lean against the wall while he stands opposite me. For a few painful moments, we wait in complete silence with the air in the small space thick with tension. I steal sideways glances at him as he stands there looking good enough to eat in his exquisitely tailored suit and expensive leather shoes. He wears a distinctive cologne. It’s fresh and masculine, and while it’s never overpowering, it lingers in the air and makes my mouth water.

When the elevator stops, I let out the breath I’ve been holding in and he steps out before me, holding the doors open. We’re in the basement. The sound of music from the club above and directly next to us thumps through the concrete space. I follow Shane past the line of expensive cars and notice a room that I’ve never seen before. As we approach, Liam and Mikey are standing outside. They frown at us as we draw near.

“What’s up?” Mikey asks as we reach them and he moves to stand directly in front of the door. There’s a muffled scream coming from the room, and I look between Mikey and Shane. What the hell is going on here?

“I’ve come to show Jessie exactly what kind of line of business we’re in, boys. Now step aside.”

Mikey blinks at him in surprise. “But you know he won’t want that. He won’t want Jessie to see him in there.”

“He’s right, Shane,” Liam adds.

“It’s time she learned the truth. Now step away from the fucking door,” Shane snaps and Mikey does so with no further hesitation or resistance.

My heart hammers in my chest as Shane’s fingers curl around the metal handle, because whatever is going on behind that door is something that Conor or the twins obviously don’t want me to witness. The fact that Shane does makes me wonder exactly what his agenda is.

Shane pushes open the door and steps inside, beckoning me to follow him. I walk into the room and instinctively take a deep breath. As I do, the metallic smell of blood hits my nostrils and almost makes me retch. I stumble, but Shane’s strong hand grips my elbow, holding me up. The room is small and dark, with a single lightbulb hanging from the ceiling illuminating the scene before me. There are three men inside, a large wooden table in the middle, and various tools hanging on the walls. It almost looks like a workshop. Except there’s a man strapped to the table, and another one on the floor, bleeding out. At least, he looks like he was a man once, but now his face is barely recognizable as human.

The third man is Conor. He stands shirtless and bloodied, holding a sharp scalpel in one hand as he snarls like a demon at the man on the table who screams and pleads for mercy.

Conor barely registers us walking into the room. he’s entirely focused on the task in hand—or perhaps he’s lost to it. I can’t figure out which it is yet. I stand next to Shane who openly watches me rather than the scene unfolding before us, as though this is some sort of test.

Suddenly, the man on the floor, who I assumed was already dead, moves. His hand jerks out, and he grabs hold of Conor’s ankle. Conor spins around, raises his foot and brings his boot crashing down against the man’s temple, causing his eye to pop out of its socket. Instinctively, I flinch and my hand flies to my mouth to stifle the scream that threatens to come

out. I turn to walk out of the room because I don't need to see this. But Shane grabs hold of my arm and pulls me back, forcing me to stay and watch as Conor turns back to the groaning man on the table and starts to pummel his head and body with his fists. Blood spatters everywhere and I shrink back to avoid getting it on my clothes.

I notice the flicker of a smile cross Shane's face as he looks at me before turning back to his brother. "I think he's dead, Con," he says and Conor turns to us as though he had no idea we were there.

His face is so full of rage that I barely recognize him as the man I've come to know. "What the fuck is she doing here?" he snarls as he wipes the blood from his face.

"Our little hacker wanted to see what we did here, and I thought it only fair to show her the kind of men we really are. And, well now she knows."

Conor looks at me, his eyes narrowed. "You need to get out of here, Jessie. Now."

I nod in agreement. Shane has well and truly proven his point. "I think I've seen enough."

I turn to walk out while Shane stays behind. "Mikey, take the hacker back up to the apartment," he shouts through the open doorway.

As soon as I'm out of the door, Shane closes it behind me until only the muffled sounds of his and Conor's voices can be heard coming from the room. Mikey puts his hand on the small of my back, guiding me back through the basement toward the elevator. My insides are churning. The smell of blood stays in my nostrils and makes me want to throw up. I haven't witnessed violence like that for a long time, but Shane Ryan is mistaken if he thinks I haven't seen worse than that before today.

I don't speak until Mikey and I are in the elevator. "Are they the guys from the club? The ones I pulled the footage on?"

He nods. "That's what you've signed up for, Red."

“What did they do?”

“It’s a long story. But, ultimately, they disobeyed him. Conor told them never to come back to New York, and they did.”

“I thought you and Liam were the muscle?”

“We are.” He grins at me. “But when someone really pisses us off, we send Shane in. And when we really want to fuck someone up, we send Conor.”

I blink at him. “Conor?”

He smiles at me. “He might lay down like a pussycat and let you rub his tummy, Red, but make no mistake, my big brother is a fucking animal. That’s why they took him and not one of us.”

“Who took him?”

Mikey winces as though he’s said something he shouldn’t. “Not my story to tell, Red,” he says, shaking his head. “He’ll tell you when he’s ready.”



I LIE on Conor’s bed and stare at the ceiling, listening to the sound of my breathing and the soft ticking of the clock on his nightstand. Shane’s little excursion earlier did nothing to ease my insomnia. In fact, since I came back to the apartment thirty minutes ago, my stomach has been churning and my mind has been racing.

I sit up with a start as the bedroom door swings open. Conor walks into the room, covered in blood. He glares at me as he sees me sitting on the bed. “What are you doing here?” he snaps.

“Waiting for you,” I say softly.

He sucks in a deep breath and then he just stares at me. After what seems like an eternity, he speaks. “I need to take a shower. Stay here,” he says as he stalks toward the bathroom.

I listen to the sound of the water running as I lie back and wait for him to finish. It’s at least fifteen minutes later when he

finally walks out of the bathroom with a white towel wrapped around his waist, sitting just below his perfectly chiseled abs. Walking over to the bed, he sits down beside me.

“He shouldn’t have brought you down there,” he snaps. “I never wanted you to see me like that.”

“Was that the animal you told me about? The one you keep locked away?”

His eyes lock on mine, so dark they look almost black, but he doesn’t answer and there’s a pain in them that I know runs deep. It’s the same kind of pain that sometimes stares back at me when I look in the mirror.

“You think I didn’t already know what type of man you are, Conor? You and your brothers practically run New York. I’m not naïve enough to believe that you get to be where you’re at without doing the kind of shit I just saw down there.”

“I’m not that man, Jessie,” he says softly. “Not up here. But... out there, things are different.” He hangs his head low.

“I know that.” I sit up and take one of his hands in mine. “Just because you do bad things, doesn’t mean you’re not a good man.”

“I’m not a good man, Angel. Not even close. But I want to be a better one with you.”

“I think you might be the best man I know,” I say as I reach up and place my hand on his cheek. His beard tickles my palm as he presses his face against it. “You might be a tiger out there, but you’re still my pussycat,” I smile at him.

He looks up and scowls at me, but his eyes twinkle with wicked deviance. “A pussycat?”

“Okay, a tiger cub?” I offer with a flash of my eyebrows.

He springs up cat-like as he dives on me, pinning me to the bed. He rubs his nose along my jawline and a growl rumbles in his throat. “Shane brought you down there to create some distance between us, Angel. He thinks you’re getting too close.”

“And what do you think?” I stare up at him as the weight of his body settles against me and I start to experience the familiar fluttering in my abdomen from his touch.

“I think there’s no such thing as too close when it comes to you, Jessie,” he says as he trails feather light kisses along my throat. Then he looks up at me, his eyes burning into mine. “Do you still want me after what you just saw?”

I curl my fingers through his thick, dark hair. “The more I know you, Conor Ryan, the more I want you.”

“Damn, Angel. You surprise the hell out of me every single day. Just when I think I can’t be into you any more than I already am,” he growls as he nudges my thighs apart with his knee.

“So, you’re into me?” I tease him as I bite my lip and flutter my eyelashes.

He grins wickedly. “You know I am, and I’m about to get into you even deeper.”

CHAPTER

TWENTY-ONE

JESSIE

G roaning with pain, I sit up in bed and reach for the TV remote. Sleep is not forthcoming for me tonight. I have a hot water bottle clutched against my stomach and I've taken two Advil, but they're doing little to ease the pain. The cramps I get on the first day of my period are completely debilitating sometimes. It feels like someone is pulling out my insides through my navel with a corkscrew.

My bedroom door is open, and I hear footsteps outside. "You okay in there, Angel?" Conor asks as he pops his head inside.

"Just cramps," I say. "They'll go in a few hours or so. I hope."

"You need some painkillers or something?" he says as he walks into the room and comes to sit on the bed.

"I've taken some, but they're not great for cramps. Usually heat works," I say as I lift my cover and show him the hot water bottle. "But even this thing doesn't seem to be helping tonight."

"Heat?" he asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

"Yes." I grin at him despite my pain. Since he and I first had sex a few days ago, we've hardly been able to keep our hands off each other. And if I'm not in his bed, I seem to be with the twins. My period has come just at the right time—an enforced break. Although I doubt a little blood would bother any of them. "Not that kind of heat. I can't be doing anything like that right now."

He laughs softly and brushes a strand of hair from my forehead. “I was *not* suggesting that, Angel. But,” he sucks on his top lip in a way that makes him look completely adorable, “I have something that might help. Give me twenty minutes.”

“I’ll try anything,” I say as another intense cramp fires through my abdomen.

He kisses my forehead and then jumps off the bed. “I’ll be right back.”

A SHORT TIME LATER, CONOR walks back into the room, carrying what looks like a small white towel on a tray. As soon as he steps inside, I’m hit by the most awful smell. It only gets stronger as he walks toward me, and I realize the stench is coming from whatever he has on that tray.

He sits on the bed beside me.

“Jesus, Conor!” I pinch my nostrils between two fingers. “What the hell is that?”

“It’s magic.” He winks at me. “Now lift up your shirt.”

“No way. It stinks,” I protest.

He rolls his eyes. “Don’t be such a baby. Lift it up, Jessie,” he orders.

As another cramp crushes my abdomen from the inside, I reluctantly lift my pajama shirt. He removes the hot water bottle and then he places the towel on my stomach instead. The towel doesn’t feel overly hot to the touch, but I instantly feel the heat from whatever foul-smelling concoction is wrapped inside.

He gently pulls my top back down and sits back with a smile. “You should feel that in a few minutes.”

“What the hell is it?” I ask as I already start to feel the warming effects in my abdomen.

“It’s a secret recipe from the old country. You wouldn’t believe the injuries that stuff has seen us through.”

“Well, I hope it works and I get some sleep, even if I do smell like a skunk who’s taken a bath in a garbage disposal

truck.”

“I hope you feel better soon,” he says with a laugh and a kiss on my forehead. “Do you need anything else?”

“You fancy watching a movie with me?” I ask.

“Fuck no, you stink,” he says as he screws his face up in disgust.

I blink at him, and he bursts out laughing. “Aw, Angel, I’m just playing with you. Of course, I’d watch a movie with you, but I have to go to work.”

“You asshole,” I say with a shake of my head.

He stares at me for a second and then he lies down beside me. “I’ve got ten minutes before I have to leave,” he says softly as he wraps one of his huge arms around me.

“You sure you can handle the stink that long?” I nudge him in the ribs.

“Yes. You know I’d still fuck you no matter how bad you smell, right?” he chuckles.

“God, you’re such a smooth talker, Conor Ryan.”

“Hmm, I know. It’s the Irish genes.”



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, I wander into the kitchen looking for Conor. Whatever he made me last night worked miracles, and I slept all night with no cramping. But this morning, my stomach feels like it’s in a concrete mixer again and Conor’s magic, stinky medicine has lost its healing powers.

Shane is in the kitchen drinking coffee when I walk into the room.

“Morning,” I say.

“Morning, Hacker.”

“Is Conor around?”

Unable to hide his disdain, he rolls his eyes. “He didn’t get in until five. He’s asleep.”

“Oh. Okay.”

Shane must see the disappointment on my face. “Give him a few hours and I’m sure he’ll be awake, and you can fuck each other’s brains out.” He smirks at me.

“That’s not why I’m looking for him,” I snap and just as I do, a cramp squeezes my abdomen like a pair of hands twisting my intestines, making me wince.

“You okay?” Shane asks, suddenly with a hint of concern in his voice.

“Fine. Just cramps, that’s all. Conor made me this foul-smelling stuff last night and it really helped. I was just wondering if he could make me one, or show me how to? I’ll just take some Advil instead.”

Shane stares at me, and then he sighs loudly. “Go back to bed, and I’ll bring some in.”

“I can get them,” I say, but he’s already up off his chair.

“Does it hurt?” he snaps.

“Yes!” I snap back.

“Then go the fuck back to bed and I’ll get what you need,” he says as he points toward the door.

“You’re so bossy sometimes,” I snipe like a sulky teenager.

“You have no idea.”

IT’S BEEN over twenty minutes since Shane ordered me back to bed and I’m beginning to wonder if he’s forgotten about bringing me some Advil. As I’m about to go back to the kitchen and get some for myself, he appears in the doorway—complete with tray and white towel. The smell isn’t as offensive as it was last night, and I wonder if it’s because I’ve got used to it, or because Shane doesn’t know how to make it properly.

He walks over to the bed and places the tray down. “Lift your shirt,” he says as he picks up the white towel filled with the healing poultice.

“I didn’t realize you knew how to make this too?” I say as I open the buttons of my shirt and lift it to expose my midriff.

He frowns. “Of course I can. Who do you think Conor learned it from?”

He places the towel on my stomach and presses lightly. His fingers brush over my skin as he positions the fabric correctly, and I experience that familiar fluttering in my abdomen. There is no doubt that Shane Ryan is hotter than hell itself, but his general moodiness ensures that I’m always kept at arm’s length. I’ve never seen this caring, nurturing side of him before, though, and I’m not sure I like it. I know exactly where I stand with asshole Shane. This one makes me feel things I don’t want to—not about him, anyway.

“Thank you,” I whisper as I lift my hands to fix my clothes, but he’s already pulling down my shirt and fastening the buttons with his deft fingers. I can’t stop the image of him unbuttoning my clothes instead from popping into my head and it makes me clench my thighs together to stop the throbbing sensation that’s starting to build.

“You’re welcome,” he says smoothly in that low gravelly voice he has, which does nothing to quell my growing need. He picks up the TV remote and flicks it on and I swallow.

Dear God, please don’t let him offer to sit in here with me. I couldn’t take it. Before I can protest, he hands me the remote. “The twins told me you love watching TV in bed,” he says as he picks up the now empty tray. “Get some rest today, Hacker. I have a job for you tomorrow.” He flashes one eyebrow at me and then he disappears out of the door.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-TWO

SHANE

My plane landed in L.A. an hour ago. There was a car waiting for me at the airport, and now I'm sitting in the air-conditioned office of Alejandro Montoya. He's the King of L.A. and an old friend of mine.

I look at the photographs on his desk. One of a young dark haired woman and a little boy, who I know to be his adopted daughter, and her son. I pick up the one next to it. This one is a picture of a woman with brown curly hair holding two chubby babies—his wife, Alana and their twin boys. They all smile for the camera, and I wonder if Alejandro took the photograph.

“Hey, amigo,” a voice behind me says and I put the frame back on the desk and stand, pulling my buddy, Jackson Decker into a hug.

“Hey, Jax. Thanks for the car.”

“Only the best for you, Shane. You know that,” he says with a smile. “Alejandro will be here shortly. He's just dealing with someone real quick.”

“Oh?” I arch an eyebrow at him.

“Nothing like that. At least not today.”

“So, what did you find out about my house guest?”

Jax takes a seat on the edge of the desk. “Well, you were right about her. She's not who she claims to be. But it blew my mind when I figured out who she really is. No wonder it took me four weeks to get to the bottom of it. I have never seen

anyone cover their tracks this well, Shane. You can tell her from me that I'm impressed."

I nod at him while the blood thunders through my veins. I knew Jessie was lying to me. "So, who the hell is she, Jax?"



AN HOUR LATER, Jax puts his hand on my shoulder. "It's been great catching up, Shane, but I have work to do. I hope we can do this again soon."

I put my hand over his. "Yeah, you too. And I appreciate you looking into the hacker for me. Thanks, buddy."

"Any time. Although I think I've left you with more questions than answers," he says with a smile before he turns to his boss, who sits across from us behind his desk. "I'll catch you later, amigo."

"Don't forget. Dinner starts at eight," Alejandro calls out to Jax's retreating back.

I turn in my chair and face Alejandro. He's offered me a suite in his hotel for the night, but after listening to what Jax just told me, I am eager to get back to New York as soon as possible. However, I suppose I can spare twenty minutes to have a quick whiskey with the man who gave me my shot when I came to the States.

"So, how is family life?" I ask him.

Alejandro runs a hand through his hair. "Exhausting! The twins are just starting to crawl and they are literally everywhere. I only come to work for a break," he says with a shake of his head.

"And how is Alana doing?"

At the mention of his wife's name, his face breaks into a huge smile. "She's amazing. She's great with the boys. She's an amazing mom to Lucia. She works full time, but she handles those kids like she's been doing it her whole life. But she's always there when I need her. She blows me away every single day."

I can't help smiling at the change in this man since I last saw him over two years earlier.

“What?”

“I never thought I'd see you of all people like this over a woman, Alejandro.”

“Well, my wife is not just any woman, Shane.” He arches an eyebrow at me.

“So how does it work, then? Having a family and doing this?” I look around his office. He's the head of the Montoya Corporation, and like me, he has oversight of as many legitimate businesses as he does illegal ones.

He takes a sip of his whiskey and then he shrugs. “We make it work. I used to believe that having a family made me vulnerable, and maybe it does, but they make my life worth living in a way that all of this never could. Why are you asking? Someone special in your life?”

“No,” I reply, perhaps a little too firmly and quickly.

“The hacker?” Alejandro asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

I sigh and take a swig of my drink. “There's something about her, that's for sure. But... I can't go there.”

“One of your brothers got there first?”

I roll my eyes. “Try all of them.”

“Oh! Damn!” Alejandro sits back in his chair and runs a hand over his jaw.

Suddenly, I have an inexplicable urge to defend her that almost blindsides me. “It's not like that,” I say, shaking my head. “It's kind of complicated. My brothers adore her. And she seems to care for them too.”

“And you?” he narrows his eyes at me.

“I don't know. I think about fucking her all the damn time. Maybe I should just screw her and get her out of my system?”

Alejandro laughs out loud. “In my experience, it doesn’t quite work like that, amigo. In fact, I don’t think that strategy has ever worked in the history of fucking. If you can’t get a woman out of your head, banging her will only make it one hundred times worse.”

“So, what do I do? Share her with my brothers? I’m not sure I can handle that. Not even with them? What the fuck would people think?”

“Screw what anyone else thinks. If it works, it works.” He shrugs as he downs the last of his drink.

“Well, you’ve certainly fucking mellowed these past few years. Not so long ago, you’d have told me to fuck her out of my system and then send her packing.”

“What can I say? I’m a changed man.” He laughs. “The love of a good woman will do that to you.”

“Yeah well. I’m not sure I want to change.”

“Whatever works for you, amigo. You’ll get no judgment from me. After all, I bought my wife from a man who I would happily see dead.”

I’d almost forgotten about that. Alejandro and Alana are the perfect couple. I’ve never seen him so happy. But they started out very differently. Alana’s father is a corrupt politician, and he sold off his only daughter to a ruthless criminal. Because as much as I respect him, that’s what Alejandro is. It’s what we both are. “Need any help with that? I’d be happy to end Foster Carmichael for you.”

“As much as I’d love to take you up on that offer, he’s still my father-in-law. And as much as Alana hates him, I still don’t think she’d be thrilled about me bumping him off.”

“And you’re worried about that?” I challenge him.

“Am I worried about breaking my wife’s heart? Um, yeah.”

“You really have changed,” I laugh as I swig back the rest of my drink and place my glass on his desk.

“Yeah, well, no-one is more shocked by my transformation than me,” he laughs too.

I stand up and hold out my hand. “It’s been good to see you, old friend.”

“You too.” He shakes my hand, and then he holds onto it and looks me in the eye. “If you really feel something for this woman, fuck what everyone else thinks, Shane. Life is too short, amigo. Especially for men like us. You need to grab onto any happiness when you can, and while you can.”

I nod at him. “Maybe.”

CHAPTER

TWENTY-THREE

JESSIE

Shane got back from L.A. late last night, and this morning Liam told me he wanted to see me. So, once again, I find myself summoned to his office and I'm sitting before him like an errant teenager waiting to be yelled at.

"You seem to be settling in here well?" Shane arches one eyebrow at me.

Heat flushes over my cheeks as I recall him witnessing my encounter with his younger brothers the week before. I'm aware he knows about me and Conor too. His room is next to Conor's and he must have heard us. "I am. Thank you."

"You're certainly a hit with my brothers."

I blush further. *Asshole!* I sit up straighter in my chair. "Well, they're nice guys."

He laughs and shakes his head. "I'm not sure you know them at all, Hacker."

"I think I know them well enough," I reply. "Especially after you introduced me to the kind of work you really do."

He stops laughing, and the change in him is instant. He glares at me, his green eyes burning into my skin. "They don't know you though, do they, Jessica?"

I swallow hard as all the saliva in my mouth dries instantly. I glare back at him. That could just be a lucky guess. Lots of Jessica's shorten their name to Jessie. But my heart starts to hammer in my chest.

Shit!

“Do you really think I would allow someone in my house, in my brothers’ house and into their beds, without finding out who they really are?” he snarls.

“I told you who I am.”

He stands up abruptly, lunging forward and grabbing my throat with one of his large hands. He squeezes lightly and my breathing grows faster. But I don’t move. “Tell me one more lie, and I will have my brothers carve you to pieces and dump you in the Hudson. So, start talking, Miss Romanov,” he spits my last name and I shudder at the sound on his lips. I haven’t heard that name for over ten years.

“How did you find out?” I croak. No-one else ever has. I learned from my father how to cover my tracks and I am damn good at it.

He releases me from his grip and sits back in his seat. “What can I say? My guy is good. He told me to tell you he was impressed. It’s taken him four weeks to find out who you really are. It usually takes him two days.”

Despite the circumstances, I experience an unexpected sense of pride at that revelation. But it still doesn’t change the fact that my cover is blown, and Shane Ryan knows I’ve been lying to him and his brothers since the moment I met them.

“As you’ve already discovered, my real name is Jessica Romanov. And I don’t suppose I need to fill you in on my family history?”

“No,” he says with a shake of his head.

I sigh with relief at that. My family’s story is well documented, and I don’t particularly want to relive it right now.

“But, tell me, how did a sixteen-year-old girl escape the Wolf? Or haven’t you escaped him at all?”

I flinch at the mention of his name. The man I’ve been looking for since the night he slaughtered my parents and my twelve year old brothers in front of my eyes. The man who kidnapped me and held me captive for almost two years.

“Of course I escaped. I earned his trust. I spent every single minute of my seven hundred and eleven days with him, learning every single thing about him. I learned exactly what made him tick. His likes. His dislikes. The things that made him get that faraway, glazed look in his eyes. The quickest way to make him lose control.”

Shane says nothing, but his eyes remain fixed on mine.

“He never trusted me enough to allow any weapons in the house. He even refused me cutlery. I was only allowed plastic spoons to eat with. But I had a hairbrush with a wooden handle. I was mostly locked in my room, or his room, and that was much worse.” I shudder at the memories. “But I was permitted outside in the gardens for one hour every night. Just like in a real prison. Every single night I would sharpen the hairbrush on the edge of a stone step. Do you know how long it takes to sharpen a wooden stake to a perfect point using only a smooth rock?”

Shane shakes his head. “No.”

“Seven hundred and eleven days,” I say with a snort. “One night, he’d summoned me to his bed, and while he was sleeping, I stabbed him in the throat. I’d figured out his security system. Once he was gone, it was easy enough to get out.”

“But you didn’t kill him?” Shane raises an eyebrow at me. “Because there’s a rumor that he’s still out there somewhere?”

My blood starts to thunder around my body. “No. Somehow he survived. The day after I escaped, I panicked. I went back to burn down the house and destroy the evidence that I’d been there, but he was gone.”

“And he’s been in hiding ever since,” Shane adds.

“Yes. But one day, I’ll finish what I started.”

Shane narrows his eyes at me. “So, Nikolai Semenov didn’t find you by chance?”

“No. I set up the whole thing. He was high up in the Russian Mafia. I thought maybe he’d have some information on whoever ordered the hit on my family. Or on the Wolf

himself. I never knew why my parents left Russia. Whenever I asked, they would change the subject. What I did know was that we were always running from something. My father was the best at what he did. There was no code, no computer, no system that he couldn't crack. Maybe they killed him because he knew something he shouldn't? Or maybe because he refused to work for them? Whatever it was, eventually, he paid the ultimate price. The Wolf made both of us watch while he slit my brothers' throats and raped my mother before he did the same to her. Then he told my father that he wouldn't kill me, but he would take me as a payment instead, and I would live the rest of my life in pain and suffering. But, from the bits of information he gave away to me while I was his prisoner, I guess he was supposed to kill me too because his employers were furious that he took me as a hostage instead. He said that no-one could ever find me. Everyone had to believe that I was dead. That's why he kept me locked away, and it's probably the only thing still keeping me alive."

"Because everyone believes you're already dead?" Shane says, almost to himself.

I look up at Shane and his face is impassive. He runs his hand across his jaw and frowns at me. "So, where do my brothers and I fit into your plan, Hacker?"

"You don't. I had no idea who you were. I mean, I'd heard of you, obviously, but I had no business in your world. However, when you killed my only link to the Wolf, I needed time to regroup. And you were about to kill me, remember? I figured I could work for you for a few months while I figured out my next move."

He narrows his eyes at me and the heat of his intense gaze penetrates every part of my body. "How do I know that this wasn't all a part of your plan? You could be working for the Wolf right now. Or the Russians. How the hell can I trust anything that comes out of your mouth?"

"I know that I've done nothing to earn your trust, Shane. I get that you don't think you can trust me now. But, I give you my word -"

“Your word means nothing to me. Once you’ve lied to me, everything you tell me is tainted by that. Even if you spoke the truth now, how would I know it?”

“You must understand why I lied, Shane?” Desperation creeps into my voice, and it annoys me.

“I do,” he sighs. “But that doesn’t change the fact that I can’t trust you. You have lured my brothers into your bed, and you have just admitted to me that you escaped the Wolf by doing the same thing. You used your body as a weapon.”

I draw in a breath as my blood starts to thunder around my body and I clench my fists by my sides. “I did not lure the Wolf into my bed! He forced me into his. And yes, I used my body to get what I needed from him. But, as a sixteen-year-old girl held captive by a monster, I had little else at my disposal,” I snarl at him.

His face softens. “I know that. And I’m not judging you, Hacker. Simply stating a fact.”

“So, what now? You go back to your original plan and kill me?” I narrow my eyes at him, readying myself to launch across the desk if he says yes.

“No.” He frowns at me. “I wouldn’t hear the end of it if I take away my brothers’ new toy.”

The sting of his words is like a slap to my face and I blink back the tears. Because that is all a woman like me is to men like him. “Then let me go, Shane, and I can be out of here in five minutes and you never need to see me again. It will be like I was never here.”

He glares at me. “Let you go?”

“Yes,” I breathe.

“And where would you go, Hacker?”

“I’ll figure it out. I’ve been surviving on my own for ten years. My father taught me everything he knew. I’ll get by.”

“Do you want to leave?”

I swallow as I try to figure out how to answer to that question. “No,” I finally admit.

He stares at me, his eyes searching my face. “Are you sharpening any wooden stakes in that bedroom of yours?”

I blink at him. Did Shane Ryan just attempt a joke? “No. Besides, I wouldn’t need to. You have a perfectly suitable set of titanium knives in the kitchen.”

A grin flickers across his face. “You can stay for now. As long as my brothers are okay with your deceit. Conor has a particular hatred of the Russians.” He flashes an eyebrow at me. “He might just kill you himself, anyway. But, I guess that’s the chance you’ll have to take.”

I ignore his attempt to rile me further. “So, I can stay?”

“For now. My brothers are much better behaved when you’re around. But, if you lie to me again...”

“I won’t,” I say before he can finish his sentence. “Aren’t you worried the Wolf will find me eventually? I don’t want to put any of you in danger.”

“Me and my brothers are always in danger. But, no,” he shakes his head, “I don’t fear the Wolf. He might have been one of the most feared assassins of his generation, but now he hides in the shadows, no doubt pining for the girl who almost killed him.”

I sit forward in my seat. “You know the Wolf? Do you know where he is?”

“No. I don’t have any answers for you. Like you said, he’s disappeared. I think you might have done your job when you put that stake in his neck. He might not be dead, but he isn’t alive either.”

“I won’t rest until the last breath leaves his body.” I spit out the words, surprised by how easily the hatred and venom I hold for him bubbles to the surface. I’ve kept it hidden for so long.

“I can understand that,” he says and for a second, it seems like we have a connection in something, although I can’t

figure out what or why.

“Thank you for allowing me to stay, Shane,” I say, suddenly overcome with gratitude. He may act like a heartless bastard, but there must be one in there somewhere.

“Your brothers were twins too?” he asks.

“Yes.” I blink, the question taking me by surprise. “Identical.”

“Like Liam and Mikey?”

“Yes. And full of mischief like them too.” Tears spring to my eyes and I look down and quickly wipe them away.

“I’m sorry about your family, Hacker,” he says quietly.

“Thank you.” I look up at him again and my eyes lock with his. My pulse quickens, and something in him calls me, deep in my soul. My breathing becomes harder and faster and I wonder if he feels anything too. But he breaks eye contact, and the moment vanishes. I shake my head. Reliving the past has made me emotional and over-sensitive. Desperate for human connection, I’m seeing meaning in things where there is none.

Shane clears his throat. “You should go tell Conor and the twins who you really are. If they don’t kill you, I’ll see you at dinner,” he says as he stands up.

I stand too. “See you at dinner then,” I say with a smile and a confidence I don’t feel.

He nods and stuffs his hands in his suit pants as I walk out of his office.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-FOUR

SHANE

I watch her as she walks out of my office and my throat constricts. My cock twitches at the sight of her curvy ass swaying in those skintight jeans, and my veins pulse with need. I consider calling her back in here, bending her over my desk and fucking her until she screams my name louder than she's ever screamed out one of my brothers'.

I close my eyes and imagine slipping my fingers inside her cunt. Tasting her. Filling her with my cock. I lie in bed at night, listening to my brothers making her come over and over again. Sometimes, I imagine what she looks like when she's losing control as I jerk off to the sound of her moaning their names.

Although this is about so much more than the desire to fuck her. I feel her in every fiber of my being. I can't look her in the eye because she sees into my soul. When I was a kid growing up in Ireland, my mother used to warn me of the dangers of witches and fairies who might sneak into my bedroom and cast a spell on me. My father told her she was crazy, and it was the only thing I ever agreed with him on, although I never told her that. But perhaps there was more truth to her fairytales than I ever gave her credit for?

Jessie Romanov has put a fucking spell on me. Even though she lied to me, to all of us, I still want her so badly it fucking hurts. She fills my every waking thought. From the moment she crawled out from beneath that desk in Nikolai Semenov's office and looked me in the eye, I knew she was a warrior. And now I know who she really is, and what she must

have endured at the hands of the Wolf, my admiration for her and her strength has grown tenfold. My brothers and I know of monsters and demons, of running from a past that is determined to keep pace with you no matter how far or how high you climb.

Jessie is just like us—and nothing like us.

But I can't give in to this. I can't let her in. Because I don't trust her, and I'm not sure I ever could. I would enjoy nothing more than to walk down that hallway after her and take her to my bed. But how would I ever be sure that she wasn't using that incredible body of hers just to get close to me, to all of us, and then take us down when we're at our weakest?

Sitting back down in my chair, I put my head in my hands and sigh. What the fuck am I supposed to do? How do I protect my family when a pint-sized siren has my fucking heart and my balls in her vise-like grip and she doesn't even know it.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-FIVE

JESSIE

I walk along the hallway toward the gym with my heart pounding in my chest. After I left Shane's office, I headed to my room and packed my small backpack.

Always be prepared to run, Jessie! Another of my father's lessons.

How will Conor, Mikey, and Liam react to the news that I've been lying to them? I don't know why Conor hates the Russians, but Shane was keen to remind me of that fact. The sound of footsteps behind makes me spin around as I reach the door.

Shane!

I frown at him. "You making sure I tell them the truth?" I snipe.

He smirks at me before reaching in front of me and grabbing hold of the door handle. His hand brushes mine and I bristle at the touch of his skin as goosebumps prickle along my forearm.

"After you, Hacker," he says as he opens the door wide.

I step inside. The music is loud in my ears now that we're inside the soundproof room. Conor is spotting Mikey on the bench press, while Liam does pull-ups in front of the mirror. The three of them are shirtless. Their hard, muscular bodies covered in a thin film of sweat. My ovaries ache in response to the testosterone and pure sex confined in this room. The thumping bass of Snoop Dog's *Sweat* pounds in my ears and the three of them move as though they're perfectly in tune

with the music. I swallow as I try to focus on the reason I've come in here.

Suddenly, the music stops, and I realize Shane has turned it off. His brothers turn to us in surprise.

"What's up?" Liam asks as he lowers himself to the ground and wipes the sweat from his eyes with a nearby towel.

"Our little hacker has something she'd like to get off her chest," Shane says as he sits on one of the nearby weight benches and stares at me.

Conor frowns and walks toward me. "What is it?"

I look at Shane and then back at his brothers before I take a deep breath. "My name is not Jessie Heaton. It's Jessica Romanov," I blurt out the words.

Conor frowns at me for a few seconds until he realizes why he knows that name. "No," he shakes his head. "She's dead."

"Definitely not," I say as I look down at myself. "I'm right here."

"Who the fuck is Jessica Romanov?" Mikey asks.

I swallow hard and the tears spring to my eyes. I'd assumed they'd all know, and I wouldn't have to explain. Closing my eyes, I'm preparing to tell them my story when Shane answers for me. I smile at him, grateful for his intervention.

"Jessica Romanov is the daughter of Peter Romanov. There were some rumors he was former KGB. Some said he was the head of the Russian mob. But what is known, is that he was one of the best hackers in the world. Ten years ago, him, his wife and two sons were slaughtered in their home, and their sixteen-year-old daughter, Jessica, disappeared, presumed dead. The case was all over the news and there was a nationwide manhunt for Jessica, but she was never found. You two were only sixteen yourselves at the time, and you paid even less attention to the news back then than you do now. It's well known, in our circles at least, that an assassin named the Wolf carried out the attacks. He is, or he *was*, the

Bratva's finest and most experienced hitman. The hit fitted his MO. But he disappeared afterwards. And as no-one had ever met him and lived to talk about it, he was impossible to find. Whoever paid him and ordered the hit, and why, has never been revealed."

"Fuck!" Mikey says.

"And you're her? The missing daughter?" Liam asks.

"Yes," I nod.

"How did you disappear? Where have you been? Are you working for the Russians?" Conor scowls at me as he bombards me with questions.

"The Wolf was supposed to kill me too, but he kidnapped me instead. He kept me prisoner for nearly two years until I almost killed him and escaped. No, I am definitely not working for the Russians. But I want to find out who paid for the hit on my family and why, and I want to finish the Wolf for good."

Liam walks over to me and wraps me in his arms. "Fuck, baby, you really are a warrior," he says as he plants a kiss on my temple.

"You're safe here with us, Red," Mikey adds. "We'll help you find who was responsible. Won't we, Conor?"

I look up at Conor who frowns at me. "I fucking hate the Russians," he spits. "Present company excluded."

"I hate them too," I breathe. "Not the entire people, obviously. I hate the Bratva. But, I can find them on my own. I just need somewhere to lie low while I do. If you'll still have me here?"

"Of course we will," Conor nods as he walks over and kisses the top of my head, and then he straightens up. "I'm going for a shower," he adds as his eyes glaze over and he walks out of the gym.



AN HOUR LATER, I've answered as many of Liam and Mikey's questions as I can. They've asked me about my family,

particularly interested in my twin brothers after I told them how much they remind me of them. Eventually, Shane intervened and told them to give me some space for a while. They dutifully obeyed him and have left me alone. Shane has left now too, and I should probably go to my room and have some quiet time to myself. Reliving the worst time of my life has left me mentally and emotionally exhausted. But I can't stop picturing Conor's face when he walked out of that gym.

I go to his bedroom and knock quietly.

"Come in," he shouts.

Opening the door, I step inside to see him lying on his bed in his boxer shorts with a book in his hand.

"What is it?" he asks.

"Can we talk?"

"What about?" He frowns at me.

"About what I told you earlier?" I say as I walk over to the bed and sit beside him.

He puts the book down beside him and holds out his hand to me. When I take it, he pulls me down to lie next to him and wraps one of his huge arms around me. "You can tell me when you're ready, Angel," he says softly.

I place my hand on his stomach, my fingers flexing over his hard abs. "My parents came to the US when my mom was pregnant with me. I never knew what my father did in Russia – whether he worked for the KGB or the Bratva, but I do know that he spent the rest of his life running from it. He thought he could build a better life for us here in the States. But he was always on the move. Always looking over his shoulder. We never settled anywhere for long. I never went to school, or made friends like regular kids did."

Conor runs his warm hand over my arm, and I press myself closer against him. "But we always had a really happy home. My mom home-schooled us and made sure we always had everything we needed. She was an incredible woman," I say as I recall her beautiful face and her soft hands. "She always made wherever we were feel like home. And my dad,

well, he was the smartest man I've ever known. He taught me so much. All about computers and how to cover your tracks. He taught me how to fight too. He used to tell me that one day our pasts would catch up with us and that I would need to be strong. I always got the sense there was something he wasn't telling me, but I never got the chance to find out."

"You have no idea who ordered the hit on them?" Conor asks as he brushes my hair from my face in that way that makes me feel completely cherished.

"I've figured out plenty of people that it wasn't, and I suppose that's a start. I also suspect that there is a lot more to it than my father simply refusing to work for them or a fear that he would reveal their secrets."

"Hmm?" Conor pulls me tighter to him. "What happened to your family is almost like an urban legend. And the Wolf disappearing with the daughter, well, you," he says quietly. "You must have been terrified."

"I was. I've buried it all so deep that I wonder now if my memories are reliable anymore. And I promise I'll tell you anything you want to know, Conor. I'll never lie to you again. But can we stop talking about me for a while?" I press my cheek against his chest.

"Of course, Angel."

We lie in comfortable silence for a few minutes and then Conor draws in a shaky breath. "You've never asked why we killed Nikolai Semenov and his men?"

"No. I figured you'd tell me if you wanted me to know." I whisper.

"The Christmas before last, they kidnapped me and kept me chained in the basement of that house where we found you, for four weeks."

My head snaps up and I look at him. Bile surges from my stomach, burning the back of my throat as I think about this man I've come to care for so much being at the mercy of Nikolai Semenov. Because I'm aware of exactly what kind of

man Nikolai was, and what he did to his enemies. “What? Four weeks? Why did they take you?”

“They figured me and my brothers had something to do with some deal they had that went south. It was another family, but Shane is the head, so Semenov held him responsible. And he took me as payback.”

“Did they hurt you?” I ask, the tremor in my voice clearly audible.

“What do you think, Angel?” he breathes, and I feel kind of dumb for asking such an obvious question. “But mostly it was psychological torture. Sleep deprivation. Hardly any food or water. No contact with anyone. No light, and no idea of time or space.”

“Is that why you don’t like the dark?”

“Yup. Or small spaces. Or Russians,” he laughs softly. “Present company excluded,” he adds.

“You do know that Leo Tolstoy is Russian, don’t you?” I nod toward the tattered copy of Anna Karenina beside him.

“Yes,” he says with a dramatic sigh, making me laugh too.

“How did you get out?”

“My brothers found me. Shane had to pay Semenov off so as not to cause an all-out war. Then we bided our time until we could exact our revenge cleanly and walk away with no repercussions.”

“You knew they would come for you, though?” I say as the sob catches in my throat.

“Yeah. I had no doubt about it. It was what kept me going.”

“That must have been some comfort to know they were looking for you.”

He places his hand under my chin and tilts my head up so I can look into his soft brown eyes. “I’m sorry you never had that, Jessie.”

“Well, I’m glad that you did.” I smile at him.

He wraps both arms around me and pulls me tighter to him. “You have it too now,” he says quietly as he strokes my hair. “I will always come looking for you, Angel, and I would burn the whole world down to find you.”

I don't reply because I'm scared I might tell him how much he means to me. Instead, I lie there in his arms. “Will you read me some Tolstoy?”

He picks up the book with one hand and opens it where he left off. I listen to the soft, velvety tones of his voice, and it soothes every nerve and every frayed edge in my body.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-SIX

JESSIE

I stand near the elevator with Conor, Liam, and Mikey. Nervous energy sizzles in my veins. I have hardly left this apartment since I arrived here six weeks earlier. And when I have been out, it's been to the store. There has been nothing exciting. Well, except for that day Conor took me to his friend's boutique, the memory of which will keep me warm when I'm a lonely old woman.

Today, I'm accompanying the Ryan brothers on a job and I couldn't be more thrilled.

"Remember. Be discreet. I need this sorting quickly and quietly," Shane says as he hands me a slip of paper. "This is the information I need. But, if you have time, get anything else you think might be helpful."

"Aren't you coming with us?" I frown at him.

"No. I've got a meeting." His tongue darts out and he licks his lower lip. It's a habit he has that drives me crazy because it makes me think of what else I'd love him to do with that mouth.

"Erin stopping by, is she?" Mikey says with a laugh, earning him a glare from Shane. Liam and Conor chuckle quietly behind me, while an acute pang of jealousy strikes me out of nowhere. Who the hell is Erin?

"Just get the job done. I'll see you back here later," Shane growls before turning around and walking down the hallway and out of sight.

"Who is Erin?" I whisper once he's out of earshot.

Conor chuckles softly. “I’m sure you’ll find out soon enough.”

I want to ask more questions, but the elevator doors ping open and we step inside. Once the doors close, Conor and the twins begin to go over the plan for the job we’re headed to, and I listen intently. I don’t want to screw up on my first time out.



WE ARRIVE at Balthazar’s bar over an hour later. Liam drapes his arm over my shoulder as we walk through the doors and I can’t help but notice the many admiring glances he and his brothers attract.

After we select a table near the back, Conor orders us some drinks from the waitress.

“We all clear on the plan?” he asks when she walks away from the table.

“Yes,” I say, and the twins nod their agreement.

“Let’s do this, baby,” Liam says with a grin as he holds out his hand. I take it with a smile and he pulls me up from my seat. He makes a show of grabbing my ass and kissing me deeply in front of the customers and then we stumble to the back of the bar toward the toilets. When we reach them, he takes his arm from around my waist and we walk toward the office at the rear of the building. He tries the handle, and as we suspected it would be, it’s locked. Taking out a small multi-tool from his pocket, he picks the lock in a matter of seconds.

“You’re up, baby.” He grins at me as he opens the office door. “I won’t let anyone else in here.”

I nod at him, just before I slip inside the door and fire up the computer. It doesn’t take me long to guess the password and I’m in within five minutes. Ten minutes after that, I’ve got all the information Shane asked me to retrieve. I’m about to switch off the machine when I see the file titled Romanov and my breath catches in my throat. Why the hell does this guy have a file with my family name on? My heart starts to pound against my ribcage as I move my fingers over the mouse and

click on the tab. The sound of the door opening startles me and I turn to see Liam's face.

"We might have some trouble out front. We need to go."

I look back at the screen and then at Liam. "Can I have just one more minute? Please?"

He rolls his eyes. "One minute. I need to check on Conor and Mikey. I'll be back in sixty seconds. Do not leave this office until I come get you."

"I won't. Thanks," I say as I turn back to the screen and open the document. It's a Russian marriage certificate, but it doesn't relate to the name of the family on the file. I scroll further until I'm disturbed by the door opening again.

"It hasn't been a full minute," I say as I turn around, but it's not Liam's face I'm looking at. Instead, there is a tall man with a shaved head and a tattoo of a raven on his neck.

"Who the fuck are you?" he snarls as he advances toward me.

My instincts kick in and I spring from the chair and flash him my best smile. "I was just looking for the restroom..." I say, but as I'm speaking, he stops in his tracks and stares at me, his mouth hanging open as he blinks at me. I don't know what the hell has him so spooked, but I need to get out of here, and fast. Glancing behind him, I mentally plan my route out of here, but I'm hampered by the fact that he's blocking the whole doorway. I hear the commotion in the hallway outside, making me wonder where Liam and his brothers are.

The bald-headed man continues staring at me while my heart keeps pounding in my chest. After what feels like an eternity, he finally speaks. "Nataliya?" he breathes. "I've found you."

I blink at him, but I don't have a chance to tell him that he's mistaken because I see the figure of Liam looming behind him as a large hand wraps around his throat. The glint of a blade flashes before my eyes as the bald man's head is pulled back. I close my eyes as his blood sprays my face and body, and when I open them again, he's on the floor clutching at his

throat while his blood pours through his fingers and onto the ground. Liam holds out his hand to me and I grab it.

“Let’s get out of here,” he says as he pulls me out of the room. I stumble after him, wiping the blood from my face with the back of my hand. It’s in my mouth and my nose, and the copper tang makes me want to retch. As we round the corner, two more men with tattooed necks almost crash into us. They see me covered in blood and draw their weapons. Liam pushes me behind him. He knocks the gun from the hands of the one closest to us before slicing his throat with the blade, while Conor steps seemingly out of nowhere and snaps the second man’s neck.

We run past them and into the bar where Mikey is holding off two more men who look like they were trying to make their way into the back.

“Let’s go,” Liam shouts and Conor pulls a gun from the waistband of his trousers and aims it at the head of one of Mikey’s attackers. That seems to stop everyone in their tracks and the two assailants back off, allowing the four of us to run out of the bar to the car parked outside.

Liam bundles me into the back along with Conor and then jumps into the passenger seat while Mikey climbs into the driver’s seat and starts the engine. The car wheel spins out of the parking lot as he floors the accelerator.

“Jessie,” Conor snaps as he pulls me toward him. “Are you okay?” he asks as he starts lifting my clothes and rubbing his hands over my body.

Looking down, I remember that I’m covered in blood and I grab hold of his hands. “It’s not mine. I’m fine.”

“Thank fuck!” he sighs as he wraps his arms around me and kisses the top of my head.

“What the fuck happened?” Mikey shouts. “Why the fuck is Jessie covered in blood?”

“Some guy walked in on her in that office. He had a gun in his hand. I had to make a split-second decision.”

“It was my fault,” I add. “I asked Liam for more time. I should have left when he told me to.”

“But how did he get into the office? Why weren’t you there? Why didn’t you stay with her, Liam?” Conor snaps.

Liam puts his head in his hands and groans. “I heard the noise in the bar and recognized the Russian accents and knew that we didn’t have much time. I only left her for a few seconds to see how many of them were there. I don’t know where the other guy came from. He must have already been in the building.”

“Which is why you were supposed to stay with Jessie and divert anyone who tried to get in there, Liam,” Conor says in exasperation. “Now we have three dead Russians. Cleanly and quietly, Shane said.”

“It was my fault,” I say again.

“It wasn’t, Jessie,” Liam snaps. “I know the drill. I should never have left you.”

“He could have fucking killed her,” Conor says as he punches the back of the passenger seat so hard that Liam jolts forward.

“Don’t you think I know that,” Liam shouts. Then he turns in his seat and looks at me. “I’m sorry, Jessie.”

“There’s no need to be. I’m completely fine, and you saved my life.”

“Shane is going to go fucking nuclear when he finds out about this,” Mikey says with a shake of his head.

“Fuck!” Liam says with a sigh before he puts his head in his hands and stays quiet for the remainder of the journey home.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-SEVEN

JESSIE

Stepping out of the shower, I wrap myself in a towel before walking back into Conor's bedroom. He sits on his bed, as his eyes roam over my body.

"Are you okay?" he asks, his face full of concern.

"I'm fine." I smile at him and how much he cares about my welfare.

"Good," he says with a sigh. "Because Shane wants to see us. Like, right now."

"Okay. Let me go get changed."

"Here," he says, handing me a white shirt and a pair of black lace panties. "I grabbed these for you from the laundry. He's pissed, and you know he doesn't like to be kept waiting."

"Fine," I reply with a roll of my eyes. I put the clothes on, eyeing Conor as I do. I've never seen him looking so nervous. But then, I suppose we all just made one huge clusterfuck of epic proportions. Deep down, he and the twins want nothing more than to impress Shane. I'm learning that he's much more like a father to them than a big brother.

A few moments later, Conor and I walk out of his bedroom to find the twins waiting for us outside.

"Ready?" Conor asks.

"Fuck, no!" Liam groans with a shake of his head.

"Hey. This is on all of us, not just you," Mikey says, placing a reassuring hand on his twin's shoulder.

“He’s right. Now let’s get this over with,” Conor adds with a sigh.

I follow the three of them down the hallway toward Shane’s office and the tension hangs in the air as though it is something tangible I can reach out and touch. I’ve seen Shane Ryan pissed plenty of times. It seems to be his default setting. But I have never experienced this level of anxiety from his brothers before. It’s coming from them in waves. I swallow as I wonder just what the hell we’re walking into.

Shane is pacing up and down his office when we walk in, the four of us sticking close together as though it offers some sort of protection.

He looks up as he hears us come in. “Sit!” he barks at us with a scowl.

Like naughty kids who have been summoned to the principal’s office, we do as he tells us. I sit between the twins, taking some comfort from the warmth of their bodies pressed against mine on the small sofa. I place my hand on Liam’s thigh and squeeze, and he gives me the faintest hint of a smile. Shane sees it too, and he scowls at me.

“Who’s going to tell me what the fuck happened?” he snarls, his teeth bared like a rabid dog.

Liam sucks in a breath beside me, but it’s Conor who answers. “We fucked up, Shane. One of them was already in the bar when we got there, but, we didn’t know. Then, when the others came in, they saw us and got suspicious. When one of them walked into the office and pulled a gun on Jessie, we had to act. We were sloppy and we got distracted.”

“Who was supposed to be Jessie’s lookout?” Shane snaps.

“I was,” Liam says quietly.

“So, why the fuck weren’t you doing your job?” Shane snarls as he walks toward where the twins and I are sitting, leaning down so his face is close to Liam’s.

Liam opens his mouth to speak, but I act first. “It was my fault, Shane,” I say, my voice trembling. “Please don’t blame your brothers. This is all on me.”

Shane's head snaps toward me and he frowns. "You?"

"No, it wasn't," Liam adds. "I was the lookout."

"It's on us, not Jessie," Conor says with a sigh.

"Yeah," Mikey agrees with a nod beside me. "Jessie was just doing what we asked her to."

"No. I was the distraction. You were only looking out for me, and if you hadn't been, none of this would have happened," I say as I glare into Shane's dark green eyes and my pulse thrums against my skin. I swallow as he narrows his eyes at me as though he's trying to see into my soul.

"Are you lying to me, Hacker?" he snarls.

"No," I snap. "Your brothers messed up today, but it was because of me. I was the one who created the problem, Shane. I take full responsibility."

"No," Liam says, and Mikey and Conor voice their agreement, but Shane holds a hand up to quiet us all, and like obedient little puppy dogs, we do as we're told.

He walks back to his desk. "Did you at least get the information I asked for?"

"Yes," I whisper.

He chews on his lip and sits down. "I've spoken to our contacts in NYPD and they're dealing with the fallout. This is being pegged as a robbery that went wrong. Our names won't be connected to anything. Fortunately, the hacker did something right and at least disabled the CCTV before you lot had your little party."

We all sit there nodding at him and I'm wondering whether this is it. Is this what his brothers have been so worried about? But I sneak a look at their faces and realize it's not the telling off they were worried about, it's the fact that they've let him down. He asked us to handle this quietly, and we did the exact opposite.

"It really was my fault, Shane," I say again. "Your brothers were protecting me because I was distracted. I'm sorry. It won't happen again."

Liam shakes his head and places his hand over mine.

“Enough!” Shane snaps. “It’s done. And it better not happen again. Ever.”

“It won’t,” Conor says, and the twins nod their agreement.

“Good. Now, you all look like shit. So, get out of here,” he snarls and we all stand.

“Not you, Hacker. Come here,” he growls as we all start to file out of his office.

I glance at his brothers and swallow. Conor winks at me reassuringly and Liam kisses my cheek before the two of them walk out of the room.

“Uh-oh, you’re in trouble now,” Mikey says quietly with a grin before kissing my forehead and following his brothers.

Heat is searing between my thighs as I walk to Shane’s desk and stand directly in front of him. Goosebumps prickle along my forearm beneath the cool cotton of the shirt I’m wearing. He pushes his chair back slightly and nods at the small amount of room he has created between him and his mahogany desk. I slide into the tight space, perching myself on the edge of the cool wood.

“Why did you do that?” he asks, rubbing a hand over the stubble on his jaw.

“Do what?”

“Try and take the fall for them. They’re grown men. They take responsibility for their own actions.”

“I know that. But I also know how much they hate to disappoint you. And they really were just looking out for me,” I say with a tremor in my voice as the heat of Shane’s gaze makes the warmth pool between my thighs. “They’ve had a rough day, and I wanted to protect them. The way they protect me. You know?”

“You care about them?” he asks matter-of-factly.

“Of course I do,” I can’t help but frown. “I care about all of your brothers.”

He eyes me suspiciously, and I glare at him. He is as hot as hell, but he's also a moody asshole. "Is that all?" I ask before I suck in a breath.

His tongue darts out of his mouth and he licks his lower lip, making my inner walls clench at the sight. Jesus! Being so close to him is maddening. He makes me want to wrap my legs around his waist and beg him to fuck me.

"No," he growls, lifting one hand and fingering one button of the shirt I'm wearing. "Why are you wearing my shirt, Hacker?"

I look down and swallow. Shit! This is his? Conor said he'd just grabbed it from the laundry, but I assumed it must have belonged to him. "I'm sorry. I didn't realize. Conor gave it to me," I whisper.

"Hmm?" he narrows his eyes at me as though he doesn't believe me.

Asshole!

He obviously gets off on making me feel uncomfortable. Let's see how he responds when the tables are turned. I lift my hands to the collar. "Would you like me to take it off?" I purr.

"Yes. Right now," he growls, taking me entirely by surprise.

Shit!

I draw in a deep breath as I unbutton it slowly. My fingers tremble, making the task more difficult than usual. When I'm done, I slide the cotton over my bare skin until I'm sitting in only my panties, my almost naked body just inches from his. My nipples pebble under his gaze and heat creeps over my neck and cheeks. Why the hell didn't I wear a bra?

His eyes linger on my hardened nipples, and he shifts in his seat slightly. Dropping my eyes to his groin, I can't help but notice the bulge in his pants and bite back a smile.

"Here you go," I breathe, handing him the shirt.

His eyes burn into mine as he takes it from me and tosses it onto the floor. Without breaking eye contact, he palms his dick

through his suit pants and wet heat rushes between my thighs. “Those panties belong to me too,” he growls.

“What?”

“I paid for them. So, that makes them mine.”

I open my mouth to protest, but nothing comes out. So, he wants my panties, does he? “Fine,” I breathe as I hook my fingers into the black lace fabric and slide them down my legs.

He holds out his hand, and I place my embarrassingly damp panties into his outstretched palm. He closes his fist over them and just as I expect him to toss them aside too, he holds them to his face and inhales deeply.

Fuck! Me!

“I wonder, little hacker. Do you taste as good as you smell?” he growls, and I feel another rush of wet heat.

“You’d have to ask your brothers about that,” I reply with a pop of one eyebrow.

“Will I?” He stuffs the panties into his pocket and then rubs a hand over his jaw. Those hands. I imagine him running them over my body and touching that place where I am aching to feel him.

I swallow as my pussy starts to throb with need. “Or you could see for yourself,” I add. Damn, this man has me a hot, trembling mess.

His eyes narrow and my pulse quickens as his green eyes burn into mine. Reaching out his hand, he slides it up my inner thigh, leaving a trail of fire in his wake. My legs part for him of their own accord, and the low rumble in his throat seems to reverberate through my whole body. His hand reaches the apex of my thighs and I draw in an expectant breath before he palms my pussy possessively. I shudder at his touch, pressing my hips forward as he slides his index finger through my wet folds.

“Shane,” I pant with need as he reaches my hot entrance and pushes the tip inside me.

“Why are you so wet?”

“I live in a house with four men who are as hot as hell,” I bite back before staring into those incredible green eyes.

He narrows them at me. “Do you want this, Hacker?” he asks as he pushes his finger deep inside me and I moan loudly, my head tipping back between my shoulder blades.

“Well?” He curls the tip of his finger, pressing against my G-spot and my hips almost shoot off the desk.

Then he slides his finger out of me and leans back in his chair. “I guess not,” he growls, and I realize I didn’t answer his question.

I stare at him while I practically drip onto his desk. I need to take back some control here. Because Shane Ryan is too much. He’s going to unravel me. Break me apart and leave me in pieces.

I sit up and lean forward, pressing my face close to his neck and inhaling his incredible scent—expensive cologne and raw sex. “I wonder, Shane. Do you taste as good as you smell?”

His eyes blaze with fire, and he pushes his chair back a few inches. “Why don’t you see for yourself?” he growls as he looks down at his impressive erection straining at the seam of his suit pants.

I don’t need any further encouragement and I drop to my knees and unzip his fly, letting his hard cock spring free.

God, he’s huge!

I lick the bead of pre-cum from his tip and then suck him into my mouth as far as I can take him, pressing my tongue flat against the underside of his shaft and sucking to the tip as his hands fist in my hair and he curses in Gaelic.

I take him as far back into my throat as I can. Until my eyes are watering. I expect he’s going to start fucking my mouth, but he allows me to stay in control and pleasure courses through my body at the guttural sounds he makes as I suck and lick his beautiful cock.

I can feel him on the edge, and I work faster.

“Stop!” he orders suddenly as he pulls my head back by my hair. I look up and blink at him, thankful that my eyes are already watering as tears spring to them.

I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand. “Is something wrong?”

“Stand up,” he growls, ignoring my question.

I do as he instructs, my legs trembling as he places his hands on my hips to steady me. His fingers dig into my soft flesh as he grips me tightly. “I haven’t fucked a woman without a condom for a very long time,” he says as he stares at the space between my thighs.

“Really?”

“My brothers assure me you’re clean?”

“I am. I was tested when I had my checkup when I first got here.”

“And you’re on birth control?”

“Yes,” I pant as I stand here, literally dripping for him.

He nods as though he’s satisfied with that answer and then he leans forward. His hands slide up to my waist and he lifts me as though I’m made of air, before pulling me onto his lap and impaling me onto his huge, thick cock in one swift movement.

“Jesus, Shane,” I hiss as he stretches me wide open. My feet can’t touch the floor, so I have no leverage to work with and I’m completely full of him. I shift my weight to try and get a more comfortable position, but he holds me tight to him, letting my body adjust to his size.

“Fuck! Hacker,” he growls in my ear. “You feel so fucking good.”

My insides are on fire as his hard length throbs inside me. I draw in a shaky breath as my walls clench around him. His warm hands slide up to my back and he rubs over my skin, soothing me.

“Your cunt is so hot. You’re dripping all over me. Does sucking my cock make you wet?” he leans forward and breathes against my ear.

“Yes,” I groan as I tip my head back, allowing him easier access to my neck.

He runs his teeth along my sensitive skin before sucking on a spot just below my ear, and a rush of my arousal coats him. I breathe deeply as my body finally adjusts to his size. He knows as soon as I’m ready, and he moves his hips slightly, making me moan out loud as I cling to his neck.

“Shane,”

Chuckling against my skin, he places his hands on my hips again and rolls me over his cock. The friction and the angle are perfect and he reaches the sweet spot deep inside me so easily that I am panting for breath and teetering on the edge of oblivion. As if I could possibly take any more, he bends his head low and sucks one of my hard nipples into his hot mouth, licking and nibbling me gently until my whole body feels like it is on fire.

“You going to come all over my cock already, Hacker?” he mumbles, and I want to call him an arrogant asshole. But I can hardly form a coherent thought in my head, never mind speak. Besides, he’s right.

I run my fingers through his hair as my orgasm crashes over me like a freight train. I shudder against him, my walls squeezing and clenching around him until he throws his head back.

“Fuck,” he grunts as he fills me with his own release.

I PRESS my forehead against Shane’s as we both pant for breath. He lifts me slightly until he has enough room to pull out of me, and then he shuffles me backwards while he fastens his zipper and belt. I watch his Adam’s apple bob as he swallows hard, and I wonder if he’s going to tell me to leave now. He has resisted this thing between us for so long, perhaps he has taken all he needs from me.

But then he stands up, with my legs wrapped around his waist, and walks us out of his office, right past the den where his brothers are watching TV.

They all voice their approval as he carries me past them. Me completely naked, and him still in his suit. I blush as I bury my face in his neck.

“Don’t forget, you can’t have her all to yourself, Shane,” Conor shouts as we pass by.

Shane stops and turns to them. “You three have had your fun for the past four weeks. Tonight, it’s my turn,” he growls, and my insides melt like warm butter. I’m getting him all to myself, for tonight at least.

WHEN WE REACH HIS BEDROOM, Shane throws me onto the bed, making me giggle as I bounce into the middle. I stop laughing when I look up at his face. he’s so serious and fierce. I swallow as he undresses, his deft fingers making easy work of his shirt buttons. It’s only seconds before he’s sliding the crisp white cotton over his thick, tattooed biceps, exposing his muscular torso. I have only snatched glimpses of it before now, so I take the time to appreciate his hard, toned chest and abs. Not to mention those incredible arms, inked from wrist to shoulder.

I lick my lip unconsciously, earning me a smirk. Shane is an arrogant, self-entitled asshole, but right now I don’t care. I want him naked and inside me again, and I want him now. He slows his movements, unbuckling his belt and pulling it off in deliberate, unhurried strokes. By the time he reaches his zipper, I am trembling with need.

“Spread those legs wide for me, Hacker. I want to see you.”

Heat flushes over my cheeks as I do as he instructs and his gaze drops to my pussy. “Your cunt looks beautiful with my cum dripping from it.”

“You think I’m beautiful?” I can’t help but tease him.

“I said your cunt is beautiful. And that is the only part of you I’m interested in,” he snarls.

“Oh really?” I challenge him, unable to stop myself from trying to push his buttons.

“Really,” he snaps as he pushes off his pants and boxer shorts and crawls onto the bed. He places his large, powerful hands on my inner thighs and presses them flat to the mattress, spreading me wide open before bending his head low. He inhales deeply and growls his approval and the animalistic way he does it makes me pant with need. Leaning down, he presses the flat of his tongue against my opening. The warmth sends a shiver down the length of my spine and I whimper shamelessly as he works the tip inside me. But it’s when he licks the length of my pussy that I almost come undone again.

“Shane,” I pant as he swirls his tongue over my clit and I experience the rush of wet heat between my thighs.

“Your cunt is so fucking sweet, Hacker,” he growls against me. “Even full of my cum. Now I know why my brothers can’t keep their fucking hands off you.”

Heat sears through me at his words as he sucks my clit into his mouth and pushes two fingers inside me at the same time. My back arches off the bed in pleasure and then I raise my hips, grinding myself on his mouth and his fingers. My climax runs from me in a hot, wet rush, making my whole pussy and thighs slick with my arousal as he tips me over the edge.

I rake my fingers through his hair and try to pull his head away. “Stop,” I pant as he keeps on sucking. “Shane. Please, I can’t,” My legs tremble violently as he keeps his tongue and his fingers working me into a frenzy until I’m cresting another wave. The intense pressure builds in my core as I realize I’m going to lose all control and I’m not sure I want him to be the one I lose it with. I have less of a connection with him than any of his brothers, but damn if he makes me come as hard as I ever have in my life.

“I want more. I want it all,” he growls as he increases his efforts and I press my head back against the pillow, powerless to resist him. I cry out his name as the next orgasm rips through my body like black powder. Wet heat gushes from me, soaking the bedsheets and Shane’s face. I pant for breath as

my whole body convulses. That has never happened before. He looks up at me with a look of pure deviance in his eyes. “Damn, little hacker. Did you just...?”

“Stop,” I say, throwing my hands over my eyes. “I don’t know how that happened.”

He crawls up the bed, not even bothering to wipe any of my cum from his mouth, and takes hold of my wrists, pulling my hands from my face and pinning them either side of my head. “How the fuck am I supposed to keep out of this sweet little cunt of yours now?” he growls.

“Well, you don’t have to,” I whisper.

“Isn’t it enough that you have my brothers wrapped around your little finger? You don’t need me too. Besides, I’m not sure you’ll survive me *and* my brothers. And I don’t share well with others.”

“Well, maybe you need to try and learn?” I say with a grin as I place my hands on his face and pull him toward me for a kiss, but he pulls back.

“All I need to do, Hacker, is fuck you tonight. Just one night. In fact, I’m going to fuck you so hard neither of us will ever forget it, and then you can go back to my brothers.”

“Whatever you say, Shane,” I smile at him to hide the gaping hole he just tore through my chest. He might be right that I already have his brothers, but he’s wrong if he thinks that I don’t need him too. I need all of them. Each of them makes me feel something completely different, and I want it all. I know that makes me selfish. I know that I have no right to any claim on any one of these men, let alone all four of them, but it doesn’t stop me longing for it just the same. I feel something here that I haven’t experienced since I was a kid. On their own, they make me feel cherished, desired, wanted, even loved, but together, they make me feel like home. And I haven’t had that for such a long time that I’d forgotten what it was like, and how good it is to belong somewhere, or to someone.

“You ready?” Shane growls, snapping me from my thoughts. He’s holding himself up on his forearms. His breath skates over my cheek. I can smell my arousal on his face and it makes my stomach contract with the need for him. But I don’t even have a chance to answer as he pushes himself deep inside me, forcing me a few inches up the bed.

I feel every single inch of him as he buries his face in my neck and nails me to the mattress. He gives me everything he has, and I know it’s because he wants this to be it for us. I clench my walls around him, pulling him in deeper as I rake my nails down his back. If this is going to be all I get from him, then I want it all too.

“Your cunt is fucking perfect, Hacker,” he groans against my skin. “I can feel you squeezing me and dripping all over my cock. How the hell am I supposed to keep my hands off you?”

“Shane. You can’t. You fuck me too good,” I pant in response, and he growls in Gaelic in my ear as he doubles his efforts.

I LIE in Shane’s bed with his arm draped over my stomach as we both catch our breath. It’s almost 3a.m. and he has fucked me over and over again for hours. He is a machine, but I’m not sure my body can take any more of him.

He curls his arm tighter around me. “Has anyone ever made you squirt twice in one night before?” he growls.

I swallow hard as his words vibrate through my core. “No-one has ever made me do that before,” I whisper.

He sucks in a breath. “Fuck, Hacker,” he grunts.

“Don’t tell your brothers that,” I say. “They’ll only view it as some sort of challenge.”

“I won’t,” he says softly before he stretches and yawns.

“Shall I go back to my room?” I ask, the words catching in my throat.

He wraps his arm back around me and pulls me to him until I’m pressed against his chest. “I said one night, Hacker.

That means the entire night,” he says, pressing his lips against my hair. “Now get some sleep.”

I close my eyes and lean into him. Our bodies fit together so easily that I wonder how I will ever live without sharing his bed again. I only hope that he feels the same.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-EIGHT

JESSIE

The sound of the shower running wakes me from my sleep. I stretch my limbs and smile as the dull ache in my muscles reminds me of the previous night's endeavors. Shane Ryan is a machine in the sack. Climbing out of bed, I walk to the bathroom and find him standing in the huge walk-in shower; the water running over his perfectly chiseled body. He looks up and grins as he sees me.

"Come here, Hacker," he says, holding out his hand.

I lick my lips. My pussy is tender, and he fucks hard. I'm not sure I can take another session with him right now. But I can't resist him either. I step closer and take his hand, allowing him to pull me under the water with him. He runs his hands over my hips to my behind. I lean forward to kiss him, but he dips his head low, kissing my neck instead before trailing his soft lips over my hard nipples. Suddenly, I realize he has never kissed me, at least not on the lips. He has slipped his tongue into the most intimate parts of my body, but he won't kiss me? What the hell is that about?

I'm stopped from thinking about it any further when one of his hands slides between my thighs and through my slick folds. I can't help but wince.

"Are you sore?" he asks softly.

"A little," I admit.

He closes his eyes and draws in a breath as he slips one finger inside me. "You're already wet," he growls. "How can I not fuck you?"

“You can, Shane. Please do,” I whimper as he pulls out and circles my swollen clit.

“I can’t do gentle,” he breathes.

“Then don’t. I don’t want gentle. I want you.”

“Fuck,” he grunts as he lifts me by my ass cheeks until I wrap my legs around his waist. Then he presses me against the cool tiled wall and fucks me again. I moan his name when I come and he presses his face into my neck as he grinds out his own release. When we’re done, he lowers my legs and presses his forehead against mine as the water continues running over both of us.

“Do you still feel me inside you, Hacker?” he growls.

“Yes,” I say as my pussy throbs.

“Good. Then I think my work here is done.”

I force a smile even though my heart breaks a little bit more.

WHEN I’M SHOWERED and dressed, I make my way into the kitchen. Conor turns as I approach, placing his cereal bowl onto the counter before he pulls me into his arms. He presses his body against mine until I can feel his growing erection against my abdomen. “Morning, Angel. Listening to you and Shane all night made me so fucking hard. I jerked off twice listening to him make you come. So you’re staying in my room tonight.”

He doesn’t give me a chance to respond as he seals my mouth with a kiss. At this point, Shane walks up behind me and smacks my ass, and I giggle into Conor’s mouth.

“Morning, Jessie,” Mikey and Liam say as they walk over to me, both of them dressed in only boxer shorts. I’m still in Conor’s arms when Mikey presses himself against my back and plants a kiss on my neck. Despite mine and Shane’s marathon fucking session, the wet heat sears between my thighs. These boys make me so horny. Conor slides his hands between me and Mikey, and down the back of my jeans, beneath my underwear, until he’s cupping my bare ass cheeks. Some gentleness might be just what I need tonight. The twins

can be gentle, but there are always two of them to please. Conor, on the other hand – he is always all about me. I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him deeply as Mikey’s hands run over my hips, before sliding into the front of my jeans and my panties as he continues nibbling my neck.

I feel the heat from Liam as he approaches too. “You look so fucking hot being felt up by my brothers, Jessie.”

Shane loudly clears his throat from the other side of the kitchen and we all stop and turn to him as warmth flushes over my cheeks. I’m turning into a complete sex addict. The more I get, the more I need.

“Thanks to your fuck up yesterday, we have plenty of work to do today. So, take your hands out of her fucking panties and go get ready,” he barks. We untangle ourselves and the three of them each give me a soft kiss on the cheek before they walk out of the kitchen.

I walk to the breakfast bar and pick up a clean mug, holding it out to Shane as he fills up his own mug from the pot of coffee.

“You *are* a distraction,” he says with a flash of his eyebrows as he pours me a drink too.

“Sorry,” I whisper. “But they distract me as well.”

“Do *they*?” he frowns at me and I’m not sure why. “Can you behave yourself if we leave you here alone for the day?”

“Can’t I come with you?” I blink at him.

“No. It’s not the kind of work I want you involved in. Besides, haven’t we already established that you are far too much of a distraction for my brothers?”

“But not for you?”

He sighs and rolls his eyes, avoiding my question. “Do I need to get a babysitter in here for you, Hacker?”

“No,” I shake my head. “I’ll behave, I promise.”

“Good,” he says with a nod of his head and then he walks out of the kitchen, leaving me standing alone.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-NINE

MIKEY

I lean against the back seat of the car as Conor drives us through the streets of New York.

“Where the hell did you say we’re going?” Liam asks from beside me.

I can’t see Shane’s face, but I know without a doubt that he just rolled his eyes. Liam has a habit of asking the questions that we all want the answers to, but aren’t stupid enough to ask.

“To sort out your epic fuck up from yesterday,” he snaps.

“Yeah, I know. You told us that part. But where exactly is that?” he replies. “It’s kind of hard to get psyched up when you don’t have any idea what the plan is, bro.”

“Do you even know what the plan is, Shane?” Conor laughs, earning him a punch in the arm from our oldest brother.

“We’re going back to the bar. You three left too many loose ends, and I don’t need a war with the Russians right now.”

“What if they’ve already talked?”

“They haven’t. They’re small time. They don’t have a direct line to the top men. My sources tell me they’ve not spoken to their handlers yet. Nobody there recognized any of you. But it’s only a matter of time before one of them says something or sees one of you somewhere one day and realizes who you are.”

“You know we’re sorry, right?” Liam says.

I put an arm around my baby brother’s neck. He hates it when I call him that though, and I suppose I am only older than him by sixteen minutes. Liam is always the one who is most desperate for Shane’s approval. Not that he needs to worry. He already has it. Everyone knows that except Liam himself. Shane respects the hell out of him, out of all of us. But Liam will never measure up to his own expectations. He’s always so damn hard on himself. Then we all have our demons. I suppose it was hard to get through our childhoods without some scars.

“So? You and Jessie?” Conor asks, changing the subject completely, and making me lean forward in my seat. I have wondered if this would be a thing between the two of them. Liam and I have always shared everything, including women, and we’re more than happy to share Jessie. Knowing that she cares about Liam and Conor doesn’t make me feel any less cared for by her. I’m not big on relationships, and Jessie gets that. She makes time for me whenever I need her, and I like it that way. But Conor and Shane never share. They love each other deeply. They only had each other for eight years until me and Mikey were born, and they share a bond as close as me and my twin do. But they do not share women. Until now.

“What about us?” Shane snaps.

“I knew you wouldn’t be able to resist her,” Conor chuckles softly.

“Well, I’ll admit she has a certain appeal,” Shane nods. “You okay with that?”

Conor turns to him and smiles. “I am actually. Go figure.”

“Go figure,” Shane agrees.

“Hey. Let’s not forget, we liked her first. No-one asking if we’re okay with this arrangement?” Liam interrupts the bonding going on in the front.

Shane turns in his seat and just as I’m sure Liam is going to get a slap across the face from our oldest brother, Shane speaks instead. “This okay with you two?”

“Fine by me,” I nod.

“Of course. It’s just nice to be asked, that’s all,” Liam nods too.

“Good,” Shane snaps and then turns back to the road, before he quietly adds. “Because I wouldn’t give her up if it wasn’t.”

“You’re an asshole.” Conor shakes his head.

“You know, that’s what she said,” Shane bursts out laughing and suddenly the four of us are laughing like we haven’t done in a long time. Not since before they took Conor eighteen months ago. Jessie Romanov might just be the best thing that’s ever happened to the Ryan brothers. Our little red-haired ray of sunshine.

CHAPTER

THIRTY

LIAM

Walking behind Conor and Shane back into that bar where we fucked up so badly yesterday, I still feel guilty. Shane asked us to do a job and we completely let him down, and that was mostly because of me. But even worse than letting him down, Jessie could have been killed. A minute later and things could have been so much worse. And I would never be able to live with myself.

Mikey steps up behind me, placing a reassuring hand on my shoulder. He knows exactly what I'm thinking.

Shane turns to us as we reach the doors. He speaks to all of us, but for some reason, I can't shake the feeling that it's mostly aimed at me. "This place is closed to the public right now. So, anyone who is in here is a target. No shooters unless absolutely necessary. I want this to seem like amateurs were here. Like a bust up between two rival gangs. And no loose ends. Okay?"

"Okay," I nod, just before Shane opens the doors. The four of us walk inside and bolt the doors behind us. There are at least a dozen men in the place. Most of them sit around two tables that are pushed together in the corner, as though they're having a meeting and the others are near the bar.

"Jesus, Shane," Conor hisses through clenched teeth. "You sure we can't use our shooters?" he asks, referring to the handguns each of us have tucked into the back of our waistbands.

“Not unless they do. Besides, I thought you three were always up for a fight?”

“But this is one of my favorite shirts,” Conor feigns his protest, although his grin gives him away.

The men in the room start standing up or making their way toward us, and Mikey leans close to Shane’s ear as “You do realize if we beat and, or, stab all of these fuckers to death, it will still look like a professional job though, right?”

Shane shrugs. “Less professional though than if we just shoot them all in the head.”

“Whatever you say,” Mikey laughs as he rocks back on his heels, ready to spring into action. Conor cracks his knuckles and then his neck. He was an undefeated bare-knuckle boxing champion back in Ireland, and he loves any excuse for a good punch-up. It’s why he enjoys working in the club so much.

“Three each? Give or take?” Shane suggests.

“Does the one who kills the most get a prize?” I ask.

“No,” Shane snaps. “Just get to work.”

The four of us split off into the room and within seconds, I no longer have any idea what my brothers are doing because the giant bastard who has been sizing me up since we walked in launches himself at me, barreling into me with such force that he almost knocks me on my ass. I steady myself and push back against him, making him stumble. I am six foot four; I work out hard to keep in shape, and I’m the biggest out of my brothers, but this guy must have at least four inches and eighty pounds on me. And not only that, he can fight too. I hit him with an uppercut just as he throws a right hook that catches me right on my left cheekbone. Both of us stagger backwards but then we’re back at it again. We keep going, landing blow after blow, until he catches me with a knee to my ribs, which completely takes the wind out of me and knocks me flat on my ass.

I lie on the floor, glaring up at him. Since I came to New York at the age of sixteen, the only other person who has ever knocked me on my ass is Conor in a sparring session. My head

spins as I look around the room and watch my brothers making easy work of the rest of this misfit's crew. Shane and Mikey wield a knife each, while Conor is snapping someone's neck with ease. I have a knife strapped to my calf. I could pull it out now and use it, but this has become personal. I will take this fucker down in a fair fight if it fucking kills me. If he's only using his fists, then so am I.

Launching myself back up, I throw myself at him like a caged tiger. I don't know how long we go on fighting but every part of my body starts to hurt. It becomes an all-out brawl. Each of us punching and kicking the other one. Landing blow after blow that seems to do little more than temporarily wind the other. I'm vaguely aware of the room around us growing quieter and soon my three brothers are standing around me, having wiped out at least eleven men between them while I'm still grappling with this huge fucker.

My ribs ache so much it hurts to even breathe. There is blood pouring down my face from a cut above my eye. And now I carry the shame of being the weak link. I was the only one who didn't pull my weight today. The anger wells up through my chest and I launch myself at him again, finally knocking him to the ground. I dive onto him, straddling his chest while I punch him in the face. Over and over and over. One of his eyes pops out of his socket and blood spatters my face, but I keep going until a pair of arms wrap around my chest.

"Jesus, Liam. He's dead, kid," Shane says in my ear. "Come on," he pulls me backwards until I'm sitting on the floor. Looking, down, I realize I'm covered in blood. My brothers eyes are on me, burning into my skin.

"What the hell are you three looking at?" I snarl.

"Nothing, bro. Come on. Let's go," Conor says.

I look up just as Mikey whispers something in Shane's ear.

"Go wait for us in the car," Shane says to my brothers. "We'll be out soon."

I watch Mikey and Conor walking out of the bar, and I swallow hard. I've let them all down again.

Shane crouches down, sitting back on his heels so he can look me in the eye. "He was one tough motherfucker, kid," he grins at me. "You did good."

"No, I didn't," I shake my head. "Three each it was supposed to be, and I just about handled one."

Shane looks back at the huge man lying lifeless on the floor. "He's a fucking giant, Liam. Why do you think we left him for you? He would have used my face as a boot-scraper. Conor might have got the better of him, but I knew you would be the best match for him. Why didn't you use your knife?"

"I wanted it to be a fair fight," I shrugged.

Shane smiles, and then he stands up, holding out his hand to me. I take it and allow him to pull me up. "You always insisted on fighting fair. Even when you were a little kid," he says as he reaches up ruffles my hair, taking me back to all the times he looked out for me or stood up to our father for me. "You did a good job today. I mean that. I know I don't tell you enough, but I'm proud of you."

"But, yesterday, I fucked up," I shake my head.

"We all fuck up sometimes, Liam," he wraps an arm around my neck. "No matter what you do, no matter how many mistakes you make, you will never disappoint me. Do you understand me?"

"Yes." I blink at him as I wipe the blood dripping into my eye.

"Good. Now, don't tell your brothers this, but you're my favorite," he pulls me closer, until he almost has me in a headlock, and kisses the top of my head.

I laugh because I know that's not true. He doesn't have favorites. I wish I could tell him how much I admire and respect him. How he's more like a father than a brother to me. But, I can't find the words.

“Come on. We need to go to the club and get cleaned up before we go home, because Jessie will have you all wrapped in cotton wool if she sees the state of us all.”

“Well, I wouldn’t mind a little Jessie TLC,” I smirk at him.

“I bet you wouldn’t,” he grins back before we walk out of the bar, leaving the room full of dead bodies behind us.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-ONE

JESSIE

I switch off the laptop and lean back against the chair with a sigh. Seeing that document on the computer at the bar yesterday has made me remember what I'm supposed to be doing with my life. I've been so distracted by the Ryan brothers – distracted being happy for a change, that it was easy to forget that I'm supposed to be tracking down the Wolf.

That day when I finally escaped, I was convinced that I'd killed him. I stuck that wooden hairbrush handle right into his throat. I have never seen so much blood. But when I went back the next day to torch the place, he was gone. So, I ran, and I kept on running until I reached civilization two days later.

The Wolf didn't have a car, or I would have stolen it. So, where the hell did he go to? Maybe he is dead after all?

But maybe he's not. And until I know for sure, I'll never be able to rest.

THE BOYS HAVE BEEN GONE all day and I've kept myself distracted with some more work and a workout in the gym. I showered and put on one of Liam's huge baseball shirts. The soft cotton feels good against my skin, and it's so big that I can wrap my whole body in it when I'm sitting on the sofa. Walking into the kitchen, I look in the refrigerator for something for dinner. I wonder if the boys will be hungry when they get back or whether they will have eaten while they were out.

The sound of raised voices makes my heart skip a beat as I realize they're home. I had thought I'd enjoy some time to

myself, but I've missed them.

A few seconds later, they walk into the kitchen carrying pizza boxes and the delicious aroma makes my stomach growl. Liam and Mikey reach me first. Putting the takeout onto the counter, they press me into a hot man and Jessie sandwich as Mikey kisses me, while Liam pulls my hair aside and rubs his nose along my neck. "We've missed you, baby," he breathes.

When the twins let me go, lured away by the smell of the tempting food, Conor pulls me into his arms, lifting me onto the kitchen counter and kissing me deeply. I wrap my legs around his waist. "Come take a shower with me, Angel," he groans. "I need inside you."

"Sorry, Con. I need Hacker to check out that security system for me. She's coming with me," Shane says as he reaches us and places a hand on Conor's shoulder.

"As soon as you're done, then," Conor groans as he brushes my hair back from my face.

"She'll still be with me," Shane says matter-of-factly and my insides contract at the thought. He said just one night, didn't he?

Conor turns to him with a scowl. "I had to listen to the two of you fucking the whole of last night."

"And I've listened to the four of you for the past four weeks. It's still my turn," he says with a wink as he reaches for my hand and pulls me from the counter, picking up a pizza box with the other. "But, first, we have work to do."

I kiss Conor softly before following Shane into his office. He sits at his desk and fires up his computer while I take the pizza from him and open up the box. My stomach growls again as soon as the aroma of pepperoni hits me, and I take a slice.

He holds out his hand to me. "I need you to hack into the security system at Balthazar's. I want you to wipe any footage from today."

I nod as I take a bite. He doesn't usually let me use his computer. "Sure. Shouldn't take me long," I say as I take a

step toward him. I wait for him to stand up and let me sit down so I can get to work, but he doesn't move, and I realize he is my seat. I sit on his lap and open up the page I need.

He pulls my hair back and kisses my neck and I wriggle on his lap. "This would go a hell of a lot quicker if you weren't distracting me," I say with a grin.

"Fine," he says as his hands drop to my lap. "But, you're sexy when you work."

"So are you," I reply as I watch the footage of him and his brothers wiping out the entire room.

"You don't have to watch it all, Hacker," he says as his hand slides between my thighs and his fingers edge dangerously close to my panties. "Just wipe it."

"Okay. I can fast forward, but I need to make sure I wipe it all."

"Fine," he answers as his fingertips brush over my folds and I suck in a breath.

"Why do you insist on walking around the house in nothing but panties and a t-shirt?" he growls as he presses his lips against my ear.

"What can I say? I enjoy wearing yours and your brothers' clothes," I shrug. "Besides, it's easy access for you, isn't it?" I chuckle, and he nips at my neck.

"You are far too much of a distraction, Hacker," he says as he tugs my panties to the side and slides a finger through my wet folds, making him groan out loud. "You're dripping wet. Have you been enjoying yourself while we've been out?"

"No," I breathe. "I've been busy." I shift in his lap, but he holds me tight to him. "Now let me finish my work."

"A good hacker should be able to work well under pressure," he breathes in my ear as he pushes one finger deep inside me.

"Shane," I groan.

"Hurry up and finish what you need to do," he growls.

I try to focus as I forward through the footage while he gently pumps his finger in and out of my channel. Then I come to the end. Conor and Mikey leave the bar, and it's just Shane and Liam.

He isn't watching the screen. Instead, he's nuzzling my neck and fingering me to distraction, but I watch as Shane wraps an arm lovingly around his younger brother and kisses the top of his head. "What did you say to Liam?" I ask.

He looks up at me. "Nothing. Just delete it."

"It doesn't look like nothing."

He pulls his hand from between my thighs. "It's none of your business. Now delete the footage."

"Fine," I snap, and press delete. "There. All done. Can I go now?"

He frowns at me as he lets out a long, slow breath of exasperation. "You are fucking infuriating."

"Well, so are you."

"Fine. Do you want to go, Hacker? Would you rather be with one of my brothers tonight?"

I swallow, realizing that I've offended him. He has every right not to tell me about the details of a private, and quite obviously meaningful conversation with his brother. "No," I whisper. "I'd rather be right here with you."

"Here?" he growls. "You'd like to be fucked on my desk?"

"I just like being fucked by you," I breathe as his hand slides back to where I'm already aching to feel him again. "Anywhere is fine."

He moves the computer keyboard out of the way, pushing it beneath the monitor before he stands up, lifting me with him and sitting me on the edge of his desk with Liam's t-shirt up around my waist. "I've been dreaming about fucking you on my desk. Especially when you're wearing these pretty pink panties," he looks down at my underwear. "You realize they're wet already?" He arches one eyebrow at me as he runs his finger over the damp patch.

“Well, this really hot, moody guy has just had his fingers inside me. So, what do you expect?” I bite on my lip and look up at him.

He grins as he lifts the edge of Liam’s t-shirt and pulls it over my head before tossing it onto the floor. Then he trails his fingers down over my stomach and to the edge of my panties. He tugs the band roughly and shoves his entire hand inside them. It makes me gasp, but it’s so freaking hot, I experience the familiar rush of wet heat. He chuckles as my skin flushes with warmth too. His other hand reaches for my hair, wrapping it around his fist as he tips my head back slightly and licks from my collarbone up to my jaw. “You smell so fucking sweet, Hacker.”

I push my hips against his hand as he slides his fingers through my soaking wet folds before pushing two of them inside me.

“Shane,” I cry out.

“Fuck, I love the way you say my name,” he growls as he kisses and sucks on that perfect spot on my neck, right below my ear, at the same time as he begins to finger fuck me. His thumb knuckle grazes over my clit and my legs almost buckle until I wrap them around his waist.

The pressure builds and my thighs begin to tremble as the skin on my neck and chest burns with heat.

He moves his lips to my ear. “Come for me, Hacker. I want to feel you creaming on my fingers.”

His filthy talk is my downfall and my orgasm bursts through me and I shout his damn name – again. He smiles against my skin, holding me in place as he rubs the last tremors from my body. “Good little hacker,” he chuckles.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-TWO

JESSIE

My eyelids flutter open as Shane stirs beside me. “Hey, Hacker,” he says in the low, smooth tone he has that turns my internal organs to melted chocolate.

“Hey. What time is it?” I purr as I stretch like a cat.

“Four a.m. You were talking in your sleep,” he says as he raises one eyebrow at me. “Who is Volk?”

That name is like a knife through my heart. I realize I’m staring at him with my mouth open when his face pulls into a frown.

“Who is it?” he snaps.

“Volk is Russian for Wolf,” I reply before drawing in a long, shaky breath. I don’t remember dreaming about him. Why was I calling his name?

“Are you okay?” he asks as he reaches out and dusts the back of his knuckles across my cheek.

“I’m fine. I’m sorry if I woke you.”

“I’m used to people shouting in their sleep around here,” he says softly. “I’ve never heard you do it before, though. You sure everything is okay?” he stares at me with such concern in his eyes that it makes me want to cry.

“I’ve been thinking about things since the day at the bar,” I say with a shrug.

He sits up and looks down at me. “What things?”

“My family. The Wolf,” I shake my head. “I saw something on Dmitriy’s computer. It was a file titled Romanov. When I opened it, there was a marriage certificate.”

“Was is something to do with your family?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t think so anyway. The names were unfamiliar. I didn’t recognize them. Alexei Ivanov and Nataliya Vasiliev. But Nataliya had the same birthday as my mother. A different year, but same month and day.”

Shane narrows his eyes at me. “Was it a recent document?”

“No. It was from twenty-eight years ago.”

“So, you *didn’t* think it was anything to do with your family? But now you do?”

“I’m not sure.” I look at him and swallow. “Why was it kept in a file marked Romanov?”

“Romanov is a common name, right” he asks.

I nod. “Yeah. But there’s something else. When that guy came into the room... he was about to make a grab for me, but then he stopped. And then he called me Nataliya. Like he recognized me. So, maybe I’m related to this Nataliya in some way?”

“Did your parents have any siblings?”

I shake my head. “Not that I know of, anyway. They told me they were only children.”

“Perhaps it’s their marriage certificate? And they changed their names?”

“But my parents married when I was three. I was there. That document is dated two years before I was born.”

“Why didn’t you tell us any of this before?”

“With everything else that happened, I didn’t get the chance. Besides, I was still trying to work it out myself. It could be a coincidence, couldn’t it? That I see that on Dmitriy’s computer right before one of his men calls me Nataliya?” I look up into his beautiful green eyes, hoping that

he'll tell me that of course it is, because if it's not that I might not know who my parents were at all.

“Do you look like your mother?” he asks instead.

“Yes,” I swallow. “Who is Dmitriy, Shane?”

He shakes his head. “No-one of note. He used to work for the Semenovs. He was running a gambling racket in Brooklyn, though. That's why I was interested in him.”

“So, why did he even have that document on his computer?”

“I don't know. But, I don't have the time for a war with the Russian right now.”

“I know. I won't do anything stupid. I have enough information to start a new search. And it could be a coincidence. I've been chasing these leads for eight years, Shane, and they all lead me down the same dead end road. This could be nothing at all,” I insist, although I don't quite believe it myself.

“Okay,” he nods. “But it might also mean that your mother or your father aren't who you think they were. And that could be the reason your family were killed. You shouldn't have kept this from me. You promised me no more lies.”

“Shane.” Reaching out my hand, I take hold of his. “I didn't try to hide this from you, I swear. To be honest, I wasn't sure...” I swallow the lump in my throat.

“Wasn't sure of what?”

“I wasn't sure that you would be interested. You're only interested in one part of me. Remember?”

His jaw tenses. “If there is any threat to you, then there is a potential threat to me and my brothers too. Don't you understand that?”

“Yes,” I whisper. “I've been used to only looking out for myself for so long, I swear I didn't think of how this might affect you all too. I was going to tell you as soon as I figured out what there was to tell.”

“So, what are you planning on doing now that you have this information?”

“I’ll look into Nataliya and Alexei and see where to go from there.”

“Do not do anything to draw any more attention to us right now,” he warns.

“I won’t. I’ll do it all from the comfort of my laptop. Promise.”

“You are going to be my downfall one day, Hacker. I can already feel it,” he whispers as he crawls over me.

“I won’t. Because we’re only about one thing, you and me. Aren’t we?” I bite my lower lip as I stare up at him, trying my best to be completely irresistible and seductive.

“Yes, we are. Would you like me to remind you again just what that is?” he growls before bending his head and sinking his teeth into my neck.

“Shane,” I half squeal, half groan, and he chuckles against my skin.

“You want my mouth on you?” he breathes as his head sinks lower.

“Yes,” I pant as the tingling between my thighs skyrockets.

“You have such a sweet tasting cunt, I don’t know how any of us get any fucking work done around here anymore.”

“Well, it’s a good job there’s four of you,” I groan as his lips skate over my breasts and my stomach until his head is settled between my thighs.

“Only I can make you squirt though, can’t I?” he growls as his lips are pressed against my skin and his words reverberate throughout my entire body.

“Stop talking and put that hot mouth of yours to work,” I say with a wicked grin. If this is all we are, then I might as well embrace it.

He laughs again, and his hot breath dances over my slick folds, making me writhe beneath him. Then his magical

tongue licks me from my opening to my clit, where he settles his mouth and begins to suck gently while rimming either side of the tender nub of flesh. I push my hips further against him as he tortures me with his incredible oral skills. This man is a magician with his tongue. And as my orgasm builds and threatens to wash over me, he pushes two fingers inside me, causing me to almost shoot off the bed.

“Shane,” I cry out and he continues his relentless pace until I’m screaming his name. I haven’t recovered from the earth shattering orgasm when he’s moving back up the bed and pressing his hands against the inside of my thighs, until they’re flat against the mattress.

I reach out for him, clawing at his neck as he drives his huge cock deep inside me. “Fucking you is like my kryptonite, Hacker. This sweet cunt gets you anything you want, doesn’t it?”

I close my eyes and try and ignore the hurt from his words. he’s intent on pushing me away. Instead, I concentrate on the feel of his hard body on mine. The flex of his muscles as he takes exactly what he wants from me.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-THREE

JESSIE

When I wake the following morning, Shane is gone. Glancing at the clock, I notice it's a little after nine am. I wonder what time he left as I rub my hand over the side of the bed where he slept. It's cold and I can't help being a little disappointed by the fact that he didn't even wake me.

Rolling out of bed, I make my way to the shower and step inside. I turn the temperature up as high as I can stand it and enjoy the hot water running over my body, easing my aching muscles. These Ryan brothers are certainly keeping me active. I smile to myself because I wouldn't have it any other way.

I ALMOST BUMP into Conor a little later as I step out of my own bedroom.

"You know where his office is," he says to the person standing out of my view.

"Yes. Thank you," a soft Irish voice says, immediately followed by one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen in the world striding past me and walking confidently down the hallway in pumps that must have at least a six-inch heel on them. She's dressed in a cream, fitted suit and her long, wavy blonde hair is styled perfectly. She looks like she just stepped out of some fancy magazine shoot.

"Who the hell is that?" I whisper to Conor as I watch after her with my mouth hanging open.

He leans against the wall, his arms crossed over his broad chest and his legs crossed at the ankles. "Erin. Our family

lawyer,” he replies. “Don’t be fooled by her ladylike exterior. She’s vicious,” he laughs.

“She’s stunning,” I say, experiencing an unexpected pang of jealousy. So, this is Erin?

He pulls a face as though he disagrees with that statement before he adds matter-of-factly. “She’s also Shane’s ex. They almost got married.”

“What?” I stare at him, my mouth hanging open in shock. “How could you not lead with that?” I push him playfully on the arm.

He grins at me. “Not jealous are you, Angel?”

“No,” I snap back a little too quickly. “But Shane? Married?”

“Almost,” he says as he stands up straight and steps toward me. He wraps an arm around my waist and we walk toward the kitchen.

“What happened? Which one of them broke it off?”

“No idea.” He shakes his head.

“Liar.” I smile.

“I’m not,” he laughs. “It’s a closely guarded secret. Shane never talks about it. But two days before their wedding, they suddenly called everything off. He never told us why.”

“But aren’t you desperate to know?” I ask, my eyes wide as we walk into the kitchen to find the twins sitting at the table eating cereal.

“Not as desperate as you are, it seems,” he grins at me. “If Shane wanted us to know, he would have told us.”

“So, you’ve met the Ice Queen then?” Mikey asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

“Don’t let Shane hear you calling her that,” Liam warns him.

Mikey shrugs. “She broke his fucking heart. And she hates us. I’ll call her whatever I want.”

Conor shakes his head as he picks up a box of muesli and pours himself a bowl. “You don’t know that she broke his heart,” he says with a sigh.

“No. But he was a miserable bastard for fucking ages after,” Mikey says.

“Still is,” Liam adds, and the twins burst into laughter.

“I’m spot on about her hating us though, bro,” Mikey says when he stops laughing.

“Yeah, well, you might just be right about that,” Conor agrees.

I put on a pot of fresh coffee while the boys chatter amongst themselves. The subject of Shane’s ex-fiancée isn’t raised by them again, but I can’t help thinking about it. Shane Ryan almost married. And to that goddess?

Well, of course, if he was going to marry someone, it would be someone who looked just like Erin. I look down at my five foot four frame. My thick hips and my curvy thighs. How the hell do I ever compete with a woman like that?

I turn and look at the boys and remind myself that I don’t have to. I have the Ryan brothers’ attention for now, and I should enjoy it while I can. Although I care for them all deeply, I know this can’t last. It’s not like I’m going to marry any of them. Especially not Shane who has made it abundantly clear that he’s only interested in me for one thing. I knew that this was just a temporary thing when I signed on, didn’t I? As soon as I figure out where the Wolf is hiding, I’ll be moving on anyway. That’s if this thing doesn’t fizzle out before then all on its own.

“What’s the ETA on that coffee, Angel?” Conor asks and I’m snapped from my thoughts.

“Coming,” I smile sweetly, and take the pot over to the table. As soon as I set it down, Mikey wraps an arm around my waist and pulls me to him. “You fancy a movie and a sleepover with me and Liam tonight, Red?” he asks as he nuzzles my neck.

“Sure. Sounds good,” I smile at him, but I’m still distracted by the blonde goddess currently in Shane Ryan’s office.

I HANG around the enormous living room when the boys and I have finished breakfast, under the pretense that I’m tidying up. But you have to walk past the huge open plan area to get to the elevators, and I hope to catch another glimpse of Shane’s guest before she leaves. If she leaves. What if she spends the night? Or longer? The thought makes me shudder just as I hear voices coming along the hallway.

“Thanks for this, Erin,” Shane says as he escorts her past the room.

I stand up, blowing a strand of hair from my face. “Hey,” I say as breezily and naturally as I can, as though I haven’t been loitering here waiting for them to make an appearance.

“Erin, this is our house guest...” Shane says.

“Jessie,” she interrupts him.

“Yes,” he nods as his eyes linger on her face, and jealousy gnaws at my insides. *Get a grip, Jessie.*

I walk over and extend my hand, seeing as Shane offers no further introduction.

“I’m Erin. Shane’s lawyer,” she says with a curt smile as she takes my outstretched hand.

“It’s lovely to meet you,” I lie.

“Well, it’s been lovely to see you, as always, Shay,” she says as she turns back to him. “But I need to get going. I can show myself out.”

Shay!

“Of course. It’s always a pleasure,” he says softly as he kisses her cheek. I glare at the two of them. I bet he used to kiss her on the mouth.

“I’ll be in touch.” She gives him a last lingering look before turning around and walking to the elevator.

He looks at me as I stand there with a bottle of furniture polish in one hand and a cloth in the other.

“Cleaning?” he arches one eyebrow at me.

“Shay?” I snap back.

He glares at me. “Don’t ever call me that.”

“Fine. Are you two dating or something?” I frown at him.

He steps closer and wraps one arm around my waist and slides his free hand onto my ass. “No. She’s my lawyer. Nothing more. Do you think I’d be fucking you with no protection if I was seeing other women?” he growls in my ear, and my insides tremble as his voice vibrates through my body.

“No,” I whisper.

“So, don’t ask me stupid fucking questions, Hacker.”

“Okay,” I frown and then he releases me and stalks off toward his office.

Asshole!

CHAPTER

THIRTY-FOUR

JESSIE

It's been two days since I first learned about Shane's ex-fiancée and he has mostly avoided me since. Who would have thought it would annoy him so much that I called him Shay? He didn't seem to mind when Erin purred it in his ear.

I sit in the den, looking at his office door, wondering whether to just go in there and clear the air with him because I can't stand this constant tension between the two of us. I seem to be always pushing his buttons lately, and not in a good way either.

I put the magazine I've been reading down on the sofa and stand up as voices approach from the hallway. Straining my ears, I'm sure it's Erin's voice. What the hell is she doing back here again?

Sure enough, a few seconds later, she glides gracefully past the living area in her impossibly high heels and heads straight to Shane's office. I sit down, picking up my magazine and flicking through it, but I can hardly focus on anything.

I stand up and make my way into the kitchen. I need to stop obsessing about Shane and his ex. She's his lawyer and nothing more. And even if she isn't, it's no business of mine.

AN HOUR LATER, I'm in the kitchen stirring the sauce I'm making for tonight's dinner, when that now familiar, soft Irish voice speaks out behind me.

"Something smells nice."

I turn around and wipe the sauce from my hands on a towel as I come face to face with Erin. "Oh, thanks. It's just a

recipe I found online.”

She tilts her head and stares at me, sizing me up. No doubt she’s scrutinizing the woman who is living in the same house as her ex-fiancé. I wonder if she still loves him?

“Can I help you with anything, Erin?” I say with a smile as I size her up right back. God, she really is beautiful. She’s dressed in a navy suit today and she looks stunning.

“I was just looking for Conor,” she says as she looks around the kitchen, as though he might jump out from a cabinet somewhere.

“I think he’s asleep. He was working really late last night,” I say. I don’t add that he came to my room when he got home at six am and then he didn’t leave to go to his own bed until two hours later. “Can I give him a message?” I ask, trying to be helpful.

She smirks at me and shakes her head. “I’m sure I can get the message to him myself. But thank you for your kind offer.”

I suck in a breath. *Don’t offend her, Jessie. She’s their lawyer.*

“Okay.” I force a smile and then I turn back to my sauce.

“What exactly do you do around here, Jessie?” she asks.

I close my eyes and count to five before turning back to her. “What did Shane tell you I do?”

She narrows her eyes at me. “If you think he might be the one for you, you’re sadly mistaken.”

“Is that so?” I snap.

“Shane will never put you before his brothers. He will never, ever make you a priority. He will never leave them to fend for themselves.”

“Well, maybe I don’t want him to,” I frown at her.

She sucks on her top lip as she looks me up and down. “Hmm. You’re not really his type, though. Maybe Conor’s?” she laughs. “Perhaps you could do me and Shane a favor and take one of his brothers off his hands for him?”

“Perhaps you could do everyone a favor and get the hell out.”

She walks across the kitchen, towering over me in her heels while I’m in my bare feet. “Don’t make an enemy of me, Jessie,” she snarls.

“Ditto.” I snarl back.

She flicks her long blonde hair over her shoulder before she walks out of the kitchen. I stare after her, wondering what the hell that was about. Clearly, she does still love Shane. Does he still have any such feelings for her?

I turn off my sauce and make my way to his office. The door is open, and I walk straight in.

“Hacker. Come here,” he growls as soon as he sees me.

I walk over to his desk. “Erin just left,” I snap.

“I know,” he stands up and walks over to me.

“What is the deal with you and her?”

He ignores my question and slides his hands over my hips and onto my ass, squeezing hard as his head drops to my neck.

“Shane. Are you even listening to me?” I groan as I lean my head back.

“No. Because I don’t want to talk about Erin,” he snaps as he walks me backwards across the room until I’m pressed against his filing cabinet.

“I only -”

“I just told you I don’t want to talk about her, Hacker,” he interrupts me. “I only want to fuck you.” Then he spins me around until my front is pressed against the metal cabinet and he is pressed against my back. His cock is rock hard, and he pushes it against the seam of my ass. Erin left his office not less than five minutes ago and now he has a massive hard on for her that he intends to relieve using me.

“Shane,” I gasp as he reaches beneath my oversized t-shirt and tugs my panties down my legs.

Then, he opens his zipper and bends his knees before he pushes his cock deep inside me.

“Fuck, you feel good,” he grunts in my ear and I groan out loud. I resent the hell out of him fucking me as a poor substitute for Erin, but damn if his body doesn’t feel good inside mine. I place my hands on the cabinet and lean into him as he reaches in front of me and rubs my clit to the same intense rhythm that he thrusts in and out of me.

“Shane,” I moan out loud as he nails me to the cabinet while sucking on that sweet point on my neck. I wish he would say my name. Just once. Just so I know that it’s me inside his head and not her.

He increases his pressure on my clit and a few moments later, I am coming apart around him and a rush of my cream coats his cock. Shane increases his pace further and a few seconds later he curses in Gaelic as he spurts inside me, hot and heavy.

He pulls out of me and steps backwards, and I take the opportunity to pull my panties back up. We both stand there panting for breath, but as the waves of my orgasm ebb away, the tears prick my eyes. Shane has always been an asshole to me, but he has taken his assholery to new heights today.

“Is there anything else?” I ask.

He looks up and frowns at me. “What? Well, not right now.”

“Good. I’ll leave you to your work then,” I feign a smile before I walk out, leaving him standing in his office.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-FIVE

SHANE

I sit in the armchair and watch Jessie with my brothers. So easy and relaxed. Liam has his arm casually around her shoulder while Mikey has one hand on her thigh and the other holding a bowl of popcorn. Whenever a funny part of the film comes on, she laughs and looks between the two of them. My little brothers smile back at her and I'm not sure I've ever seen them so happy before.

Conor sits on the armchair opposite and he rarely takes his eyes off her. My broken right-hand man who had been a shell of his former self after what happened with the Semenovs, with a contentment on his face that I haven't seen for a very long time. She looks over at him too, reminding him she's there, and that all he needs to do is say the word and she's his. Because she would do that for him. If he held out his hand to her now, she would leave the comfort of the sofa and the warmth of the twin's bodies against hers and go to him. She would do the same for Liam or Mikey too. They give her everything she could ever want or need, and she does the same for them.

Yet, she can barely stand to look at me. My heart races as I recall the last time I touched her. It was two days ago, and she has barely acknowledged me since. I miss her when she's not in my bed, but I accept she can't spend every night with me and I can live with that. Usually, she calls into my office at least once a day, and more often than not, I fuck her on my desk. So, to not touch her at all, to not feel the brush of her lips on my skin, or the perfect weight of her ass in my hands, I fucking hate it, and I miss her.

I was rough with her the other day, but then I often am. So, what the hell have I done to make her so pissed at me? If I called her name right now, would she come to me too? And if she did, would it be because she wanted to, or because of something else?

The film credits are rolling over the screen and I watch her stretch and yawn. Liam curls her hair around his fist and pulls her face to his, pressing a soft kiss against her temple. I wonder if she's planning on spending the night with the twins. If I have any say in it, she won't be.

I stand up. "Jessie," I growl, and all of their heads snap toward me. I have never called her by her name before. "We're going to bed."

She blinks at me, and Mikey squeezes her thigh reassuringly.

My heart pounds in my chest as I wait for her response. I have never felt this vulnerable in front of my brothers before. What if she says no? I'll have to walk over there and carry her out of here. But then she stands, and a wave of relief washes over me.

"Night, boys," she says before leaning down and kissing Mikey and Liam on the cheek. She walks toward me, her head slightly bowed, and as she reaches Conor, she stops to kiss him too. He's not satisfied with a peck on the cheek though and he pulls her into his lap, places his hands on either side of her face and kisses her deeply. She closes her eyes and leans into him and there is a connection between them that is so tangible, I could almost reach out and touch it. It makes me feel something I don't like feeling. After a few seconds, she pulls away.

"Goodnight, Angel," he whispers before giving her a slap on the ass as she stands up. She giggles, but then she stops again when she looks up at me. I turn and walk toward the hallway and she follows close behind.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-SIX

JESSIE

I walk along the hallway behind Shane, watching the powerful muscles in his back flexing beneath his white shirt. Did that really just happen? Did he just order me to bed like I'm a teenager? What the hell is that about? I obeyed him though, didn't I? Without question. Because he can play me like a six-string.

When we reach his room, he holds open the door and I step inside. I walk toward the middle of the room as the soft click of the door signals it closing behind us.

“Take off your clothes and lie on the bed,” he says softly. His voice is as smooth as hot chocolate and it sends a shiver through my body.

My pulse thrums against my pressure points as I turn to face him and peel the oversized t-shirt over my head before dropping it onto the floor. Hooking my fingers into the side of my panties, I look him in the eye as I peel them down my legs and kick them off, so they land on top of the t-shirt.

He doesn't speak, but he rubs a hand over his jaw as his eyes roam over my naked body. My nipples pebble under his gaze and although I'm still mad at him, a rush of wet heat sears between my thighs.

Stepping backwards, I reach the bed and lie down on it. I look up at him as he walks toward me.

“Why have you been avoiding me, Hacker?” he asks as he begins unbuttoning his shirt.

My pulse quickens. The sight of Shane Ryan removing his clothes could be a Broadway show. I know I would pay good money to see it. “Because you’re an asshole,” I say with a smile.

He doesn’t reply, but simply cocks one eyebrow at me as he shrugs off his shirt before his hands drop to his belt and he unbuckles it. My abdomen flutters at the sight of his powerful hands working the soft leather, pulling it through the metal buckle and letting it hang loosely. I lick my lips as he unzips his fly and pushes his suit pants and his boxers down his thick thighs in one swift movement before bending and pulling them off his feet along with his socks. When he stands up straight again, his cock is rock hard, glistening with pre-cum. I swallow at the sight as my body thrums with the anticipation of what is about to happen.

“So, why have you been avoiding me?” he asks again as he takes a step toward the bed.

I flash one eyebrow at him. “You’re an intelligent man, Shane. I’m sure you can figure it out.”

He narrows his eyes at me. “Well, I can only assume it has something to do with my refusal to talk to you about my past? But I have been one hundred percent clear with you from the start about what this is.” His eyes drop to the space between my thighs, that is already starting to throb with need, as though to emphasize his point. “So, why, Hacker? And don’t make me ask you for a fourth time.”

I have to stop myself from rolling my eyes at him. “It’s not that you wouldn’t talk to me. It was what happened after,” I say, suddenly feeling vulnerable in front of him in a way that I never have before.

“I fucked you?” he snaps with a frown.

“Did you?”

“I’m pretty fucking sure I did.”

I lean up on my elbows and tilt my head as I stare at him. “Well, it kind of felt like it was Erin you were really fucking.”

The fire flashes in his eyes. Is that for her? Does he feel that heat and anger simply at the sound of her name? He steps toward the bed and crawls over me, holding himself up on his forearms until our faces are only a few inches apart. “I was most definitely inside you, not Erin. So, what the fuck does that mean?”

I glare into his blazing green eyes. “I get that sex is all you want from me. But I don’t appreciate you screwing me when you’ve got a hard on for another woman.”

His nostrils flare as he glares back at me. “You think that was for her?”

“Wasn’t it? She had literally just walked out of the room and your dick was almost busting through your zipper.”

He gives a subtle shake of his head. “I don’t like sulking, Hacker,” he says with a snarl. “But just this once I will indulge you. I told you that I don’t want Erin and I am not a liar. But I can’t help the fact that she still wants me. She sat on my desk and then she crossed her legs to make sure I got a good view of her panties.”

I suck in a breath and blink at him. Is this supposed to make feel better?

“But all I could think about was you sitting on my desk the other day in those damn pink panties that were soaked with your cream. That was why I was hard, Hacker.” Pushing his knee between my thighs, he nudges my legs apart and then settles himself between them. He pushes his hips against mine, and his erection presses against my opening. “*You* make me hard.”

“I thought...”

“I told you I have no feelings for her like that. Not anymore,” he interrupts me.

I want to ask him if that means he has feelings for me, but I don’t dare.

“So, the next time you doubt me, do me the courtesy of speaking to me about it instead of sulking like a spoiled brat. Okay?”

“Okay,” I whisper.

He narrows his eyes at me and my heart lurches into my throat. He presses his lips against my collarbone and then slowly moves down my body, covering my breasts and my stomach in kisses.

“Shane,” I moan his name as I rake my fingers through his thick hair.

“You smell so good, Hacker,” he mumbles against my skin before his head dips lower and he settles between my thighs. He slips his tongue inside me and I reward him with a rush of wet heat. A few seconds later, his tongue is replaced by two of his thick fingers and I groan out loud, arching my back off the bed in order to take more of him. My walls clench around him, sucking him deeper inside. He licks the length of my folds and sucks my clit into his mouth, swirling his tongue over the sensitive bundle of nerve endings until I’m writhing beneath him. He curls his fingers inside me, pressing against that sweet spot while he sucks and licks and it’s not long before I am shouting his name out loud as my climax tears through my body.

He stays there until the last of my orgasm has trembled through me, before sliding his fingers out of my channel and moving up the bed so we’re face to face. “You taste so fucking sweet too,” he grins at me.

I place my hands on either side of his face, which glistens with my arousal. “Show me,” I breathe.

“You want to taste yourself?” he growls.

“Yes,” I pant. I want him to seal his mouth over mine and kiss me the way that I have imagined him kissing me since the first time he summoned me to his office. But he has never kissed me, and I realize he’s not going to as he slides one hand back down my body and slips one finger inside my slick channel.

A few seconds later, he lifts his finger to my lips. “Open,” he commands.

Opening my mouth, I allow him to push his wet finger inside. I suck on it, tasting my sweet, salty arousal on his skin. His eyes burn into mine and his Adam's apple bobs as he swallows hard.

“Fuck. Jessie.” he growls as he moves his face closer to mine. Then he slides his finger from between my lips. I'm about to protest, but before I can utter a sound, he seals his mouth over mine, pushing his tongue inside and flicking it against my own. I groan into him as I taste myself again on him. There is something so hot and intimate about his kiss. And as his tongue claims my mouth, he drives his huge cock into me, swallowing my moans with his own.

I melt into him as he nails me to his bed. Our bodies pressed together so closely I can hardly tell where one of us ends and the other begins. I know I will probably pay for this. Shane will punish me for getting too close to him. For being vulnerable. For making him kiss me. But right now, I don't care. All that matters is me and him and the things he makes me feel.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-SEVEN

JESSIE

It's been almost two days since Shane kissed me, and as I suspected he would, he's been doing his best to avoid me since. I'm walking past his office on my way to the library when he calls my name.

"You need something?" I ask him as I pop my head inside.

"Yes," he growls.

I step into the room and resist the urge to roll my eyes. "What is it?"

"Come over here."

I walk to his desk, and he pulls me to him, wrapping an arm around my waist. "I'm having a shitty day. And I missed you last night, Hacker."

I smile at him. So much for one night. That was what he said when we first had sex a few weeks ago. "I'd say that I missed you too, but Conor kept me pretty occupied," I grin at him.

"I know. I heard you moaning his name."

"Did it make you hard?" I purr.

He grabs my hand and places it over his stiff cock. "Yes. And it's been like that ever since."

"Sorry."

He narrows his eyes at me and I bite my lip nervously under the heat of his intense gaze. "Turn around," he says eventually.

I do as he asks, and he bends me over the desk in one swift movement, pulling my t-shirt up over my ass until it's bunched around my waist. I already feel the familiar heat pooling between my thighs from his touch. He pulls my panties roughly to one side and without warning he slips two of his fingers inside me.

"Shane," I groan out loud.

"Why are you always soaking wet? You make it far too easy for me to slide my cock into you whenever I want to."

He pulls his fingers out of me, and the sound of his zipper opening makes me suck in a breath. A few seconds later, he's filling me with his cock instead and nailing me to his desk.

"This cunt is so fucking hot and tight," he groans as he leans over me. "You think I can make you drench me with your cum again, little Hacker?"

"You can try," I pant as my walls squeeze around him.

Shane is still fucking me over his desk when Conor walks into the room a few moments later. He flashes his eyebrows at us, but he doesn't make any attempt to leave. "You just can't keep out of that sweet pussy, can you?" Conor says with a shake of his head as he takes a seat on the sofa.

I turn my head to Shane, assuming he's going to stop, or at least tell Conor to leave, but he places his hand on my back between my shoulder blades, pressing me against the desk as he carries on pounding me.

"Did you get the information we needed?" he growls as he slips his hand between me and the desk, pressing on my swollen clit and rubbing firmly until my legs start to tremble.

I groan out loud as my eyes lock with Conor's. He reaches down and palms his cock, rubbing it through his trousers as he watches his brother nail me to his desk.

"I'm still working on Chester," Conor replies, his eyes never leaving mine. "He should have something for me by the end of the day."

"Shane," I pant.

“Well, see that he does,” Shane growls as his hand reaches for my hair. Wrapping it around his fist, he pulls my head up slightly and leans over me, pressing his lips against my ear. “If this is going to work, you’re going to have to get used to being fucked in front of all of us. If you’re a really good girl, maybe one day we will all fuck you at the same time. So, I want you to look at my brother while you come all over my cock,” he growls as he presses down on my clit and I come apart around him, my knees trembling and my cum spilling out of me. “Shane.” I groan as he grinds out his own release while my eyes remain locked on Conor’s.

“That’s my hacker,” he says against my ear as he leans over me and gives me a soft kiss on the cheek. He stands up, pulling me with him and onto his lap as he sits down. His arms circle around my waist as he holds me against his chest.

“Oh, Erin says she needs to meet with you again,” Conor says.

“Fine,” Shane nods. “Tell her I’ll stop by her place tomorrow at eleven.”

My whole body tenses at the idea of him being alone with her. Shane feels it too and his hand slides up my inner thigh. “I’ve told you she means nothing to me, Jessie,” he says in my ear, but loud enough for Conor to hear. “Now, what is it going to take for you to believe me?”

“I do believe you,” I whisper as he pulls my panties to the side again and runs his fingers over my slick folds.

“Shane,” I groan. “Don’t.”

Shane looks at Conor and nods toward the door. Conor stands and winks at me before walking out and closing the door behind him. “Why not?” he says as he slides two fingers inside me and I can’t help but clench around him as he rubs against that sweet spot.

“You are the only woman I have any interest in. I can barely keep out of your sweet cunt. I’ve just fucked you, in front of my brother, and my cock is already weeping for you

again. So, why do you have a problem with me meeting with my lawyer?"

I shake my head. "Shane, please," I beg as he brushes the pad of his thumb over my clit. "Let me go."

"Tell me why you don't believe me," he insists as he keeps thrusting his fingers in and out of me. My orgasm builds slowly until suddenly it comes out of nowhere. I let it crash over me and then I cling to the collar of his jacket as the tears start to run down my cheeks.

"Jessie?" he says as he frowns at me. "What the hell is wrong?"

I scramble up off him and swallow. "Nothing," I say as I head for the door.

he's up off his chair and blocking my way before I can escape. "Jessie," he snarls.

I look up at him through my tear-filled eyes and feel like a complete idiot for what I'm about to admit, but he's not going to let me go. "I know you don't want her now," I choke down the tears. "And I know that you want me. At least a part of me. But you loved her, Shane. You wanted all of her. You loved her so much that you were going to leave everything you knew for her, and I can't help it, but I hate that," I sniff.

He steps back, blinking at me, allowing me the space to leave and I take my chance and walk out of his office. I head toward my room, where I plan on staying for the rest of the night. Shane has always made it clear that he and I are only about sex, and I have just gone and made a complete fool of myself. At least I never told him I love him, and I want him to love me too. That would have been completely disastrous.

I'M LYING in bed watching TV when my bedroom door opens. Looking up, I am about to tell my visitor to leave me alone. I've had about enough of the Ryan brothers for one day, but despite that I can't help but smile as Mikey and Liam shuffle into the room with huge grins on their faces. Mikey is holding a tub of Ben and Jerry's in one hand, and a bag of candy in the other.

“Need some company, baby?” Liam asks.

“We heard Shane’s being an asshole,” Mikey adds with a grin.

“Where did you hear that?” I flash my eyebrows at them, sure that Shane wouldn’t have mentioned our encounter.

“Okay, well, we didn’t exactly hear about it, but Shane is in a foul mood and being with you is the only thing that cures his bad moods lately. So, if he’s not with you...” Mikey says with a shrug.

“I must be the reason for his foul mood?” I offer.

“Exactly,” Liam says as he slides onto the bed and lies next to me. “And we know you’re not an asshole, so it must be him.”

I can’t help but laugh. “I’m not sure about your logic, but I appreciate you having my back.”

“And your front,” Mikey grins as he slides onto the bed on the other side of me until I’m sandwiched between them. Liam hands me the bag of candy while Mikey rips the top from the ice cream and hands me a spoon.

A FEW HOURS LATER, I wake with a start. The room is in darkness, but I’m sandwiched between the warm, hard bodies of Liam and Mikey. I must have fallen asleep watching the movie we chose earlier. Smiling as I snuggle against Mikey’s hard chest, I pull Liam’s arm tighter around my waist. I am safe and warm and content. Suddenly, I understand why cats purr.

Liam stirs behind me. “Are you okay, baby?” he breathes in my ear.

“Yes,” I whisper. “Better than okay. I’m not sure I’ve ever been happier.”

He rubs his jaw over the soft skin on my neck. “Hmm. Me too,” he replies sleepily.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-EIGHT

JESSIE

Dropping the weight bar onto the floor, I stand straight and flex my shoulders before pulling out my earbuds.

“That’s an impressive weight for a short-stack like you,” a low voice says behind me. “What is that. One ten?”

“One twenty actually,” I say, wiping the sweat from my brow with the back of my hand. “What can I do for you, Shane?”

I turn around to find him already dressed in one of his impeccably tailored suits, despite it being only 8 a.m. He looks damn near good enough to eat and he knows it. I’m so glad that my cheeks are already flushed from my gym session as I remember what I said to him last night. I’m aware that it’s ridiculous to be upset about the fact that he once loved Erin, but I can’t help it. He’s so closed off from me. He reminds me at every opportunity that I am nothing more than sex to him. I have asked myself what is so special about Erin that she was able to capture his heart, but I suppose I know the answer. She’s smart and successful, and she looks like some kind of blonde goddess.

“Finish your workout. Grab a shower and get dressed. We’re going out,” he says coolly.

“Where?”

“You have such an issue with me going to see Erin. You can come with me.”

“What? No, thanks. I’d rather not.”

“It’s a pity you don’t have much choice then. We’re leaving at nine-thirty. Don’t keep me waiting,” he smirks before turning around and walking back out of the gym.

I stare after him and shake my head. Arrogant asshole! What the hell does he want me to go see Erin with him for? So I can watch her fawning all over him and calling him Shay? Is this part of my punishment for telling him how I felt about her?

AN HOUR AND A HALF LATER, I walk down the hallway toward Shane. He’s glaring at his watch, but I can’t help but smile at the undisguised look in his eyes when he sees me. My usual attire is skinny jeans and tank tops, pajamas, or more often than not, one of the guys’ shirts and my underwear. I checked my wardrobe after my shower and was suddenly incredibly grateful for Conor’s excellent taste and his insistence that I try on some sexy dresses when he took me shopping a few weeks earlier. I’ve chosen a knee length, skin tight green dress that shows the perfect amount of cleavage to be classy while still showing off my assets. To top it all off, I’ve paired it with some six-inch heels, or fuck-me pumps, as Conor’s friend, Callie, called them.

I strut along the hallway, enjoying the expression on Shane’s face as I make my way toward him. Conor and Liam were just starting their workouts when I was leaving mine earlier, and they’re walking along from the other end of the apartment in just their gym shorts, with a towel each slung over their shoulders.

Liam wolf whistles so loudly that it echoes all around the room.

“Damn, Jessie!” Conor says appreciatively as they reach me. He pulls me into his arms and tries to kiss me.

“Conor. You’re a sweaty mess,” I squeal as I untangle myself from him. “But it is nice to be appreciated, boys.”

From the corner of my eye, I notice Shane shake his head.

“You make sure you come find me when you get back from wherever you two are going,” Conor winks at me.

“Not if I find her first,” Liam nudges him on the arm.

“If you’re quite done, we have to go,” Shane says with a sigh.

“Bye boys. I’ll see you both later,” I smile, turning back to Shane as the elevator arrives. I step inside first and stand with my back to the wall. He follows me inside and steps toward me. He leans close, his breath skittering over my cheek. “You clean up good, Hacker. I’m going to fuck you in nothing but those heels later.”

The breath catches in my throat, but I glare at him. “We’ll see.” I flash him my best smile and he chuckles and steps back, leaning against the wall, fully aware that I would let him fuck me any way and anywhere.

WE ARRIVE at Erin’s office building over an hour later. I glance around as I step out of the elevator. “This place is fancy,” I say as I struggle to keep pace with Shane in these damn heels.

“It should be for the money I pay her,” he growls and then a few moments later, he stops outside a huge solid oak door, with a small glass window that has the name Erin McGrath, Managing Partner, stenciled onto it.

Shane knocks, and Erin smiles widely as she opens the door to let him in.

“Shay. It’s lovely to see you,” she says, placing her hands on his arms and kissing his cheek.

“Hi, Erin,” he says. “I hope you don’t mind that I brought Jessie along today.”

She looks behind Shane and at me and the disappointment is clear on her face, but it’s quickly replaced by her huge, fake smile. “Of course not. Come on in both of you.”

I walk into Erin’s office. It is enormous, with floor to ceiling windows and a huge glass desk in the center of the room. There’s a large chrome bookcase at one end of the room crammed full of law texts and journals. The whole place is polished chrome and glass and the height of sophistication. I

sit in a black leather chair and don't move, afraid to touch something that might cost a few thousand dollars and break it.

I listen intently as Shane and Erin discuss the legalities of the Ryan brothers' business and the transferring of ownership of some property in Ireland to Shane. They talk business for over half an hour, and I'm beginning to wonder why Shane bothered bringing me here. It seems like they're wrapping things up when Shane throws me for a curveball.

"You did some work with the Russians a few years back, Erin?"

"You know I did, Shay," she purrs. "I stopped working for them when we got engaged, at your insistence."

"If I remember rightly, you did some work with the Ivanovs?"

"What if I did?" She sits up straighter in her chair now and frowns at him and suddenly, I am much more interested in this conversation.

"You ever hear of one of them named Alexei? Or a woman named Nataliya Vasiliev who married into the family?"

She stares at him and then at me.

"You can trust, Jessie," he assures her. "She hates the Russians as much as we do."

"You trust a woman who you barely even know, Shay? That's so unlike you." She flashes her eyebrows at him.

"Do you remember, Erin?" he sighs.

She doesn't answer him, but she looks directly at me. "Is this something to do with you?" she asks, her lips curling back over her teeth, making her beautiful face look strangely unattractive.

I lick my lips. "I am interested in finding out about the Ivanovs," I whisper. "Anything you can find out about them might be useful."

"Why?" she snaps.

“I... I have an interest in them,” I stammer. I wasn’t prepared for this change of direction at all and my usual lies don’t trip off my tongue quite so easily.

“An interest?” she snorts.

“Erin,” Shane snaps. “Why we want the information isn’t important. Can you answer the damn question?”

“That was all so long ago. The Ivanovs are one of the oldest families in Russia. they’re not easy people to work with. I’d have to pull some of my old personal files, but, I’ll have a look when I have time to, if it’s important to you, Shay.”

“Thanks, Erin,” he says as he stands to leave.

I stand too, and Erin walks toward me, looking me up and down like she’s just found me stuck to the bottom of one of her Louboutins. “You must have a magical pussy or something, girl, to have this one fighting your corner.”

I blink at her and step back. I’d like to slap her in the face, but she’s important to Shane, and she could be a big help in finding out who Nataliya is.

“Enough,” Shane intervenes for me and Erin smiles sweetly at him. He still kisses her cheek before we leave the office though. Asshole! “I’ll be in touch,” he says smoothly.

We walk out of Erin’s office and I take a deep breath, relieved to be out of there. Shane turns to me and scowls as we walk along the hallway. I frown back at him. What the hell have I done now? I was perfectly nice to Erin, even when she was being a complete bitch to me.

As we pass the ladies’ room, he stops and grabs my hand, pushing open the door and pulling me inside. He closes the door behind us and turns the lock with a loud click.

“Shane? What are you...” I start to say but before I can finish my sentence he’s on me, pressing me against the tiled wall with the weight of his body. He lifts one hand to my face, dragging his thumb across my lip before he cups my cheek. He rubs the pad of his thumb along my jawline and stares at me so intently, the warmth spreads through my core.

“You know that she means nothing to me?” He frowns.

I swallow hard. “Yes. You told me that.”

He bends his head low and seals his lips over mine, forcing his tongue inside my mouth and kissing me roughly. Just as suddenly, he pulls back from me, leaving me wanting more. “So, why don’t you believe me, Hacker?”

“I do,” I protest.

“Does she intimidate you?” He narrows his eyes at me, and I swear sometimes this man can read my mind.

“A little, I guess,” I admit.

He takes hold of my chin and tilts my head up, so I have no choice but to look at him. “You know that no-one can make you feel inferior without your permission, right?”

I roll my eyes at his pop psychology and he squeezes my jaw tighter. “Don’t roll your eyes at me. Why do you let her talk to you like that?” he scowls at me now. “You’re like a different person around her. Where is my little firecracker?”

“I don’t know. She’s just so damn perfect, she seems like she has her shit completely together. I mean has she ever made a single mistake in her life?” I flash one eyebrow at him.

“Believe me, she’s made plenty.”

“Why don’t you let me call you Shay?” I whisper.

“Because I fucking hate it. She calls me it because she knows it’s one of the few ways she has left to push my buttons.”

“Oh.” I chew on my lip. I hadn’t even considered that. “You and her just look so good together,” I say as the emotion wells up in my chest. “She’s perfect for you.”

“Perfect? You’ve said that twice now. And if she was perfect for me, we’d be together, wouldn’t we?” he growls and suddenly I’m aware of his free hand reaching down and lifting the edge of my dress. The soft fabric glides over my thighs as he gently pulls it, raising it higher.

Pressing his lips against my ear, he whispers. “You want to know what’s perfect?”

“What?” I pant as his hand skims over the bare skin on my thigh and between my legs.

“This sweet cunt,” he growls as he pulls my panties to one side and pushes two fingers straight into my hot, wet entrance.

“Shane,” I groan as the pain and pleasure burns through me.

“Perfect the way it is always soaked with your cum, Hacker. Always ready for me. The way you squeeze my cock when you’re desperate to come. How fucking sweet you taste. It’s so damn perfect that I think about being inside it all fucking day,” he growls as he pulls his fingers out of me and drops his other hand from my face. The familiar jangle of his belt being unbuckled causes a sudden rush of wet heat between my thighs.

I wrap my arms around his neck as my cheeks flush with fire. He is about to fuck me in this restroom, which to be fair is possibly the fanciest one I’ve ever been in in my life, in his ex-girlfriend’s office, and I am desperate for him to.

The sound of his zipper opening makes my insides melt like warm butter and I spread my legs wider apart to allow him easier access. “Eyes on me, Hacker,” he snaps, noticing that my eyes have dropped down to his hands to watch as he takes his stiff cock out.

I look up at him again. His green eyes hold mine captive as he pulls my dress up around my waist and slides my panties aside once more. I’m thankful I chose to wear these fuck me pumps because without them he’s almost a foot taller than me. He grabs one of my thighs, pulling it up and wrapping it around his waist before bending his knees and driving himself into me.

“Is this what I have to do to prove to you that you’re the only woman I’m interested in?” he groans as he nails me to the tiled wall.

“Don’t pretend this is all about you making me feel better,” I pant.

“There’s my firecracker,” he chuckles. “And yeah, this is also about me not being able to keep my fucking hands off you,” he growls as he hits that perfect spot, releasing a rush of my arousal. My walls squeeze tighter around him, drawing him in as deep as I can.

“Stop squeezing me, Hacker, or I’m not going to last five minutes.”

“Well that could be good thing, seeing as we’re in your ex-girlfriend’s restroom.”

He growls in frustration as he thrusts into me harder than before. “But you’d love her to catch us though, wouldn’t you?”

“You’re an asshole.”

“Maybe. Now stop talking and let me fuck you. The only word I want to hear from your mouth is my goddamn name when I make you come.”

CHAPTER

THIRTY-NINE

JESSIE

It's been almost a week since our trip to Erin's office. She still hasn't provided Shane with any information about the Ivanovs, but I suppose she's a busy lady. I've spent so little time digging into them myself that I can hardly blame her. Finding the Wolf used to be my only goal in life. It occupied my mind constantly. But, these days I find myself almost permanently distracted by the four fine-ass men who are currently sitting eating dinner with me.

Conor looks up at me as he licks his fingers clean. "That was some meal, Angel." He grins.

"It sure was," Liam adds while Shane simply winks at me, but I know that is the equivalent of his seal of approval.

"Thank you. Mikey has been teaching me," I blush. "I'm glad you all liked it."

Mikey walks up to me and kisses my cheek. "It was perfect, Red. You're a natural."

"I think our talented new chef deserves a treat for working so hard in this kitchen all day." Conor says with a flash of his eyebrows.

"Oh? Like what?" I grin at him.

"How about a night out?"

"At the club?" I ask with a huge grin.

"Anywhere you want, Angel," Conor replies.

"You sure you want to go to the club?" Shane asks.

“Yes. I love dancing. I haven’t been out dancing for as long as I can remember.” In fact, I’ve done it about four times before in my life.

“Then let’s get our asses in some showers and get ready,” Mikey says with a big smile on his face. “You want any help getting ready, Red?” he says to me.

“No. Everyone to their own showers, or we won’t get out this side of midnight,” Shane snaps.

A LITTLE UNDER two hours later, I walk out of my room and down the hallway to where my four guys are standing, chatting with each other. they’re dressed in suits, but not their usual work ones. No, these are both more casual and somehow even sexier. Each of them has their shirt open at the collar and my ovaries almost explode at the sight of them. Do I really get to have my pick of these guys?

Mikey sees me first and he wolf whistles so loudly, I blush to the roots of my hair. I pull the hem of my dress down nervously. “Is this too short?” I say, referring to the black leather and mesh mini dress that I’ve chosen.

“No,” Mikey says with a vigorous shake of his head as he walks toward me, taking one of my hands in his before he twirls me around while Conor and Liam loudly voice their approval. Shane is quiet as usual, but his eyes linger on the exposed skin of my thighs as I walk toward the elevator where he’s standing with his two brothers. When I reach them, Shane grabs my hand and spins me around until I’m facing the doors.

“Let’s go,” he growls, but he slips his hand around my waist and holds me tight against his body before his other hand slides between my thighs and up my dress. He palms my pussy possessively. “Don’t forget who this belongs to, Jessie. If anyone gets even a glimpse of these panties tonight, I’ll spank your ass so hard you won’t be able to sit down for a week.”

His brothers chuckle softly beside us while I stand there biting my lip and wondering why I find Shane’s sudden possessiveness so damn hot. A hard spanking from Shane Ryan makes me hot and wet and needy.

“They won’t,” I breathe. “Promise.” Despite how much I would like him to deliver on that promise, I’m not in the habit of flashing my panties, or anything else, in public.

WE WALK through the crowded club toward the VIP area. There are scantily dressed clubbers everywhere, men and women, bodies pressed up against each other in the dark space, but none of them get close to me as I’m flanked by my four hot, protective bodyguards. I step into the booth and the Ryan brothers follow me. I’d have to be blind and stupid not to notice the attention they draw when they walk through the crowd - the attention that I draw. I can feel the eyes on me and almost hear the questions buzzing through people’s heads. Who is she? Is she with one of them? Which one?

I’m not used to drawing attention to myself. In fact, I’ve done my best to avoid it for the past eight years. But as I sit down, and Shane and Liam sit either side of me, draping their arms around me possessively, I can’t help but feel a sense of satisfaction, and a massive fuck you to all the people who ever told me I wasn’t pretty enough, or good enough.

Shane turns his body toward mine, placing his warm hand on my thigh, and sliding it up the edge of my dress. “You look incredible, Hacker,” he mouths against my ear as his hand slips between my thighs again and up toward my panties. “I want to fuck you right here in this booth.”

I bite on my lower lip as his words cause a rush of wet heat in my core. “You wouldn’t, though, right?” I breathe.

“Oh, yes, I would. But I’d clear this club out first. I don’t want any of the assholes in here who have been drooling over you since we walked in seeing you being fucked, do I?”

I suck in a breath. God, his filthy mouth is in overdrive tonight. Maybe I should wear sexy mini-dresses more often. “No. So can we just enjoy the music for now?” I smile at him.

“Okay,” he growls. “But I’m warning you I will shut this place down without a second’s hesitation and spank your ass right here on this table before I fuck you, if you keep biting that lip and driving me crazy.”

Liam must hear him because he laughs softly beside me. “Okay. No biting my lip,” I reply just before I look up to see two young, tall blondes making their way up to our booth. They make a beeline for Conor and Mikey. “You want to dance?” One of them asks with a smile.

“No. I don’t dance,” Conor replies.

“Me neither,” Mikey adds.

She shrugs her shoulders and then looks up at Liam and Shane. “How about you two?” she says, licking her plump red lips.

Shane scowls at her while Liam starts to laugh out loud. Shane opens his mouth to speak, but I put my hand on his thigh, squeezing to let him know I’ve got this. I have to shout to be heard over the music. “I think I’ve got them all pretty tied up here, girls, so do us all a solid and go back to your dates. I’m sure they’ll need to get you home soon, so you don’t break your curfew.”

“Bitch,” one of them snaps before they turn around and head back to the dance floor.

“Ouch,” Liam laughs.

I shrug. “Hey. I’m not the jealous type, but I’m sitting right here. The nerve of some people.”

Liam grabs my face and turns my head before kissing me softly just as *Ride it* by DJ Regard starts playing, and I pull back from him. “Oh, I love this song.”

“Me too,” Conor smiles as he holds out a hand to me. “Come dance with me, Angel.”

“I thought you didn’t dance?” I arch one eyebrow at him.

“I’ll dance with you,” he grins as he pulls me up from my seat and I follow him to the edge of the dance floor to a spot where we’re still in view of the booth and the rest of the Ryan brothers. I can’t fail to notice that almost every woman we pass by gives him the once over. He is incredibly handsome, and I imagine most of the people in this club know he owns it. There is something incredibly intoxicating about power, and

the Ryan brothers have that by the bucket-load. The fact that they're all as hot as hell makes them completely irresistible to a lot of women, including me, it seems.

We stop near a stone pillar and Conor slips his hands over my hips and onto my ass, pressing his groin against mine as our hips sway to the music. He dips his head to my neck and rubs his nose along my jawline. The bass thumps in my ears and vibrates through my body, making my insides thrum with energy. I'm hyper aware of the warmth of Conor's body pressed against mine, his hands squeezing my ass, and his hot breath on my neck as we grind against each other.

He whispers the lyrics in my ear as one of his hands slides up my body, caressing me softly until he reaches my throat. He brushes his hand beneath my hair and palms the back of my neck as his lips skate across my skin. I wrap my arms around his neck and tilt my head back, and he opens his mouth and presses his teeth against my skin. I lean into him. I like it when he bites.

"You think anyone would notice if I fuck you right here?" he breathes.

"Yes," I purr as I roll my hips, dragging my body over his hard length. "Because every woman in this club is watching you."

"Maybe they're watching you, Angel? Dancing with you is dangerous, Jessie," he says before he takes my earlobe between his teeth and tugs lightly.

"I thought you lived for danger, Conor Ryan," I reply with a smile.

He lifts his head and stares at me, his eyes narrowed. I think he's about to say something, but then he seems to change his mind. Bending his head low, he presses his mouth against mine, licking the seam of my lips until my mouth opens for him, allowing him to push his tongue inside as his other hand slides up my body and they both fist in my hair while he holds my head still so he can claim me completely. We continue moving in perfect sync, grinding to the music as it vibrates through my whole body and the rest of the world falls away.

CHAPTER

FORTY

JESSIE

All five of us step out of the elevator and into the apartment. Mikey and Liam each give me a kiss on the cheek before they head off to bed while Conor keeps my hand firmly grasped in his. He squeezes, and goosebumps prickle along my forearm. Ever since we danced to that hot song about three hours earlier, I knew that I'd be spending the night in his bed.

The club was amazing. I haven't had that much fun, well ever. I danced all night. Mostly on my own, but up there in the booth with the boys' eyes on me the entire time.

"Night," Shane growls as he steps out of the elevator and stalks down the hall toward his office.

I stare after him. He has been watching me like a hawk all night, but for the last hour he has barely spoken to me. I know I didn't put a foot wrong and I wonder if I will ever understand his mood swings.

"What's crawled up his ass tonight?" I whisper.

Conor laughs softly. "You don't know?"

I turn and look up at him. "No."

He cups my chin in his hand and narrows his eyes at me. "He's pissed because his sexy little hacker was very well behaved, and so no-one got even the tiniest glimpse of her panties."

"So?"

“So, he’s got no reason to drag you into his office and spank your ass.” He arches an eyebrow at me and I feel an unexpected rush of wet heat between my thighs as I recall what he said before we left for the club.

I bite on my lower lip as I stifle the groan that threatens to escape my lips at the idea of Shane Ryan spanking me.

Conor frowns as he leans his head closer to me. He brushes the pad of his thumb along my jawline before dipping his head lower and pressing his lips against mine. I push up onto my tiptoes as I kiss him back, but just as I deepen our kiss, he pulls away.

“Go on,” he nods his head toward Shane’s office. “Go to him.”

“What?” I blink. “But I’m staying with you tonight.”

He sighs softly as he stares at me with those dreamy, dark brown eyes. “I’m not sure I can give you what you’re looking for tonight, Angel.”

“You can always give me what I want,” I breathe.

“Yeah. And I can give you what you need too. That’s why I know what you need isn’t me. Not right now. You’re looking for some pain to take the edge off. And I get that. But I can’t do that with you.” He drops his hand.

“But, Conor,” I start to say. The last thing I want to do is hurt him.

“And that’s okay,” he adds with a smile. “I don’t want to be that for you, Angel. Maybe one day, but not now.”

I stretch up, placing my hand on his jaw and running my fingertips over his beard. “How do you understand me so well?” I ask softly.

“Because we’re the same, Angel,” he whispers. “Now, go get yourself some punishment and I’ll see you in the morning.”

I smile at him and I almost say the words, but for some reason, they stick in my throat. Telling Conor Ryan that I love

him is the last brick in the wall. Once I do that, my last line of defense is gone.

“Thank you,” I whisper instead as I push my body against his and pull his face to mine. I kiss him softly and he groans into my mouth. “Go, Jessie, before I change my mind and carry you to bed.”

I pull back, rolling my lips over my teeth as I savor the taste of him. “Night, big guy.” I say before I walk down the hallway to Shane’s office.

WHEN I REACH the door to Shane’s office, it’s open, and I step inside. He’s sitting at his desk staring at his computer even though it’s clear that it’s not switched on.

“Everything okay?” I ask him.

He looks up at me and blinks. “I assumed you were with Conor?”

“I was. But then I remembered something, and I thought I should tell you about it,” I say as I walk toward his desk.

“What’s that?”

“You remember when I was dancing earlier?” I step closer.

“Yes?”

“And Mikey dropped his little pocket-knife, and I bent to pick it up for him?”

“Yeah,” he scowls at me as he runs a hand over the dark stubble on his jaw.

“I think that one of your bouncers might have seen my panties,” I breathe.

His eyes darken in an instant and his eyes roam over my body, making my nipples pebble beneath the fabric of my bra.

“Hacker,” he growls as he holds out his hand. I take it and he pulls me toward him. “You think? You’d better be sure because if I punish you, it will hurt.” I know that it will but my pussy clenches in anticipation anyway. “Not to mention that my bouncer is fired,” he adds.

“What? You can’t fire someone because he got a glimpse of my panties,” I say. Shit! I hadn’t considered that.

“I can, and I will, Hacker,” he scowls at me.

“Then maybe I got it wrong. He didn’t see them. Please don’t fire him, Shane.”

“So, you just came in here and straight up lied to me?” He arches one eyebrow.

“I was just trying to...” I don’t finish the sentence. But I don’t have to because he knows exactly what I was doing.

“You thought you’d come in here looking for some fun, looking for me to punish you? Which obviously I’m going to do now because you’ve just lied to me. But you could have cost a man his job.”

Well, shit! This escalated quickly. “I’m sorry. I didn’t think about it like that.”

“What have I warned you about lying to me?” he snarls and goosebumps prickle over my entire body. Fear shivers along my spine, along with a tingle of excitement.

“Not to,” I whisper.

“You could have simply walked in here and asked me to spank you,” he says as he stands up from his chair.

“I know,” I breathe.

“And you must also know that the punishment for lying to me is going to be a damn sight worse than any I’d have given you for inadvertently flashing your panties?”

The heat throbs between my thighs at that realization. “Yes,” I almost whimper.

He nods. “Turn around.”

I do as he says until I’m facing his large mahogany desk. He places one hand on my hip and his other one between my shoulder blades, pressing me down against the cool wood. I lie there with my face against the mahogany, wondering how the hell I let this happen.

Shane is pissed - for real. His fingers trail down my ass and over my outer thighs until he reaches the edge of my minidress, skimming over my hot skin as he lifts it gently. He pushes it up over my ass until it's bunched around my waist, and I suck in a deep breath as he grabs my panties in his powerful hands and tears them roughly over my skin.

My heart races and I'm hyper aware of my breathing becoming faster and heavier with each passing second. The metallic jangle of his buckle as he unfastens his belt reverberates around the room and my insides contract. The whisper of the soft leather sliding against the fabric of his suit pants makes my skin prickle with fear.

Shane Ryan is about to spank me with his belt. Fuck!

There is no warning. No prep spanking. Just the sound of leather cutting through the air before it lands on my ass with a loud, satisfying thwack.

It hurts like hell and I almost cry out, but I won't give him the satisfaction. I suck in a breath and brace myself for the next one. It lands even harder than the first.

"Will you ever lie to me again, Hacker?" he growls before the third blow slices across my ass cheeks.

"No," I say as I imagine the red welts that must be striping my ass right now.

"Your ass is a beautiful shade of pink, Hacker," he says as though reading my mind.

"I barely even felt it." I grind out the words and he draws in a sharp breath.

"Really?"

"Really," I snap.

"Well, it must be true because you just promised never to lie to me again. So," he growls as he lands the fourth one even harder and the tears spring to my eyes. My skin burns like a million tiny, fiery needles are dancing over my ass, but the wet heat still rushes between my thighs. Because Conor was right. Sometimes, I need to feel the pain, so I can give myself

permission to have the pleasure too. I focus on my breathing. I have dealt with much more intense pain than this before. It's nothing really. My body is just not as used to it as it once was.

"You feel that?" he growls.

"Fuck you," I snarl.

"Fuck me?" he says as he lands the fifth blow and now the tears are streaming down my cheeks.

Damn! I'm not crying, but the sting of his belt makes my eyes water like hell. I don't want him to think he's made me cry, though. He's standing over me and he can't fail to see, but it doesn't make him falter and I love that. Because I would hate him to believe that I can't take this. I need this from him.

Shane brings the belt down on my ass another seven times and by the last one, my skin is on fire and I start to get a slight queasy sensation in my stomach. I close my eyes as I prepare for the next one, but his belt drops to the floor as he breathes heavily. I lie still, waiting to be dismissed, but then his firm hands run softly over the skin of my ass. I can't help pressing myself back against him slightly as his touch soothes the fire burning through my flesh.

"You like pain, Hacker."

It's a statement rather than a question, but I answer anyway. "Sometimes."

He slides one finger through my dripping folds and into my hot entrance.

"You must really like pain," he groans. "Because you're fucking soaking."

Heat flushes through my chest and onto my cheeks and my pussy is throbbing along with my ass. It aches for him. But he pulls my dress down, smoothing it over my ass, before grabbing me by the elbow and pulling me up.

"Go to bed. Your own bed."

Blinking up at him, I have to force myself not to cry for real. I want to call him an asshole, but I bite back the retort.

I'm fed up of trying to second-guess his moods or figure out what he wants from me.

I give up.

Shane Ryan can go fuck himself.

CHAPTER

FORTY-ONE

CONOR

I sit on the sofa in Shane's office watching him flick through some of the paperwork on his desk. As well as our more nefarious business dealings, we have plenty of legitimate ones too. I manage the club mostly, and Liam and Mikey take care of the illegal stuff, but that leaves the bulk of it to Shane. He works at least twelve hours a day and I wish he'd cut himself some slack sometimes.

"You need me to do anything with that?" I ask.

He looks up at me as though he'd forgotten I was even in the room. "What?" he frowns.

"I said, do you need any help?"

He sits back and runs a hand over the stubble on his jaw. "No. It's fine."

"Why don't you ask Jessie to help out with some of the admin stuff? Anything on the computer would take her half the time, and I know she'd be happy to be more useful around here."

"I'm not sure allowing her even more access to our businesses is a good idea."

"Why not? She lives in our house, Shane. If she wanted to look at our business records, I'm pretty sure she'd just freaking hack her way in."

I watch as he sucks in a breath. "You need to be careful with her, Conor."

“What the fuck is that supposed to mean?” It’s my turn to frown now.

“I mean. I was watching you in the club with her last night -”

“We were dancing,” I interrupt him.

“You were almost fucking her in the middle of the club. You think with your dick when she’s around.”

“And you don’t?” I snarl at him as anger begins to bubble beneath my skin.

He shrugs. “Maybe. But I don’t look at her the way you do, Conor.”

I scowl at him. Part of me is so annoyed because he’s right. Last night she told me she thought I lived for danger, and that used to be true. But now, it seems like I live for her. For every touch, every smile, the way she laughs, and I almost told her so too. “Just what the fuck are you trying to say?”

“I’m saying she’s getting too close. And no, not just to you, to all of us.”

“What happened between you two last night?” I frown at him.

He frowns right back. “Why?”

“Because our girl was so fucking hot for you, I’d have assumed you’d be in a much better mood than this one today. In fact, it surprised me to see either of you out of bed before midday. And I didn’t hear you either.”

“You listening out for us, were you?”

“No,” I snarl. God, he’s being an asshole today. “But, usually. Well, she’s not exactly quiet, is she? And when I sent her down that hallway to your office, she was after the spanking of her life. I thought you’d be at it all night after that?” I raise one eyebrow at him. We shared a much smaller apartment than this when we first came to New York and spanking is definitely Shane’s thing. I also know that it’s Jessie’s too, and she sometimes needs a little pain to get off. And last night was one of those nights.

“Why did you send her to me?” he frowns. “She was supposed to be staying with you.”

“I didn’t exactly send her. She wanted you, so I told her to go to you.”

His Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows and I wonder what the hell stupid shit he pulled. I’m not going to ask him. What he and Jessie do in their private time together is between the two of them.

“Just be careful, Conor,” he snaps. “She’s not one of us.”

My heart sinks in my chest. “Promise me you won’t do anything stupid, Shane,” I say with a sigh as I lean back against the sofa.

He doesn’t answer. Instead, he glares at me silently.

“I mean it, Shane,” I warn him. “She is not the fucking enemy.”

“Okay.” He holds his hands up in surrender.

I WALK along the hallway to Jessie’s room. Her door is open and I step inside. She’s lying on her bed working on her laptop. When she looks up and sees me, she gives me the most incredible smile and it makes my heart jump into my throat. How the hell did we ever live without this girl?

“Hey, big guy,” she says as she closes her laptop.

“Hey, Angel,” I say, walking over to her and sitting beside her. “I’m heading to bed. I’ve slept about five hours in two days. But, if you fancy curling up next to me later tonight, then you know where I am.” I run my hand over her ass and she winces slightly before she rolls over so she’s lying on her back, looking up at me.

“You got your spanking, then?”

“Yes,” she breathes.

“Feel better now?”

“It’s complicated,” she rolls her eyes.

“You mean Shane is complicated?” I laugh.

“You could say that,” she sighs.

“He’s not really,” I say as I run my hand up her thigh to the button of her jeans and open it. “If you remember one thing.”

“And what’s that?” she purrs as I lift her shirt up, exposing her stomach.

“The more he wants you in his life,” I lean down and kiss her soft skin, right above her waistband. “The more he will push you away.”

“Then he must want me real bad,” she chuckles.

I flash my eyebrows at her. “Exactly, Angel,” I growl as I pull down her zipper. Who needs sleep? She lifts her ass up and I wiggle her jeans and panties down over her hips and thighs. I can smell her sweet juices already, and I place a soft kiss on her mound.

“And of course, I will come and curl up with you later. I don’t like sleeping on my own. And I love that I always know exactly what you want from me,” she says as I work her jeans and underwear off and down over her legs. Pulling them over her ankles, I toss them onto the floor.

“That’s because I always want the same thing.” I chuckle as I spread her thighs apart and run two fingers through her slick folds.

“Don’t say that,” her voice trembles, forcing me to look up at her.

“Say what?”

“That you only want me for one thing.” She blinks and I notice the tears pricking her eyes.

I move up toward her and wrap a hand gently around her throat. “That’s not what I said. And you *know* that’s not true, Angel.”

She bites on her lip and it trembles. I have never seen this girl cry. Not even when she had a semi-automatic stuck in her face. Or when that Russian was about to murder her and she ended up covered in his blood. I could throttle Shane for pushing her away.

“You must know that I love you, Jessie?” I breathe.

She blinks at me. Shit. She didn't know that. How the fuck could she not? The few seconds before she speaks again stretch out in an eternity as I wait for her to say what I need to hear. Fuck. What if I've read this completely wrong?

She reaches out her hand and rests it on my cheek. “I love you too,” she whispers, and I let out the breath I've been holding. She reaches between us and slides her hand into my sweatpants, pulling out my cock and rubbing the pad of her thumb over the tip as it pulses in her grip.

“You want that?” I arch an eyebrow at her.

“Yes, please.” She smiles that incredible smile again as I pin her wrists to the bed on either side of her head before I slide myself deep inside her.

CHAPTER

FORTY-TWO

JESSIE

Pulling my hair out of my ponytail, I look in the mirror and watch as it falls over my shoulders in long, rolling waves. It hasn't been this long for years. I always used to cut it short when I first escaped the Wolf. He would constantly tell me how much he loved my hair. Once I was convinced that he wasn't coming looking for me, and I felt like I had changed enough from the seventeen-year-old girl he'd last seen, I let it grow again. I take hold of a small section and lift it to my face, inspecting the ends. It's still in good condition, but I could do with a trim, and I need to speak to the brothers about making myself an appointment at a salon.

I can't help smiling at my reflection and how much the twins love my long hair. Liam likes to curl it around his fingers and Mikey sometimes likes to brush it. It kind of reminds me of being a kid when my mom would sit and comb the tangles from my hair for hours. Conor and Shane seem to love it too, although thinking about what they do with it makes the heat sear between my thighs. Both of them have a habit of wrapping it around their fists, Conor to make me more compliant when he's kissing me, and Shane when he fucks me from behind.

Conor eventually went to bed a few hours ago and I plan on joining him shortly, as he suggested. Although, just to sleep. I could do with catching up on some myself.

A loud knock makes me jump. "Yeah," I shout and spin around as Shane opens the door. I haven't seen him all day.

I've been avoiding him. I suspect he's been dodging me too, but I couldn't give a shiny rat's ass.

"What can I do for you, Shane?" I say, my voice dripping with sarcasm.

"I have something to show you, Hacker," he says and holds out his hand.

"I don't have time right now." I glance at my watch. "I was just going to have a soak in the tub and then head to bed."

"I think it's something you'll be interested in," he replies with that cocky smile of his that practically sets my panties on fire. "And you might want to put on some shoes."

I sigh and roll my eyes, as though being in his company isn't going to be excruciating no matter what we're doing. He ignores the eye roll, which isn't like him, and waits expectantly for me at the door while I slip my sneakers back on.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER, Shane and I are in the elevator headed to the basement. I stare at him, looking for clues as to where he's taking me, but he avoids my gaze and suddenly I get a strange feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach. Why won't he look at me?

"Where are we going? Can I have a clue?"

"You'll see soon. Stop being so impatient," he snaps, still avoiding eye contact.

The elevator doors finally open and he steps out into the basement garage and walks toward a large Mercedes SUV. I follow him and we both stop in front of the car and I look around. It's a beautiful car, but this garage is filled with incredible cars. If I was going to choose one to stand beside and admire, it would be the Bugatti Veyron or the Aston Martin Vulcan.

"What's so special about this?" I ask him.

"It's yours," he says calmly and my heart almost stops beating in my chest.

“What? You’re giving me a car?” I frown at him. “What’s the catch?”

“Not just a car, Hacker. There are papers in the glove compartment, giving you a new identity. Social security number, passport, birth certificate – the works. And there’s a half a million dollars in the trunk too.”

I blink at him. “What?” I get a sudden sickening feeling that I know where this conversation is headed and I don’t like it at all.

“It’s all yours, Hacker. You get into it right now, and you drive. Your new life awaits.”

“Just like that?” I snap.

“Just like that.” He turns to me and nods. “You will never get a better offer than this, Jessie. This is me offering you your freedom. No strings. No catch.”

“Except I don’t get to say goodbye? And I don’t see any of you ever again, right?”

“Well, that’s kind of the point of a new life, isn’t it? To leave the old one behind?” he frowns.

“Fuck you, Shane,” I snap as I start to walk away from him.

He grabs hold of my arm and pulls me to him, bending his head low so his face is close to mine. “Think about what you’re giving up here,” he snarls. “I am giving you everything you need to start over. I could just toss you out onto the street instead.”

“Your brothers wouldn’t let you.”

He laughs softly. It’s not a pleasant sound. It’s mocking and cruel, and it echoes around the concrete basement. “And how exactly do you see your future playing out with us, Hacker? We just go on passing your around between the four of us until we get bored? Until someone else with bigger tits and a smaller ass takes your place?”

I stumble back from him, reeling so hard he might as well have slapped me in the face. I try to wrench my arm free and

move away from him, but he holds me firmly in place. “Why are you doing this?” I say as tears spring to my eyes. I hate myself for crying in front of him, but he’s tearing out my heart.

“We’re no good for you. And you’re not good for us either. You distract us, Hacker. You make my brothers vulnerable, and that makes them weak.”

Blood pounds through my veins, thrumming beneath the skin on my wrist where he holds me tightly. I suck in a deep breath and wipe my tears away with my free hand. Planting my feet squarely on the ground, I look up at him, glaring into his fiery green eyes.

“You can say what you want about your brothers and me, Shane. But I love them. And despite what you think, they love me too. I feel it in every part of my being. You think that love makes you weak, and so you run from it. Men like you will never know true strength, because you are too afraid to feel. Love does not make you weak, you jackass. Don’t you see that it’s the most powerful force in the world? So, you can stick your car, and your money, and your new identity up your goddamn ass! Now take your hands off me and let me go back to my room.”

He stares at me, his jaw working overtime and that vein pulsing in his temple. Then he releases my wrist. I draw in a few shaky breaths and then I turn and walk back to the elevator and leave him standing alone.

CHAPTER

FORTY-THREE

JESSIE

I push open the door to Conor's bedroom. The soft glow of the lamplight illuminates the vast space. He hates the dark.

As I look over at the bed and his sleeping form, a wave of disappointment washes over me. I was hoping to talk to him about his asshole big brother, but I shouldn't wake him. I kick off my sneakers and begin to undress when I hear him groan in his sleep as he thrashes his arms.

"No," he shouts and I rush over to him, sitting beside him on the bed. I place my hand on his cheek and he stirs. "Jessie," he blinks at me.

"Sorry," I whisper. "You were shouting in your sleep."

He rolls his eyes. "Weird dreams." Then he holds up the duvet. "Jump in, Angel."

"Thanks," I say with a smile as I hop in next to him and press myself against him. He wraps his arms around me and plants a kiss on the top of my head. He smells of expensive soap and fresh sweat and I feel the familiar fluttering in my abdomen as I inhale his scent and press my cheek against the skin of his hard chest.

"Everything okay?" he asks softly as he smooths my hair back from my face.

"No. Your brother is a complete asshole, do you know that?"

He laughs softly, and the sound rumbles through his chest and into me. "Did he test his little hacker?"

I look up at him. “Yes. How do you know?”

Conor shrugs. “He tests us all. I knew yours was coming. I could sense it in him. What did he do?”

“He offered me a brand new SUV, half a million dollars and a new identity if I left. He said it was my freedom.”

Conor lets out a low whistle. “I didn’t realize he was going to go that far. What did you say to him?”

“I told him to stick it all up his ass,” I reply and Conor laughs again.

“I wish I could have seen his face.”

“He wants me gone, Conor. How long before he gets his way?” I snuggle closer to him.

“He doesn’t want you gone. I get that he has a fucked up way of showing it, but, I told you, him trying to make you leave is really about him wanting you to stay.”

“That’s some twisted logic right there.”

“That’s Shane, Angel.”

“He said I make you all weak. And vulnerable. Do you think that?” I whisper.

Conor places his index finger under my chin and tilts my head up. He stares at me with those incredible brown eyes. “Do you?”

“No,” I swallow.

“Good. Because you make us all stronger, Jessie,” he replies, and then he bends his head low and seals my mouth with a kiss. I drag my fingers through his thick hair and pull him closer as I grind my hips against his.

His hand slides down to my ass, and he squeezes hard, making me groan into his mouth.

I pull back. “I need you, Conor,” I pant.

“I know, Angel,” he growls as he rolls on top of me, pinning me to the mattress. His hand slides down my body and

between my thighs before he tugs my panties to one side and slides two of his fingers through my slick folds.

“Conor,” I gasp as I press myself against his hand.

“You want my fingers in you first, Angel?” he soothes as he starts to trail soft kisses over my neck and toward my breasts.

“Yes,” I breathe. Him and his magic fingers are exactly what I need.

He sucks one of my hard nipples into his mouth at the same time as he pushes two fingers deep inside me. My hips shoot off the bed as pleasure courses through me, and he chuckles softly. “You are so fucking tight.”

“Conor,” I moan again as I release a rush of wet heat and my walls clench around him.

“Damn,” he grunts. “I need to taste me some of that sweet pussy.”

“Don’t stop,” I pant. “Please.”

“I won’t, baby. I know you like a good finger fucking,” he growls as his head sinks lower until he’s so close I can feel his breath on my wet folds. He continues working his fingers inside me as he settles his warm mouth over my clit and begins to suckle. It’s not long before I’m coming apart around him as my orgasm rolls over me, making my entire body tremble.

CONOR WRAPS me in his arms, and I lay my head on his chest, listening to the sound of his heartbeat thumping gently against my ear.

He curls my hair around his fingers and I sigh contentedly.

“You realize if you’d got into that car and driven off, I’d have come find you and brought you straight back here, don’t you?” he asks softly.

“You would?”

“Yes. Don’t ever make me do that, Jessie,” his voice cracks. “I told you, I would burn the whole fucking world

down to find you, Angel.”

“I won’t. I promise,” I say as I wrap my arms tighter around him.

CHAPTER

FORTY-FOUR

JESSIE

I spent the entire night with Conor and this morning I avoided the kitchen and the living area because I didn't want to bump into Shane. I can still hardly believe what he did last night. Conor has done his best to try to convince me that Shane testing me means that he's finally ready to accept that I'm staying. And I suppose I can kind of understand his twisted logic - pushing a person away before you're willing to let them in, to see how far they're willing to go. But I can't forget the things he said about him and his brothers passing me around until someone better comes along. It stung like hell. It still does.

As the day goes on, I keep replaying his words over and over in my head, and each time I do, I find myself becoming angrier by the minute. How dare he speak to me like that. As though I'm some gold-digger who manipulated my way into their lives. As much as I wanted each of them, I never made a move. I didn't cross that line first. Not with any of them. They pursued me.

I would have been content to spend a few months here working for them, and then moving on. They changed the rules of the game. Not me. And now I'm in too deep to walk away. Now, they've given me a taste of something that I never want to lose.

I walk along the hallway from my bedroom toward Shane's office. His door is open, and I storm inside. He looks up at me as I enter the room. Sitting behind his desk in suit pants and a white shirt open at the collar, he also has a light

dusting of stubble. He looks so damn good. I remind my treacherous body that we're not speaking to him.

"What can I do for you, Hacker?" he asks smoothly.

I scowl at him. So, he's just going to sit there and pretend everything is fine, and that he didn't insult me on almost every level last night.

I stalk toward his desk and plant both of my hands on it as I steady myself. My thighs are trembling, but thankfully his desk hides them from view. I glare at him and he simply leans back and looks at me with a mild look of amusement on his face, which only infuriates me more.

"I've decided that I do want my freedom after all," I snap.

He frowns at me. "You do?"

"Yes. But on my terms."

He leans forward in his chair, resting his elbows on the desk, his hands steepled under his chin. "Go on?"

"You can keep your money, and your fake ID. I'll borrow the car occasionally. But, I want my fingerprint added to the security for this apartment."

"Really?" he arches one eyebrow at me.

"Yes. I want to come and go from this place whenever I please. Just like you and your brothers do."

He narrows his eyes at me. "I'll think about it."

"You'll think about it?"

"I believe that's what I just said, Hacker."

"Well, while you're thinking about that, you can also think about the fact that if you ever make me feel like a cheap whore again, I will slap that arrogant grin off your face, Shane Ryan. I don't care how tough you believe you are."

He doesn't answer me. He just sits there, staring at me.

"And if you think you're going to *pass me around* with your brothers any longer, you're sadly mistaken. So, now might be a good time to go find yourself one of those women

with bigger tits and a smaller ass that you're so fond of. I hear Erin is unattached."

He still doesn't speak. Instead, he glares at me, and I wonder if any woman has ever spoken to him like that in his life.

I smile triumphantly, and then I turn on my heel and walk out of his office with my heart pounding in my ears. I'm pretty sure I'll pay for that, but right now I don't give a damn, because it felt so good to put Shane Ryan in his place.

CHAPTER

FORTY-FIVE

JESSIE

I walk out of the bathroom to find Shane standing in my room with his hands stuffed in his trouser pockets. He looks as fierce as ever and I wonder if he's still mad at me for what I said in his office earlier. But I don't even care anymore. The things he said to me last night cut me deeply and I'm not sure I will be able to look at him the same way again.

"What do you want, Shane?" I ask with a sigh as I cross the room and stand in front of him. As usual, he smells incredible.

He holds out his hand to me, and I look down at it hesitantly. "Come with me," he orders.

"Again? And just what are you planning on doing tonight? Driving me to the state line and kicking me out of the car?" I arch an eyebrow at him.

"Stop being a brat and come with me." He grabs my hand now and my pulse quickens at his touch. I dutifully follow him out of my bedroom, down the hallway, and to the elevator.

"Where are we going, Shane?" I demand.

"Wait and see, Hacker," he says, and I roll my eyes in annoyance. Thankfully, he doesn't see me, or he'd probably reprimand me for it.

We step into the elevator and take it to the ground floor. Shane steps out first and I follow him. He walks straight to the SUV he offered me last night and the car beeps to life as we approach.

I stop in my tracks and pull my hand from his, crossing my arms over my chest. “I already told you, I’m not leaving.”

He sighs deeply in frustration and frowns at me. “I know. Just get into the car.”

He pulls the passenger door open for me, and I shake my head in annoyance before climbing inside. I suspect that if I don’t get in voluntarily, he’ll just pick me up and throw me in anyway.

I STARE out of the window as we drive away from the city and my heart races in my chest as we get further and further away from the place I’ve come to call home. “Why won’t you tell me where we’re going?” I turn in my seat and ask him.

“It’s a surprise.”

I chew on my lip nervously, and he reaches out his hand and brushes my cheek with his knuckles. “Don’t you trust me, little hacker?”

I stare at him. I’m not sure how to answer that question. “I thought I did. But then last night...”

“Last night, what? I didn’t force you to leave, did I?”

“No. But now I know that you want me to, I feel like I’m on borrowed time. I don’t know what you’re planning on doing or where you’re taking me, Shane,” I admit, the tremor in my voice clearly audible now.

“I would never hurt you, Hacker,” he says softly. “Well, not unless you want me to. What happened the other night. You wanted that, right?”

“I did. But...” I shake my head. There is no use reasoning with him.

“But what?” he frowns.

“After. You just dismissed me. I wanted more than...”
Damn. Why do I keep speaking in half sentences?

“You wanted me to fuck you,” he finishes for me. “You wanted me to make you feel better. But that’s not the point of a

punishment, is it? The real punishment is you going to bed alone with your cunt dripping wet.”

I roll my eyes and he sighs.

“You’re never honest with me, Jessie. You are with Conor and the twins.”

I turn in my seat and glare at him.

“If you had come to me the other night and told me what you needed, then I would have given it to you – the pain and the pleasure. But, instead you lied because you can’t be honest with me.”

“I... Damn.” I don’t even know what to say.

“You think it was easy for me to send you away? I was as hard as fucking stone for you. You could have asked me to let you stay. You could have asked me to come with you, Jessie. You could have been honest about how you were feeling instead of walking out and hating me.”

“God, I wish I hated you.” I snap at him. “Besides, you make it hard to be honest with you, Shane. You’re completely unreadable. I think you might be the most difficult person I have ever met in my life!” I cross my arms over my chest and sit back in my seat.

“At least that was honest,” he says with a faint laugh.

“Anyway, none of that matters considering what you did last night,” I breathe as the memory cuts a fresh welt across my heart. “You said you’d never hurt me, but you did. Those things you said...”

“I know,” he whispers. “I was way out of line, and I’m sorry.”

“How much further is this place?” I say, looking out of the window.

“Not much. We’re almost there.”

LESS THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, we pull off the highway and onto a dirt track leading into the hills. I glance at Shane, but he keeps his eyes fixed on the road ahead, seeming to

know exactly where he's going. Finally, we come to a spot near a lake and he stops the car and unclips his seatbelt.

"Where are we?" I ask as I peer out of the window. There is nothing here but the lake and trees.

"Come and see," he says as he climbs out of the car. He walks around to my side as I'm opening my door and takes my hand. I grab onto it as I step out, wondering what I'm stepping on. It's so dark out here, I can barely see. He keeps hold of my hand and leads me closer to the water. When we reach it, he stops and looks out at the water with a strange look of contentment on his face. Meanwhile, my blood is thundering in my ears. What the hell is going on here?

"Would you look at that?" he says, nodding toward the lake.

I turn and look. It is a beautiful sight. The water is almost black, but the reflection of the full moon ripples on the surface, illuminating the lake and the surrounding trees.

"It's beautiful," I admit.

"It's yours," he says softly.

"I'm not sure about that, Shane," I smile. "As powerful as you are, I'm not sure a lake and the moon are within your gift to give."

He turns to me, his face full of emotion. "If you're going to stay with us, then you'll need this."

I frown at him, not understanding what he means.

"I know my brothers can be a bit much," he says.

I raise my eyebrows at him.

"And I know that I can too," he adds. "I used to come to this spot at least once a week. Just to have some quiet and some space from them and their constant noise. It's hard being the one who always has to have the answers, Jessie," he says with a sigh and despite him being a complete asshole at times, my heart aches for him. He puts himself under so much pressure.

“I suppose I get that. But if you give this spot to me, then where will you go?”

He smiles at me. “Wherever you are.” My breath catches in my throat and my pulse quickens. What the hell is happening here? “I realized this morning that I haven’t been to this place for over two months. Not since you came into our lives. You bring us all into balance somehow, Hacker. You take the worst parts of each of us and make them softer and more tolerable. I want you to have a place to run to when you need some space – and some peace. When you need to get away from my brothers, or from me.”

“Shane, you don’t have to do this.”

“I want you to have this place, Jessie,” he says, his voice thick with emotion. “Because if I’m going to let you in, I need to know that you will never leave. If you’re going to be one of us, then you always will be. So, this is the place you can run to when we get a bit too much. If only for a little while.”

I blink away the tears. This might be the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me. “Shane, I can’t take this.”

“Yes, you can. And if you’re worried about privacy, I own this land. I’ve always planned to have a cabin built here someday.”

“Wow, that would be incredible. A cabin out here,” I say as I take another look around. “I would love to spend time here with you and your brothers.”

“You would?” he smiles at me.

“Of course,” I whisper.

“I know what you said today, and you had every right to say it, but tell me you didn’t mean it. Jessie. Tell me that I still get to touch you. Tell me that I still get to have all of you.”

“I don’t know, Shane. You made me feel completely worthless. Like I was some whore. You talked about me like I meant nothing to any of you.”

He reaches up and tucks my hair behind my ear. “You mean more to me than you will ever know, Hacker.”

“You expect honesty from me, Shane, but that’s a two-way street. Where is my honesty?”

“I’ve never lied to you,” he frowns at me.

“Maybe. But you have never let me in either. You never tell me what you want from me. You don’t share any of your life with me.”

“What do you want from me, Jessie?” he shakes his head.

“Something real, Shane. Anything real?” I plead with him.

He licks his lips and stares at me. “I called the wedding off.”

“To Erin?” I ask.

“She’s the only woman I’ve ever been engaged to, so yeah,” he frowns, and I bite back the retort that’s on the edge of my tongue.

“Why?”

“She had a pregnancy scare,” he says with a sigh and I blink at him.

“It’s not like that,” he shakes his head. “I’m not a complete asshole, Jessie.”

“I know,” I whisper as my pulse thrums against my skin.

“She wasn’t pregnant. I’d always told her from the start, I was clear that I never wanted kids. And she said she felt the same. Then, she had this scare, and I found out she hadn’t been taking her birth control properly and she was just so fucking laid back about it, like she hadn’t completely lied to me. She admitted she thought I’d change my mind one day. But I had never, ever give her any indications that I would. I do not want to carry on my bastard father’s bloodline,” he snarls, and I reach out and take his hand in mine. “The plan was we were going to live in the apartment for a few years, and then convert one of the other floors for ourselves. But, after the whole baby thing, I found out she’d put a deposit on an apartment overlooking Central Park. Without even telling me.”

“Haven’t you ever told your brothers about this?”

He shakes his head. “No, because besides all of that shit, she blamed them for us not working out. She said that they were too dependent on me. Conor and Mikey and Liam think I was miserable because we’d broken up, but I wasn’t. I was miserable because I knew that she was right. I would never leave my brothers, Jessie. My family is everything to me.”

“So, why did that make you miserable?” I frown.

“Because, I realized I would always put them first. Above everyone else. I don’t want kids, because I feel like I already have some. I have been looking after my little brothers since I was four years old. And I don’t resent that. I love them. I would make every sacrifice one hundred times over for them.”

“So, you chose their happiness over your own?”

He shakes his head. “No. I chose my brothers over the possibility of falling in love with someone again.”

“Oh, I see,” I nod. I understand him so much more than I did half an hour ago. I wrap my arms around his waist and rest my head on his hard chest. “Thank you for sharing that with me.”

He runs his hands down my arms and rests his chin on top of my head. “You know, my mother always used to tell me tales of curses and witchcraft back in Ireland. But I thought she was crazy. I never believed her. Now I’m not so sure.”

“You think I’m a witch?” I look up and grin at him.

“You’ve certainly got me under some kind of spell.”

I swallow as I look into his eyes. The moonlight highlighting the darkness in them.

I have never felt more loved in my whole life than I do by him and his brothers.

“It’s no spell, Shane. I love you. It’s that simple. And that complicated.”

He stares at me and I can’t help but feel like I have just crossed a line that he didn’t want me to cross.

He leans forward and seals his lips over mine, kissing me so fiercely that I almost lose my breath. Despite the cool air, my whole body is flooded with heat and desire. I have wanted him inside me since he sent me out of his office two nights earlier. He steps forward, walking me backwards until my back is pressed flat against a tree.

“Shane,” I pant as I wrench my lips away from his.

He groans out loud, mistaking my desperation for hesitation. “I need you, Jessie. And there’s no-one out here but us.”

“I don’t care who sees us,” I breathe as I reach for his zipper. “I want you. Right now.”

“Hacker,” he growls as he reaches for the edge of my dress and pulls it up around my waist before he tugs my panties to one side. “You’re going to get me. Every fucking inch of me, because you make me so hard I could come just from touching you. There is nothing I love more in this world than burying my cock in your hot cunt.”

“You have a filthy mouth,” I gasp as I pull his hard length free from his pants. He buries his head in my neck and growls against me as his hands drop to my ass before he lifts me until I can wrap my legs around his waist. There is no warning from him before he pushes his full length inside me.

“Shane,” I shout into the darkness as a rush of my cream coats him.

“Always ready for me, my little hacker,” he whispers against my ear. “Soaking wet and ready for my cock. Every. Fucking. Time,” he thrusts with each word until I am coming apart around him. There is something about being out here in the open with him that makes my heart beat faster and the blood pound through my veins. Every sense is heightened.

I rake my nails down his muscular back as I take everything he has to give me.

“You want it harder?” he groans.

“Yes,” I groan, and he rails into me with all his strength. The tree bark at my back bites against my skin through the

thin fabric of my dress, but the pain only makes the pleasure of him driving into me over and over again all that sweeter. Soon my legs are trembling with my impending release and because he knows my body so well, he increases his pace until my walls are clenching around him and I am shuddering against him.

“Shane,” I groan as the waves of pleasure crash over me.

“I fucking love the way you squeeze my cock when you come, Hacker,” he growls in my ear and a few thrusts later, he climaxes with a roar.

SHANE IS quiet on the drive back to the city and I wonder if telling him that I love him has completely spooked him. Especially after he’d just spoken about never wanting to fall in love again. When we get back home, he walks me to my room. “Goodnight, Hacker,” he says softly.

“Goodnight,” I whisper. I stare at him, wondering whether to ask him to stay the night with me. I want to wake up with his warm, hard body pressed against mine. But I swallow the words. I know he asked me for honesty, but I have laid myself bare to him and if that isn’t enough for him, then I don’t know what else to do. I suppose I have to accept that this is his way, and this is the pattern we will always follow. He might never tell me that he loves me, but I feel it sometimes anyway, and maybe that is enough?

I LIE in bed staring into the darkness and listening to nothing but the sound of my heartbeat in my ears. My back stings slightly from the tree bark digging into it earlier, but it makes me smile – a reminder of the place Shane shared with me. The soft click of my door opening and footsteps padding across the floor makes me hold my breath. I know it isn’t the twins because they couldn’t be that quiet if they tried, and there is definitely only one set of footsteps. The scent of fresh air and his distinctive cologne fills the room as he approaches.

“Shane?” I whisper, sure that it can’t be him and my senses are deceiving me, because he has never slept in my room before.

He doesn't answer me as he reaches the bed and lifts the covers. The mattress dips beside me as he slips beneath the duvet and presses his body against mine. When his rough hand skims over my hip, I know for sure that it's him and I smile to myself.

"Hey," I say as he wraps his arm around my waist and pulls me close to his chest.

"Hey, Hacker," he breathes.

"What are you doing in here?"

He swallows. "I shouldn't have let you come to bed alone."

"So, why did you?" I ask as I shift my body so I'm facing him. His hand slips onto my ass and I run my fingertips across his cheek.

"Because you make me feel things I don't like feeling, Jessie. You have my heart in a vice."

The tears spring to my eyes. I love this man so much. He and his brothers are everything I have ever wanted in life. Each of them makes me feel whole and cherished and protected, in their own unique ways. Living without them now would be like living without air. But I know that he's struggling with his emotions and I want to be what he needs too. "Well, that's better than your balls," I giggle, and he slaps me lightly on the ass before pulling me tighter to him again.

"Ow," I giggle. "My ass is still tender, you know?"

"Go to sleep," he whispers in my ear. "Or I'll put you over my knee this time."

I press my face against his chest and inhale his intoxicating scent. "I love you, Shane. I am never going to leave. I promise."

He presses his lips against my forehead. "I know, Hacker," he breathes. "Now go to sleep."

CHAPTER

FORTY-SIX

SHANE

My phone vibrates on my desk, and I look down at the screen as Erin's name appears on it.

"Hi," I answer. "Did you find out anything on the Ivanovs for me?"

"Oh, hi. And I'm fine, thank you," she snaps.

I suck in a breath. She's so fucking difficult, but I have to remind myself that she's a talented lawyer, and she knows far too many of my family's secrets. "Sorry. But did you?"

"No, nothing. Sorry."

"Nothing at all?"

"Nope," she replies breezily, and I know that she's lying. She's an accomplished liar, what lawyer isn't, and she no doubt hates that this information would help Jessie. Since we visited her office a couple of weeks back, Erin has barely contacted me.

"Oh, and next time you visit my place of work, please don't take your girlfriend into my restroom for a quick fuck," she hisses, and I have to bite the inside of my cheek to stop myself from laughing. "I had to have the whole place sanitized. I didn't realize you were so crass, Shay."

I seem to remember her dragging me into a restroom stall more than once, but I don't remind her of that fact. Because I'm a gentleman, after all. "Well, what can I say, Erin. I just can't keep my hands off her. Thanks for the call," I say and

then I press the end call button and throw my phone onto the desk.

A few seconds later, I look up as Conor walks into my office.

“Did you want me earlier?” he asks.

“Yeah. Close the door.”

He frowns at me, but he closes it behind him. “What’s going on?”

“You remember that guy from Balthazar’s place? The one whose throat Liam cut?”

Conor nods. “The one who was about to attack Jessie?”

I run a hand over my jaw. “That’s the guy. My sources tell me he’s still alive.”

“What? Fuck! I mean, I didn’t see what happened, but Liam said he sliced the guy’s throat from ear to ear.”

“I have no doubt he thinks he did. But, maybe he missed an artery or something?” I shrug. “Maybe the guy is a fucking superhero? Whatever happened, he’s still breathing.”

“You’re worried he’ll identify us?” Conor asks as he leans back in his chair.

“No, it’s not that. Besides, he only saw Jessie, didn’t he?”

“Yeah. So? Why are you looking so concerned and why have I closed the door?”

I sigh. I should have told him about this when it cropped up, but it didn’t seem that important. “When that guy walked into the room, Jessie said he seemed to believe he recognized her from somewhere.”

That makes Conor sit up in his seat. “What? Where?”

“That’s just it. She doesn’t have a clue. But, the guy called her Nataliya.”

“Nataliya?”

“Yeah. But Jessie says she doesn’t know anyone by that name. I thought the guy was dead and there could be any

number of possible explanations, and so I dismissed it. But now that I know he's still alive," I lean back in my chair and sigh. "I don't know. It's bothering me."

"You think maybe she looks like this Nataliya? A sister she doesn't know about?"

I shake my head. "She's adamant that couldn't be possible. But," I shrug again.

"What are you thinking?" Conor narrows his eyes at me.

"Maybe her mom?"

"Wasn't her mom's name Veronica?"

"When she was in the states, yes. But what if she changed it? What if the hit on the Romanov family was really about her and not Jessie's father?"

Conor sucks in a breath and sits back as though he's deep in thought. "It's a possibility. Have you told Jessie about the guy from the bar still being alive?"

I shake my head. "Not yet. I want to find out a bit more about him first, and if he can even speak before I worry her."

Conor arches an eyebrow at me.

"What?"

"She won't thank you for lying to her," he says with a shake of his head.

"I'm not lying. I'm delaying telling her the truth because I don't want to freak her out."

"You don't want her to run?" He smirks.

"Just do some digging around on this guy. Okay? And then we can tell her if and when we find out something. There could be nothing at all to it. A simple case of mistaken identity."

"Okay. Are you telling the twins?"

I shake my head. "Not yet. I don't want Liam to know. He'll only beat himself up about it and it's not fair to ask Mikey to keep it from him."

Conor nods his agreement, and I'm glad he's on the same page. I'm not in the habit of keeping things from my brothers, but I can't shake the feeling that there was much more to the murder of Jessie's family than meets the eye. And if she's in any danger, then I'll do everything I can to protect her.

I'M SITTING on the sofa with Jessie, my arm draped around her shoulder and she's snuggled against my chest. It's not often that I spend any time with her like this, but the twins are out working, and Conor is in the club. I walked past the den and she was sitting there alone watching TV and I couldn't resist joining her.

We've been here for a while when Conor walks into the room and sits beside us.

"Hey, you," Jessie says with a yawn. "Where have you been all day?"

"Hey, Angel," he replies, rubbing his hand over her ass and onto her thigh. "Just some business to deal with."

She turns her head, and he leans forward and kisses her. I watch his tongue sliding into her mouth and I listen to her soft groans and it's such a fucking turn on. I never thought I'd be willing to share a woman with my brothers, but this feels so natural. It doesn't even feel like sharing. She belongs to each of us in different ways.

Once he's given her a good tonguing, Conor pulls away and Jessie leans back into my chest with a soft sigh. He looks over her head at me and shoots me a look that tells me he has something to tell me.

I take Jessie's chin in my hand and tilt her face to mine. "You tired, Hacker?"

"A little," she says, stifling another yawn.

"Why don't you go to bed and I'll join you shortly," I say before pressing my lips against hers. She pulls me to her, turning my fairly chaste goodnight kiss into something much more.

I pull back from her, even though it hurts me to do it because she tastes as sweet as honey and as wicked as sin.

“Bed,” I growl.

She rolls her eyes, but then she stands up and I take the opportunity to smack her perfect ass. She blows us each a kiss and then she walks out of the room. “My bed, Hacker,” I shout after her. “And don’t fall asleep.”

“I wouldn’t dare,” she snaps back and then she laughs, and I watch her sexy body disappear out of view.

“Did you find out something?” I say to Conor as soon as Jessie is out of earshot.

“Yes, and it’s good news. The guy from Balthazar’s did make it, well for a few days at least. But he’s dead now.”

“How?”

“Heart attack while he was in hospital recovering from having his throat cut.”

“Wow! That’s some bad luck.” I can’t help but smile though because it means that if he did recognize Jessie as a Romanov then she’s in less danger if he’s dead.

“He couldn’t speak, but he did communicate with the nurses. He wrote a few words on a notepad when he needed a drink or something, but mostly he was in and out of consciousness.”

“Did he have any visitors?”

“Yeah. Just one. A guy. But he didn’t leave a name.”

“But he could have mentioned he saw Jessie - or Nataliya?”

“In theory. So, do we tell her?”

“What is there to tell? The guy’s dead. She didn’t recognize him. She doesn’t know who Nataliya is. It may have been nothing at all.” I stand up. “If there’s nothing else, I’m going to bed.”

Conor glances at his watch. “You’re stopping work before ten p.m?” he says as he stands too.

“When there’s a horny redhead waiting for me in my bed, I am, yeah.”

“I never thought I’d see the day,” Conor laughs.

“I’ve been thinking about what you said, too. I’m going to ask Jessie if she wants to get more involved in the business. I could use some help with the tech side of things.”

Conor places a hand on the back of my neck. “So, she’s really one of us now, then?”

I stare at him as he looks at me hopefully. “I suppose so,” I nod.

“About fucking time, bro,” he smiles at me.

I smile back. I suppose it is about time. Time to make Jessie Romanov a Ryan.

CHAPTER

FORTY-SEVEN

JESSIE

As I sit at the large table in the dining room that we rarely use, I look around at Liam, Mikey and Conor as we all wait for Shane.

“Any idea why he’s called this meeting?” Liam asks me.

“Me? None at all.” I shake my head. “I thought one of you might?” Shane spent the night with me, but he got up early this morning, although he at least kissed me this time before he snuck out of bed.

“Not a clue,” Conor frowns.

The sound of the door opening makes us all look up. Shane strides into the room with a serious expression on his face. I share a quick side glance with his brothers and wonder which one of us is in trouble now.

“What’s going on, bro?” Mikey asks as Shane sits down at the table.

He rubs a hand over his jaw and frowns, and then he looks at me. “Jessie here has decided that she’d like to stay. Isn’t that right?”

“Yes,” I swallow as I glance around the room nervously.

“Oh, I didn’t realize we were doing *this* now?” Liam says as he grins at me and Conor and Mikey mumble as though they know what *this* is too.

“Doing what?” I look between all four of them.

Shane reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a slip of paper before passing it to me. It has an eight-digit number on it. “That’s the passcode to access the alarm system so that you can add your fingerprint. You can come and go as you please, just like you asked.”

I reach out and take the paper, closing my hand over it and holding it tightly. “Thank you. This means a lot to me.”

Shane nods as his eyes meet mine. My heart flutters in my chest as he makes no attempt to look away.

“You do know Jessie can override that system anyway,” Liam says with a flash of his eyebrows.

“Yes. But now she won’t have to,” Shane snaps and I smile at him.

“Is that why you called us here?” I ask.

“Partly,” Shane pushes his chair back and stands up. “But also, because if we’re going to make this a permanent arrangement, I think we need some ground rules, don’t you, Jessie?” He holds out his hand to me and I take it.

I swallow hard as he pulls me up from my chair. “I guess so.”

“Any that you’d like to start us off with?” he asks in that low gravelly growl that makes my insides turn to warm liquid.

“Mikey has to stop stealing my panties and putting them in his nightstand,” I say with a smile.

Shane nods and his brothers laugh while Mikey protests at the unjustness of that particular rule.

“Anything else, Hacker?” Shane asks.

“Nothing I can think of right now, anyway.”

“Okay,” he smiles. “The boys and I have had a chat, and here are ours.” He sits on the chair he’s just pulled me up from and tugs me to sit on his lap.

“We all want you, Hacker. I’d have you in my bed every night if I could. But I know that my brothers love you just as much as I do.”

I blink at him in shock. Did he just admit that he loved me?

He gives me a look that suggests he does not want to be interrupted, and I press my lips together and let him continue. “It will always be your choice who you want to share a bed with, but it’s also your responsibility to ensure that all of our needs are taken care of. This is not an open relationship and I won’t have anyone feeling like they have to search elsewhere. That puts all of our health at risk. Do you understand that?”

“Yes.” I breathe out and then I bite my lip. I am the one woman who gets to satisfy these four incredibly fine and passionate men. I am one lucky gal!

“We thought that a good starting point would be two nights a week each, because the twins like to share you anyway, and that would still give you one night to yourself if you wanted it. Does that seem reasonable?”

“Yes. More than reasonable.”

He smiles at me and brushes my hair from my face before he continues. “There might be times when more than one of us need you. I know you enjoy being with the twins together. I assume that goes for any of us if we’re willing to share, and you’re feeling up for it?”

“Yes.” I nod, as I feel a rush of wet heat between my thighs. Sharing is good.

“If you’re one of us, then you make decisions based on what is best for us as a family unit, just like we will do for you?”

I nod my agreement.

“We do not hide what or who we are from anyone, because it’s no-one’s business but ours what we are to each other. And when we leave this apartment, I want to hold your hand, grab your ass, kiss you, or touch you in any way without you worrying what people might think, and I know that my brothers feel the same.”

“Yes,” they all nod their agreement.

“Okay,” I say. I’ve never cared much for what other people thought of me anyway.

Shane slides his hand up the inside of my thigh as he continues talking. “Anything else you guys want to add?” he asks his brothers as his fingers reach the apex of my thighs. He brushes them over my panties before tugging them to one side and sliding two fingers through my slick folds.

I suck in a breath and am vaguely aware of Conor, Liam and Mikey mumbling that they have nothing else to say.

“Fuck, Jessie, you’re dripping wet.” Shane grunts as he slides one finger deep inside me, making me moan out loud. “Is it any wonder it takes all four of us to keep you satisfied?”

I bury my face in his neck as he adds another finger and presses against that perfect spot deep inside me.

“You going to make her come for us, Shane?” Conor growls.

“Please. I love to watch her lose control,” Liam adds.

Shane chuckles and then he slides his finger out of me, and holds it up for his brothers to show them it dripping with my arousal before sucking it clean. “I’ve got a much better idea,” he grins wickedly, and my stomach does a full one eighty flip. “I think we need to mark this occasion. Really welcome Jessie into the family. What do you say?”

I blink at him, wondering exactly what’s lying behind those deviant eyes.

“Like a blood oath?” Mikey asks.

“Not exactly,” Shane growls.

“More like a cum oath?” I arch one eyebrow at him.

That’s met with laughter from all of them, and Shane presses his lips to mine and kisses me. “Exactly that,” he grins when he lets me up for air. Brushing my hair back, he presses his mouth against my ear, whispering so his brothers don’t hear. “You sure you can handle all four of us at once, sweetheart?”

Damn. Did he just call me sweetheart? And can I handle all four? I've been desperate to since I first laid eyes on them. My panties might melt if they don't get them off me soon. "Yes," I pant.

"Good girl," he growls and then he stands, lifting me in his arms and placing me down on the huge table.

"I'm going to watch all of my brothers make you come, Hacker." He arches one eyebrow at me. "I'm going to sit here and watch them fuck you one by one, and when they're done, I'm going to bend you over this table and show them how hard you scream when you come for me."

Heat flashes through my entire body as his words roll over me. This should feel so wrong on so many levels, but it just feels right. The idea of having these men worship my body makes the wet heat between my thighs increase tenfold.

"Conor," Shane says, and it's understood between the five of us what he means. Shane sits in the nearby chair while Conor walks over to me.

"Lift your arms, Angel," Conor whispers and I do as he tells me, allowing him to slip the t-shirt over my head. He runs his hand up my arms and then onto my back, where he unclips my bra and pulls it off, letting my breasts fall free. My nipples are already hard, and he bends low and sucks one into his mouth while he pinches the other one between his finger and thumb and the heat rushes between my thighs.

I rake my hands through his hair. "Conor," I groan as I close my eyes. I know that his three brothers watch us intently, and it makes everything even hotter.

"Lie back, Angel," he whispers, and I do as he asks. I shiver as my warm skin hits the cold wood, but I hardly have time to focus on that sensation as Conor is peeling my panties down my legs as he sits down at the chair directly in front of me.

"I'm not sure I've ever eaten anything quite this sweet at this dining table before," he chuckles as he wraps his hands behind the back of my thighs and pulls me closer to his face.

Then he eats my pussy like it's his last meal, savoring every single part of me. My back arches in pleasure as he coaxes an almighty orgasm from my body. He stands, and I shudder as he starts to unbuckle his belt. I watch as Shane walks up behind him, placing his hand on his younger brother's shoulder and whispering something in his ear. Whatever he says makes Conor grin wickedly and heat floods my body. He leans forward and plants a single kiss on my inner thigh, but then he steps back.

“Mikey. You're up,” he says with a grin.

“Benched.” Mikey laughs as he approaches while Conor and Shane take a seat and whisper to each other, like the coaches of a sports team, switching players and talking tactics – and I should hate it, but I don't.

I barely have time to think anyway because Mikey is standing between my thighs, placing his hands on my hips and leaning over to kiss me. “You look fucking beautiful, Red,” he growls as his hands slide between my thighs. “It would be criminal not to eat this pussy now that Conor hasn't blown his load in it.”

His words send a shiver through my entire body and despite what Conor just did, my pussy throbs in anticipation.

CHAPTER

FORTY-EIGHT

MIKEY (BONUS CONTENT)

I slip two fingers into Jessie's tight as fuck pussy and groan at the feeling of her squeezing my fingers. Her back arches off the table and she groans in pleasure as I slip deeper, rubbing the pads of my fingertips over her G-spot.

"Fuck, Red! Conor got you real wet for me."

"Sure fucking did," my older brother grunts his agreement, chest swelling with pride as I glance sideways at him. Then my eyes are firmly back on my girl as she writhes on the dining table.

"Mikey, please?" she pleads with me as I go on teasing her with my fingers.

Liam stands beside me, gripping his hard cock in his fist. "You know we love to hear you beg, baby," he growls appreciatively.

Dropping to my knees, I bring my face close to her pussy, inhaling her sweet intoxicating scent. "You smell so fucking good, Red," I say with a grunt as I slip my fingers out of her. Her cum drips out of her pussy making my cock throb with the anticipation of burying myself inside her very soon. I have a pretty good idea of what Shane and Conor have in mind shortly, and I will take full advantage of being able to eat this pussy without any of their cum tainting it. Because Jessie Ryan's cum is the sweetest damn thing I ever tasted.

I lick the length of her wet folds, enjoying the deep satisfied moan that vibrates through her entire body. "Your

pussy is addictive, Red,” I mumble against her slick flesh, causing her to writhe against my face.

Liam leans over her, sucking one of her beautiful tits into his mouth while he squeezes the other one in a bruising grip.

“Holy fuck,” Jessie breathes out the words as a rush of her arousal drips from her hot channel.

I lap it up with my tongue, savoring the taste of her sweet juices as they coat my tongue, making my balls sear with heat and need. Reaching into my sweatpants, I wrap my hand around the base of my shaft and squeeze hard, groaning at the immediate relief. I swear I could come in my pants like a teenage boy just from eating this woman’s pussy. And now she’s truly ours, and I will get to eat and fuck her every damn day of my life.

I graze my teeth over her sensitive clit and she gasps.

“You okay there, baby?” Liam asks with a soft chuckle.

“Y-yes,” she moans, threading her fingers through my hair.

“Mikey eating your pussy real good, huh?”

“Yes.”

My twin catches my eye and winks at me. “Good because we’re going to need you nice and wet so we can fuck you real hard, okay?”

“Of, fuck, yes,” she pants out the words as she grinds her beautiful pussy on my face.

“That’s it, ride my face until you come, Red,” I urge her on, swirling my tongue over her sensitive flesh as I suck and lick her, devouring her cunt and savoring her sweetness like it’s the last time I’ll ever taste her.

“M-Mikey,” she moans loudly before Liam crashes his lips against hers, swallowing all of her moans and whimpers so that they vibrate through her body instead.

Then his hand slips south and he presses a finger against her clit as I move lower, sliding my tongue inside her. Fuck she tastes so good. Her walls squeeze and her thighs tremble

as I hold them open and tongue fuck her. Precum weeps from the crown of my cock as she rewards me with more wet heat.

Her orgasm tears through her body like an explosion, and I catch every single delicious drop of it in my mouth. After a final swirl of my tongue over her wet center, I push myself up and wipe my face with my hand. Liam stands straight too, with a wicked grin on his face as she looks up at us both, her eyes dark and hooded. Her tits shudder as she sucks in shaky breaths. I grab her hips, fingertips digging in to her soft creamy skin while I line my cock up at her soaking wet entrance.

“You ready to be fucked now, Red?” I ask.

She doesn't even get a chance to get the word out before I slam into her, sinking balls deep into her tight, hot channel. She cries out, the sound echoing around the dining room and it makes pride swell in my chest that it's me currently ripping those guttural noises from her body and not my brothers. I love sharing her with them, but when I'm buried deep inside her this way, it's like I get her all to myself for a little while. As though he can read my mind, which I'm pretty sure he fucking can, Liam takes a few steps back and gives me room to fuck her.

She sinks her perfect white teeth into her plump bottom lip as her blue eyes fix on mine, dark with heat and desire. It spurs me on and I drive into her, tightening my grip on her hips so she doesn't slide up the table. My cock pulses inside her as she milks me with hungry little squeezes, desperate for more of me. I grin at her, aware that I'm the only man in her head right now and loving that. I'm fucking feral with need for her and it burns through my veins. This cum oath—the marking her as officially ours—is long overdue in my opinion. Shane should have gotten his head out of his ass a long time ago and made her one of us, but it's happening now. She's fucking ours and I'll never let her go.

“Your cunt loves my fucking cock, Jessie,” I say with a grunt as I drive into her so hard, her eyes roll back in her head. “You belong to us now, yeah?”

“Yeah,” she pants, her pink lips falling open as her back bows. “Damn, you feel so good.”

Yeah, I do. I lean over her, lips trailing over her throat before I sink my teeth into her soft skin and suck hard. She loops her arms around my neck, pulling me closer as she rocks her hips, grinding herself onto my cock.

I close my eyes, trying to stave off the climax that’s only a few breaths away, because I want her to fall right over that edge with me. But she’s clinging to me, arms and legs wrapped around me now, panting in my ear, skin burning with heat as soft moans vibrate through her body. I nail her to the table and it’s taking every ounce of willpower I have to hold on.

“Mikey,” she shouts my name, thighs tightening around my waist, pussy squeezing me like a vise and tremors rippling through her entire body as she comes so fucking hard for me. The sweet fucking sounds she makes, and the way her pussy ripples around my cock, tips me right over the edge with her. My own eyes roll back as I empty myself inside her, pumping out every drop of cum I can give her as ecstasy and relief flood through my limbs.

“Holy fuck, Red,” I growl in her ear as she goes on clinging to me, her chest heaving as she sucks in deep, shaky breaths.

I push myself up, my eyes raking over her trembling body as I admire my handiwork. When I pull out of her, a rush of our combined cum gushes out along with me, landing on the wooden table with a faint splat that makes her cheeks turn an even deeper shade of pink.

“Oh, you’re such a naughty fucking girl Red,” I tell her with a wink.

“She sure fucking is,” Liam agrees as he steps up beside me, squeezing his cock in his hand as he prepares to take his turn. Jessie’s eyes flicker from mine to his, and a soft smile lights up her gorgeous face. She blows a strand of hair from her forehead. “You ready for me now, baby?”

“Yes,” she says the word with a soft purr. She’s as sweet as fucking sugar and as wicked as fucking sin, and I love her more than I could have ever imagined possible.

I step aside, allowing my twin to take my place between her thighs. He gives me a sideways glance and I grin at him. We have been sharing women for as long as we’ve been having sex, but never like this. Never when we’ve been in love with the girl we were fucking. Never when she’s meant so much to us, to all of us, as Jessie does.

“Warmed her up real nice for you, bro,” I tell him with a wink.

“Fuck you,” he snaps back good naturedly.

“No,” I lean down and give my girl a soft kiss on the lips, “the idea is you fuck her numb-nuts.”

He grins at her, pressing the tip of his cock inside her and making her whimper. “Yeah?”

“Yeah,” she agrees with a slight nod of her head.

He edges in a little deeper. “You want this?”

“Yes,” she whines, all desperate and needy for him despite how hard she’s just been fucked.

“If this is what you really need, baby,” he says on a groan as he rolls his hips, sinking deep inside her sweet pussy and making her hiss out a breath. I watch them, my eyes fixed on the space where their bodies join as he stretches her pussy with his cock, pulling out slowly before driving back inside her again every time.

I glance at Conor and Shane, who are watching too. I never in a million years thought those two would be okay sharing a woman. They’re both possessive and controlling, and while Liam and I are to a certain extent too, my older brothers are not used to sharing anything. I guess Jessie is the one in a billion kind of special person that managed to change all that, and not a single one of us would give her up for anything.

I turn back to Liam and Jessie, stroking my cock as I watch my twin fucking my girl to her next orgasm.

CHAPTER

FORTY-NINE

JESSIE

Shane pulls me from the table and onto his lap, seemingly not caring that his brothers' cum is dripping out of me onto his suit pants. After Mikey fucked me on the table, Liam lined up and did the same.

I'm panting for breath and my entire body is trembling as Shane takes hold of my chin and turns my face so I'm looking directly into his eyes. "You feel how hard you've made me, Hacker?" he growls as he shifts his hips slightly, so his erection is pressing against my folds.

"Yes," I breathe.

"You remember what you were doing with the twins that night? When me and Conor caught you all fucking?"

"Yes," I swallow as I stare into his eyes.

"I want that. Right now. Me and Conor."

"Now?" my voice trembles. So, that's what he said to Conor earlier? My whole body quivers from the mind-blowing orgasms that Conor, Liam and Mikey have just given me on this table and I don't know how much more I can take.

"Yes," he says as he smooths my hair from my face. "But if you're not okay with it, I'll do what I planned and bend you over this table instead, because I am going to fuck this pretty ass today, sweetheart."

I draw in a shaky breath as the idea of Shane and Conor at the same time makes my pussy throb harder. "Yes. I want to."

Shane's eyes almost roll into the back of his head and Conor lets out a loud groan of pleasure as he walks up beside us.

"Fuck, Jessie," Shane groans, and then he stands up with me in his arms, carrying me over to the huge corner sofa.

Conor is one step ahead of us, and he undresses quickly before lying down on the sofa while Shane sets me on my feet. His hands run over the skin on my ass, and up my back, until he reaches my neck. Pulling my hair to one side, he kisses me softly in that perfect spot just below my ear. "You can stop this any time you want, Jessie," he whispers.

"I know," I breathe. But I can't imagine ever wanting to. Having these two men at the same time is mind blowing.

Conor takes my hand and pulls me toward him. "Come here, Angel," he says, and I move to straddle him. "Slide yourself onto my cock when you're ready."

I take his stiff length in my hands and guide it into my entrance. I'm so drenched that I slide onto him easily. "Fuck," he grunts as I take him all the way to the hilt. "I will never tire of the feeling of your wet pussy, Angel. Now, come here," he reaches out for me, pulling me down so I'm lying against his chest. One of his hands fists in my hair as he pulls my face to his and crashes his lips against mine, kissing me so hard, I almost lose my breath. Then his other hand is on my ass, squeezing possessively, exactly the way I like it. I roll my hips over him slightly and he groans into my mouth.

I'm aware of Shane behind me and it sounds like he's undressing, but I haven't felt him yet. It's Liam's voice I hear next as my head swims from Conor's attentions. "Here you go," he says softly just before the snapping of a plastic cap indicates he's passed Shane a bottle of lube.

I brace myself for the cold gel, but it doesn't come. I heard some being squirted out, but the next thing I feel is Shane's warm, wet fingers gently gliding over my hole.

"Is she tight here?" he asks the twins as he circles it over and over.

“Yeah. But she can take you,” Liam answers, talking about me like I’m not even here, which only turns me on more. The fact that all of these men have such intimate knowledge of my body makes me feel sexy and powerful.

One of Shane’s hands slides over the ass cheek Conor isn’t holding onto while he slips one of his fingers inside my ass. I inch forward instinctively, and he leans over me, until I am the Jessie meat in a hot man sandwich. “I’ll be gentle for our first time, sweetheart. Promise,” he whispers in my ear.

Conor lets me up for air, and as he does, he brushes my hair from my face with his hand. “I love you, Angel,” he breathes.

“I love you too,” I whisper.

Shane’s lips are on my neck now and he kisses me softly as he slowly slides one of his fingers in and out of my ass. I moan loudly at the incredible feeling of these two men filling my body and my senses. He slides a second finger in and I suck in a breath as a rush of wet heat slicks my pussy and Conor’s cock.

“Fuck,” Conor grunts as my walls squeeze around him. “She’s ready, Shane. She’s milking my cock here. So, hurry up and fuck her, or I’ll blow my load before you even get started.”

Shane chuckles softly, and then he leans up and pulls his fingers out of my ass. I whimper at the loss of his touch.

“Hold her still, Conor,” he growls as he presses the tip of his erection at my seam. “This is going to burn, sweetheart. But it will be okay once I’m in, and then you’re in complete control, okay?” he grinds out the words as he edges himself inside me.

“Okay,” I breathe as I resist the urge to push back slightly against him.

Conor wraps his arms around my waist. “Stop squeezing me, Angel,” he groans but he does it with a smile.

“Sorry,” I mouth just as Shane pushes deeper inside. “Ow,” I wince. He is bigger than his brothers and he’s stretching me

so wide it burns.

Shane rubs his hands over my ass and spreads my cheeks further apart. "I'm almost in, Jessie," he breathes. The burning pain soon gives way to pleasure as he pushes himself all the way inside me with a satisfying growl.

"Damn. You feel so good on my cock," Shane groans.

I take a deep breath as I try to calm my racing heart and allow my body to adjust to being so completely filled. The two men stay still too, waiting for me to be ready. Their muscles flex and vibrate with the effort as their breathing comes hard and fast. Conor grinds his jaw as he stares into my eyes while Shane's cock twitches in my ass and his fingers dig into my hips. I suddenly realize that I am completely in control here. I have these two powerful men in the palm of my hand.

I roll my hips slightly and Conor groans in frustration. "You can both move now," I whisper.

"You sure?" Shane breathes.

"Yes."

"Thank fuck," Conor grunts as he grabs hold of my hips and thrusts his cock into my pussy at the same time as Shane does the same to my ass.

"Oh fuck," I cry out as pleasure and pain courses through my entire body. Conor wraps one of his huge arms around me, pressing me to him as he sucks and nibbles on my neck while he slips the other one between our bodies and rubs my clit in slow, teasing circles. Shane grabs my hips firmly, holding my ass in place as he fucks it. Then, sliding one of his hands up my back, he caresses my skin before pulling my hair and wrapping it around his fist so that when he leans over me a second later, he can kiss the other side of my neck.

Our three bodies are pressed together, covered in a fine sheen of perspiration. I close my eyes as I try to deal with the complete sensory overload of having these two incredible men worshipping my body with their hands, their mouths, and their huge cocks.

My orgasm starts in the tip of my toes, tingling and sparking through every nerve ending of my body until I am buzzing with electricity and energy. I moan into Conor's neck as I feel the pressure building like nothing I have ever felt before.

"She's on the edge, Shane," Conor growls. "And she's going to take me with her."

My body bucks between them when my orgasm tears through me a few seconds later, like black powder searing through my veins and exploding between my thighs. Conor comes too, pumping his release into me as he bites down on my neck while he and his brother hold my trembling body still.

Shane lifts his knees onto the sofa and lies over me, so that I am pinned to Conor as he finds a way to get even deeper inside me. "Jessie. You are so fucking beautiful, sweetheart. I love fucking you so much," he groans in my ear as he finds his own release and pumps every last drop into me.

When he's done, he gently pulls out of me and I lie completely spent in Conor's arms.

"Fuck. That was hot," Mikey says, and I'd forgotten he and Liam were even in the room.

"You are fucking incredible, Jessie Ryan," Conor says as he kisses the top of my head before he pushes himself up and shifts back so he's sitting up against the sofa and I'm straddling him.

"Jessie Ryan?" I whisper.

Shane sits beside us and curls some of my hair around his fingers. "Wasn't that the point of our cum oath?"

"Yeah, you're a Ryan now, Red," Mikey adds with a chuckle as he sits on the other side of Conor and me and takes hold of my hand, threading my fingers between his before lifting it to his lips and kissing each of my fingertips.

Liam walks to the back of the sofa, standing behind where Conor and I are sitting and leaning down, he places his hands

either side of my face and kisses me softly. “Love you, baby,” he smiles. “And yes, you’re most definitely a Ryan now.”

We stay like that for a few moments, silent and sated. There’s no need for words after what we just shared.

Shane moves first, standing up and stretching. “Right, hand her over,” he says to Conor who releases me from his embrace without hesitation, allowing Shane to scoop me up into his arms. “Come on, Hacker,” he says softly.

“Where are we going?” I whisper.

“I think we need to get you cleaned up.”

I snuggle my head against his shoulder as he carries me out of the room and to my bedroom. He places me on the bed and orders me not to move while he goes to my bathroom. The sound of rushing water makes me realize he’s running me a tub. A short while later, I must have drifted off to sleep as I’m vaguely aware of his strong arms lifting me again as he carries me to the tub. “Come on, sweetheart,” he says softly. “You can’t sleep just yet.”

“Sorry,” I yawn. “I feel exhausted.”

“Well, I can’t say I’m surprised. You were incredible, Jessie,” he says against my ear and my heart flutters in my chest.

When we step into the bathroom, I smell the sweet scent of my favorite vanilla scented candles and bath soak. He places me gently in the tub of hot, soapy water and I sigh contentedly. “Move up, Hacker, I’m coming in with you,” he growls.

“In here?” I pop one eyebrow at him.

“You think I’m passing up an opportunity to have your soapy, naked body pressed up against me? I know you’re tired, sweetheart, but I’m not dead,” he winks at me and I can’t help but laugh as I scoot along the large tub, allowing him to climb in behind me. Once he’s seated, he pulls me back until I’m leaning against his chest before he wraps his arms and legs around me like a koala. Then he takes a soft washcloth and slips it between my thighs, gently cleaning my most intimate

areas before dragging it up my body and swirling it over my stomach and breasts.

“Why are you being so nice to me, Shane?” I groan as I tilt my head back against him. He plants a soft kiss on my neck. “I’m always nice to you, Hacker,” he chuckles.

“No, you’re not. You’re usually an ass to me. And I like it. I don’t know how to handle you when you’re being sweet to me like this.”

“You know exactly how to handle me, Jessie, and you’re well aware of that fact. But, I’ll go back to being an ass to you tomorrow if it means that much to you?”

“Yes, please,” I purr. “I love asshole Shane.”

“Oh, sweetheart. I’m going to make you pay for that tomorrow,” he growls. “But, I love you too.”

My heart almost bursts out of my chest and I close my eyes and enjoy the feeling of his arms wrapped around me and the way our bodies slide together in the hot soapy water. There was a time when I thought I would never know any kind of happiness again. But here with the Ryan brothers, I finally feel like a part of something. I feel loved and protected – and cherished. I’m finally home.

CHAPTER

FIFTY

JESSIE

G roaning, I roll over, off of one hot, hard body and onto another. Every part of me aches, but I can't help but smile as I recall the reason why. After my bath with Shane last night, Mikey and Liam cooked us all an incredible meal and then Conor gave me a lovely neck and shoulder massage, followed by a foot rub while we watched some TV. The twins spent the night in my bed, but they were perfect gentlemen and we actually only slept.

"Morning, Jessie," Liam growls sleepily as he wraps an arm around me and softly kisses the top of my head.

"Morning," I purr as I press my face against his chest.

Mikey rolls toward us, pressing his body against mine, and I sigh contentedly as I lie cocooned between the two of them.

Our bubble of happiness is shattered by the door bursting open and Shane's voice echoes around the room.

"Boys," he shouts. "We're leaving in fifteen minutes. Get your asses in the shower and get dressed."

Liam and Mikey groan loudly, but they both do as Shane asks, each of them kissing me on the cheek before rolling out of bed and strolling out of the room.

Shane sits on the bed beside me. He reaches out, dusting my cheek with his knuckles. "How are you feeling this morning, Hacker?"

"Deliciously achy," I smile up at him.

His green eyes twinkle as his mouth curls into a smile. “Your fingerprint is in the security system now, so, you can come and go as you please. We have something to take care of upstate, so we’ll be out for most of the day. Will you be okay on your own?”

“I’m a big girl. I’m sure I’ll be fine.”

His eyes narrow slightly as though he’s deep in thought. “Or you could come with us?”

“I’d rather stay in bed a little longer,” I grin at him. “Besides, I have an appointment at the salon at three. I’m getting everything waxed. You wouldn’t want me to miss that now, would you?”

The fire flashes in his eyes. “Everything?” he growls.

I sit up, placing one of my hands on the back of his neck and lean in close to him. “Ev-er-y-thing,” I purr against his cheek.

He sucks in a breath and a low growl rumbles in his throat. “Then it’s a good thing that after this job today, I have nothing to do for two whole days. Nothing to do but you.”

“Two days? But you never take time off,” I breathe as my heart flutters in my chest.

“I know. So, you get some rest today, and tonight. Because you and your freshly waxed pussy are mine, sweetheart,” he growls before running his hand over my ass. “And maybe we can have another spanking session. One that ends the right way?”

“And what’s the right way?” I purr.

“You coming on my cock,” he whispers, and my insides contract as he presses his lips against mine and kisses me.

“I thought you were looking for the twins?” Conor says as he walks into the room and flops onto the bed beside me.

Shane’s head snaps up and he turns to his brother. “I was. I found them. And now I’m kinda busy with my girl. So, get lost,” he says with a wicked grin.

“Our girl,” Conor winks at me before he leans down and kisses me too. Shane sits back and sighs as Conor devours my mouth.

I run my fingers through his hair and a few moments later he pulls back from me with a groan. “We gotta go, Angel. You have a good day and we’ll see you tonight.”

I lick my lips as I look at them both. they’re so damn handsome. “I’ll make something nice for dinner.”

Shane gives me a last kiss on the lips before he and Conor get up and walk out of the room. I lie back against the pillow and close my eyes. I’m going to enjoy being a Ryan.

IT BEGINS to rain as I’m heading back to the apartment after my appointment at the beauty salon. I duck into the alleyway next to our building and head toward the garage entrance. I’m just about to press my finger on the external keypad when a voice behind me startles me.

“Jessica,” he says in a thick Russian accent.

I spin on my heel as my heart starts to pound in my chest and I come face to face with a giant bear of a man wearing mirrored aviator sunglasses. My own reflection stares back at me. Flame red hair and my shocked face as pale as the full moon.

“You need to come with me,” he says as he grabs hold of my arm.

I wrench myself from his grip. “The hell I do,” I snarl. “And my name isn’t Jessica. You’ve got the wrong girl.” I glance at the keypad and then at his throat. I could punch him in the jugular and make a run for it.

He sighs deeply and lets go of my arm, taking a step back and holding out his hands in surrender. He removes his sunglasses and his face softens. “I’m not here to hurt you. But you must listen to me. You’re in grave danger here. You need to come with me.”

“You know nothing about me. Who the hell are you?” I frown at him.

“I know everything about you. But you need to come with me. We don’t have much time.” He glances up and down the alleyway.

“I’m not going anywhere with you. Do Shane and his brothers know anything about this?”

He narrows his eyes at me. “The Ryan brothers are not the saviors you think they are, *Moya kroshka*. They won’t protect you. They will feed you to the Volk without a second thought.”

My blood freezes in my veins at the mention of the Wolf’s name. “Who are you?” I stammer again as I take a step back from him until I’m pressed against the steel door.

“Please, Jessica. Your father is waiting for you,” he says softly, holding out his hand to me.

I shake my head as I look at his outstretched hand. “My father is dead.”

“No. He is not,” he insists.

I look up at him, glaring into his dark gray eyes. “Yes, he is. I saw him murdered myself. And nothing you can say is going to make me believe otherwise,” I snarl as I stand taller, preparing for a fight. I’m not going to go quietly. I will scream down this whole neighborhood if I have to.

He lifts his hand and I steel myself for the blow, but he only reaches inside his coat and pulls out a cell phone. He dials a number and holds it to his ear. Then he speaks in Russian.

“She won’t believe me. You’ll need to come.” He glances at me. “I know,” he sighs. “Yes, but unless you want me to kidnap your daughter, I don’t see that we have a choice.” he’s quiet for a moment before he speaks again. “Okay,” he nods and then he ends the call and pockets his phone.

I watch the entire exchange with an open mouth. What the hell is this guy’s deal?

“The Boss will be here shortly. But you’ll need to get him inside quickly. He can’t be out in public for too long and risk being seen.”

I frown at him. Does he really believe that his boss is my father? “Look, I don’t know what’s going on here, but I’m not hanging around here to meet your boss, no matter who he is.”

He glares at me and we both know I’m not going anywhere, because if there is the tiniest glimmer of hope in my heart that my father might be alive, then I will stand here and wait. A black Sedan pulls up at the end of the alleyway and the door opens. My heart feels like it might pound straight out of my chest and my eyes are so fixed on the door of the vehicle, I wonder if they might burn a hole through the metal. A man steps out. He wears a baseball cap and keeps his head bent low as he walks toward us. I strain my eyes, desperate to see his face.

My blood thunders through my veins, pounding in my ears and blurring my vision. I don’t know if there are tears in my eyes, but I can’t seem to focus on his face. His footsteps draw nearer as he keeps his head bent low. It feels like it takes an eternity for him to reach us. The man who looks like a bear stiffens as his boss approaches, as though he’s expecting to be reprimanded.

And then he reaches us, and I still can’t see his face. His hand shoots up, reaching for his cap. He removes it at the same time as he raises his head and looks me straight in the eye.

“Privet, printsesssa.” *Hello, princess.*

“Papa?” I blink at him as my heart stops beating in my chest. He looks like my father, but not like my father. Ten years have passed since I last saw him. He has aged. He has scars on his face that I don’t recognize. But it is him.

He nods and holds out his hands. “It’s me, Jessica.”

“But you? I saw you?” I stammer.

He steps closer toward, placing his hands on my face. “I survived, printsesssa. But I won’t survive much longer if I don’t get out of this alleyway. Can we go inside?”

I shake my head, unable to process the enormity of what is happening. This can’t be true. Ten years. Where has he been?

“Jessica!” he snaps and breaks me from my daze.

“What? Inside? Sure,” I say as I stumble toward the keypad and place my finger on the screen. The door clicks open and I walk inside, my father and the bearlike man following me.

As soon as the door closes behind us, I turn to him again. “Is it really you?” I blink the tears from eyes.

“Yes, printsessa,” he smiles at me and holds out his arms and I fall into them. He smells different, yet familiar. he’s different, but the same.

“Papa,” I sob against his neck as he wraps his arms around me.

We stay like that for a few seconds, but then he pulls back from me. “We have to go, Jessica. There isn’t much time. Let’s get your things.” He takes my hand and starts to walk toward the elevator.

I shake my head. “No. I can’t leave. The boys...” I stammer.

His face changes in front of my eyes from one that I recognize to a face full of anger and venom. The man I remember was always full of kindness and compassion. But, I suppose witnessing what he did, and looking for me all this time, has changed him. “Those *boys* are waiting to sell you off to the highest bidder. Have you learned nothing these past years?” he snarls. “How do you think I found you after all this time? They have been reaching out far and wide, trying to find the Wolf so they can sell you back to him.”

His words feel like a knife to my heart. I step back from him, shaking my head from side to side. “No. They wouldn’t,” I insist.

“They would, and they have, Jessica. Open your eyes. I have looked for you for ten years, and now I finally find you. That’s no coincidence, *printsessa*,” he says, his voice softening again. “Now, let’s go and get your things and get out of here. It would be best if you leave them a note, so they don’t come looking for you.”

“But won’t they come anyway? If they really intend to hand me over to the Wolf?”

He scowls at me. “We are running out of time. I am your father. That is all you need concern yourself with right now. I’m sure you have hundreds of questions for me, and I’ll answer them all. But right now, we have to move.”

I swallow as I blink at him. The thought of leaving the brothers feels like a knife twisting in my heart. But this is my father. He would never lie to me. He would never put me in danger.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, I have my backpack containing my laptop, a change of clothes, and a few toiletries slung over my shoulder. I place the small handwritten note on the center of the kitchen table, propped up by the vase containing the flowers the twins had bought for me a few days earlier.

I stare at the note. I’ve kept it short and polite. My father insists I don’t leave any clue as to the fact I know they were planning to hand me over to the Wolf.

HEY BOYS. Thanks for everything. It’s been a blast, but it’s time for me to move on. I’m better off on my own, after all. Please don’t come after me.

Love Jessie x

I STARE at the note as the tears roll down my face. This feels so wrong. Only a few hours earlier, I had believed they were my new family. I had believed that they loved me.

“Come on,” my father orders from the doorway and I turn to look at him. My real family. For a moment, I am torn between my old world and my new one.

“Printsessa,” he calls softly, and I realize where I need to be.

“Coming,” I say as I wipe the tears from my cheek and turn away from the life and the home that I stupidly thought belonged to me. He holds out his hand and I take it.

Then we walk to the elevator and I walk away from the Ryan brothers for good.

CHAPTER

FIFTY-ONE

SHANE

“Will you get that bear’s ass out of my face?” Liam snaps as the four of us crowd into the elevator with a stuffed teddy bear that’s almost as big as Jessie.

“Quit your whining,” Conor replies with a roll of his eyes.

I can’t help but smile at the three of them as they argue good-naturedly between themselves. They’re eager to see our girl, and so am I.

“She ain’t gonna appreciate that monstrosity, you know?” Mikey says as he holds up the bear’s arm and then lets it go with a look of disgust.

“She’ll love it,” Conor replies confidently. “And if she doesn’t, I’m sure she’ll love the diamond tennis bracelet he’s wearing.”

She will love it, but not because it’s made of the finest pink diamonds – our girl isn’t really that into material shit. She will love it because he chose it for her.

We step out of the elevator and into the hallway.

“Jessie. We got you a present, Angel,” Conor shouts.

There is no answer.

“Jessie.”

“Maybe she’s working out?” Liam suggests with a shrug as he heads off to the gym.

“Or the shower?” Mikey adds. “I’ll check her room.”

The twins head off to look for her while Conor and I make our way to the kitchen. I see the note as soon as we walk into the room, and my heart drops through my stomach.

She wouldn't do this to us. Not after I let her in. Not after yesterday. It could be perfectly innocent. Maybe she's gone to pick something up for dinner? Or some ice-cream for dessert. But why wouldn't she just text us? Why leave a note?

Conor has a giant teddy bear in his face and doesn't notice the piece of paper on the table. I walk over to it with my blood pumping furiously around my body and a feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach. Picking it up, I read the words, and it seems like time stops. I'm vaguely aware of Conor talking to me in the background, and then Liam and Mikey run into the room.

"Jessie's not here," they say in unison.

"What?" Conor asks as he places the stuffed bear on the floor.

"She's gone," I say, handing him the note.

I watch his face as he reads it and so many emotions flood my body I feel like I'm going to explode. He was only just getting back to being something like his normal self again, and she has broken him. She has broken us all.

"No," Conor shakes his head as Liam takes the note from his hand. "She wouldn't do this to us. Someone must have taken her," he snarls as his face turns red with rage.

"Go check the security feeds," I say to Mikey and he runs out of the kitchen, returning a minute later with a laptop.

I STAND in the kitchen staring at the small screen and watching our whole world fall apart. Jessie is there, as clear as day, walking to the elevator, hand in hand with some guy. It's hard to see who it is. He's clearly used to living in the shadows and he shields his face from view. But it doesn't really matter who she left with. What matters is that she left.

She has betrayed us. Torn out our hearts and left my brothers in pieces.

I will never forgive her.

“We have to find her,” Mikey says as he looks up at me.

“Oh, we will.” I place my hand on the back of his neck.
“And when we do, she will wish she’d never heard the name Ryan.”



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RYAN REDEMPTION

CHAPTER

ONE

JESSIE

My eyes fly open and I turn beneath the covers as someone knocks loudly at the door. Blood thunders in my ears and I blink in the faint light of the room, as for a few, heart-stopping moments, I don't recognize any of my surroundings.

“Jessica. Your father wishes for you to join him for breakfast,” a voice calls through the closed door. A wave of relief washes over me as the deep, Russian accent reminds me that I'm in my father's house. The voice belongs to Vlad, the bear-like man I first met outside the Ryan brothers' apartment building in New York three days ago. I have since learned he is my father's most trusted soldier, and I've spoken more with Vlad these past three days than I have with my papa.

“I'll be there soon,” I shout and the sound of my own voice, and the effort of speaking, makes my head hurt. I screw my eyes closed as pain tightens like a band around my forehead. My throat is dry and sore and I reach for the glass of water on my nightstand. A book clatters to the floor and I remember I was reading in bed last night, but I must have dozed off mid-chapter. That's so unlike me. Ordinarily, I struggle to switch my brain off to fall asleep so easily. I take a sip of the water and it soothes my raw throat. I'm sure I'm coming down with a cold.

As I pick up the book, I glance at the front cover and a sudden rush of sadness almost overwhelms me as I recall how Conor used to read to me, and how the velvety growl of his

voice always made me feel so safe and content. Surely it wasn't all a lie?

It's been three days since I walked out of the penthouse apartment in New York, leaving only a note for the brothers. The four men who I thought were my new family. The men I had fallen completely in love with, and who I believed loved me too. That was all until I met a ghost who turned my world upside down and who told me that everything I believed to be true was a lie. The shock of seeing him standing there in front of me made me lose all sense of logic and reason.

I watched my father die ten years ago. He was slaughtered by an assassin who killed my entire family and then kidnapped me before keeping me prisoner for almost two years. Except that now I'm forced to believe that my papa didn't die at all. Somehow, he survived that attack and he's been looking for me ever since.

Tears spring to my eyes as I run my hand over the smooth book cover, tracing my fingertips over the gold embossed letters of Leo Tolstoy's name. A few days ago, I was the happiest I had been in my adult life. Seeing my father again and learning that he's alive should make me happy too. But I can't stop thinking about everything that I've left behind. I have so many questions that when I have the opportunity to ask one, I become tongue-tied and don't know where to start. This isn't helped by the fact that whilst my father promised me he would answer all my queries, I've barely seen him since we arrived at this house.

My memory of the drive to this place is something of a daze. I remember holding my father's hand. We drank some zavarka - Russian tea - and the next thing I knew we were here and my father had to rush off to attend to some urgent business. Vlad has since told me he's had lots of pressing matters to attend to recently, and from everything I've witnessed here so far, my father works for the Bratva, and is very close to the top. I hope he's still searching for the Wolf as well as me. Surely he must be?

I jump out of bed and walk to the bathroom. If my father wants me to have breakfast with him, perhaps I will finally get

some answers.

ONCE I'VE SHOWERED and dressed, I make my way downstairs and into the large dining room to find my father already seated and waiting for me.

“Good morning, printsessa. Come. Eat with me,” he says with a smile as he gestures to the place setting opposite him.

“Morning, Papa,” I say as I slide into the seat.

He reaches out and cups my chin with his palm. “You look tired. Are you feeling well?” he frowns.

“I think I'm coming down with something.”

“I'll have Marfa make you some more of her soup,” he says with a nod. “You'll be feeling better in no time.”

“Thank you, Papa,” I smile. Marfa is a wonderful cook and she has been feeding me up since I got here.

As though he has conjured her up with the mere mention of her name, Marfa walks into the room carrying a tray of zavarka, ponchiki and pancakes, and sets them down before us with a polite nod of her head. I've hardly heard her speak more than two words since my arrival, despite my trying to engage her in conversation on many occasions. After she leaves the room, my father piles his plate high, and I smile as I watch him eat. He never used to have such a sweet tooth. I much prefer coffee and cereal for breakfast myself, but Marfa makes delicious traditional Russian food, and I take some pancakes and put them onto my plate.

While my father continues enjoying his breakfast, I pick up my fork, but my hand hovers over my food. “Can we talk about what happened, Papa?” I ask, and he frowns deeply.

“Jessica. We are eating.”

“I realize that. But I need to know what happened. You said we could talk.”

He places his silverware down onto the table and stares at me, and I swallow under his intense gaze. When I arrived here a few days earlier, I waited up for him after he was called away on business, but I fell asleep in the large armchair by a

roaring fire in the sitting room. The following morning he had left again before I was awake. The only other times I've seen him, he's been in a hurry or we've been eating and he's admonished me for spoiling his appetite.

"What do you want to know?" he asks with a deep sigh.

"That night at our house. How did you get out of there?"

"I told you, it was a miracle. I woke up in a hospital bed. You were gone and your mother and brothers were dead."

"Do you know why it happened? Why the Wolf came for us?"

"Your mother and I left Russia because we were running from the Bratva."

"The mob?"

"Yes."

"Why were you running?"

He closes his eyes for a moment and runs a hand over his beard. "That is too long a story for this morning, printsessa. Perhaps some other time."

"But, Papa..."

"Jessica!" he interrupts me. "Can we not just enjoy our breakfast? I have been searching for you for ten long years. We have the rest of our lives to discuss this yurodstvo."

Craziness! Really? I bite back the disappointment that surges through my chest, remembering how much time this man had for me when I was a child and how he loved to answer the many questions I used to constantly ask him. But, I suppose watching your wife and children being slaughtered and searching for your daughter for ten years changes a man.

"Can I ask one more question, Papa?"

He narrows his eyes at me. "Go on."

"Have you ever come close to finding the Wolf?"

The vein pulses in his temple as he clenches his jaw shut. "No," he snarls. "But now I have you to help me. You are the

only person who has ever seen his face, printsessa. Together, we will find him.”

Finally, something we can agree on. “We will, Papa.”

That seems to please him too and he reaches for my hand. “Now that you are back by my side where you belong, there is nothing we can’t do,” he smiles.

“You work for the Bratva now, Papa?” I ask as I cut into my pancake.

He laughs softly. “You could say that,” he nods as he pops a ponchiki into his mouth.

“Is that how you found me?”

“I thought we agreed only one more question, printsessa?” he snaps.

“I’m just making conversation,” I smile.

He shakes his head softly in exasperation, but he answers me. “No. I found you because the Ryan brothers were trying to make contact with the Wolf so they could hand you back to him.”

My breath catches in my throat at the mention of their name and another wave of sadness washes over me. I open my mouth to ask more questions, but my father shoots me a look that makes me close it again. My head is throbbing and I am so tired despite having slept for almost ten hours. I have far too many questions and I still know little more about anything than I did when I arrived here.

“They told you only what you wanted to hear, printsessa,” he says as he places his large rough hand over mine. “Don’t feel bad about being taken in by them. They are professionals.”

I nod my agreement. Because the man who raised me, the one who taught me all I know, he would never lie to me.

CHAPTER

TWO

CONOR

Climbing out of the SUV, I flex my neck and listen to the satisfying crack before walking around the side of the car to join my brother, Shane. I can feel anger coming from him like heat from an inferno. It has only grown fiercer in the three days since we watched the security footage of Jessie walking out of our apartment holding some fucker's hand. Three days since she tore out our fucking hearts. I'm holding onto the hope that she didn't just choose to fuck us over like that. Maybe she was being threatened? Or blackmailed? But Shane is convinced that she's been playing us all along. He is also sure that she's working for the Bratva, and always has been.

The thought that she might be in league with the people responsible for kidnapping and torturing me two years ago makes me want to gouge out my own eyes. I will tear this city apart to find her. But I refuse to accept that the woman who shared our home, our beds and our lives, could be so cruel.

My twin brothers, Liam and Mikey, are working their way through every piece of security footage in the New York area trying to identify the car Jessie must have gotten into, while Shane and I are taking an entirely different approach.

"You ready?" he says as he hands me a small black duffel bag that contains some of my favorite toys.

"Always."

"Let's find us some fucking Russians then," he snarls, walking toward the apartment building and holding the door

open for me. We take the stairs to the top floor, and along the hallway to apartment 42. It's the home of Igor Nikitin, the only surviving member of Dmitry's crew, and therefore, he's the only remaining link we have to the guy from Balthazar's bar who thought he recognized Jessie and called her Nataliya.

We reach the apartment door and I look at Shane, wondering if we're going to knock. But he lifts his right leg and brings his steel toe-capped, size-ten boot crashing against the lock, causing the door to burst open.

"Way to make an entrance, bro," I grin at him as we step into the hallway just in time to see Igor flying out of what I assume is the bathroom, with his pants around his ankles and his dick flailing in the air as he makes a run for the window. Shane reaches into my jacket pocket and takes out the screwdriver he knows I have in there before throwing it at Igor with a perfect aim. It strikes him on the back of the head, causing him to stumble against the wall and fall onto the floor with his ass in the air.

Walking further into the hallway, we haul him up and push him into the kitchen where Shane sits him down on a chair while I place my bag onto the counter and begin taking out some of the contents and placing them down.

Igor shouts in Russian and Shane punches him in the mouth, knocking out one of his teeth in the process and it clatters onto the tiled floor.

"If you don't stop fucking screaming like a pussy, I will cut out your fucking tongue," Shane snarls as he holds out his hand to me and I pass him a roll of duct tape. Our victim sees the tape and tries to jump up from the chair, earning him a swift kick in the nuts from Shane that brings tears to the Russian's eyes and makes him gasp for breath while he tries to handle the pain.

Shane works quickly, strapping him to the chair, although Igor doesn't make it easy for him. He struggles and lashes out while cursing in Russian. I could help out, but my older brother is more than capable of handling this guy alone, and

besides, I enjoy watching him work. My turn will come soon enough.

Once Igor is securely bound, Shane pulls up a chair and sits directly in front of him. “I need information,” he barks. “Tell me what I need to know and we might let you walk out of here.”

“Fuck you!” Igor snarls, and then he spits a huge globule of saliva mixed with blood onto Shane’s face and I can’t help but smile. This is going to be fun.

Shane stands and takes a towel from the kitchen counter. He wipes his face before turning back to Igor, who is now eyeing him with a mixture of terror and anger in his eyes. Shane moves swiftly. Extending his hand, he takes hold of the tip of Igor’s ear, and then he tears it clean off his head. It’s a particular skill my older brother has that I’ve always been envious of.

The sudden and brutal loss of his ear causes Igor to open his mouth to howl in pain. But before the sound can come out, Shane stuffs the towel into his open mouth, muffling the noise and making Igor gag at the sudden intrusion.

As he tosses the now useless appendage onto the floor, Shane sits down again. “Shall we try this one more time?” he scowls at our captive, who nods his agreement as tears run down his face and blood from the gaping hole that was once his ear trickles down his neck, staining the collar of his pale blue shirt.

“The man who had his throat cut at Balthazar’s six weeks back. The one who survived and died in hospital. Did you know his name?”

Igor nods and Shane takes the towel from his mouth.

“Viktor,” he croaks.

“Who did Viktor work for?”

“For Dmitry.”

“Who else?”

“No one else,” Igor shakes his head.

“He recognized a friend of ours. Her name is Jessica, but he called her Nataliya. Do either of those names mean anything to you?”

“No.”

“Somebody visited Viktor in the hospital ten minutes before he died. Any idea who that was?”

“No.” His head moves vigorously from side to side as though his effort might convince us that he is telling the truth.

Shane runs his hand through his hair and lets out a long, deep sigh. “We don’t have fucking time for this,” he says as he stands up and turns to me. “You’re up.”

“About time,” I say as I turn to the counter and pick up the cordless drill and hammer. I have plenty more tools in my bag of tricks, but these are two of my favorites and they’re pretty effective when time is of the essence.

I move the chair out of the way and stand in front of Igor, who stares up at me, his eyes flickering between the weapons in each of my hands. “I don’t know anything,” he spits out as he shakes his head from side to side.

“Well, maybe you do and you just don’t realize it yet,” I say with a wink as I press the button on the drill and it whirs to life. The sound of trickling liquid onto the floor makes me glance down and I smile as I watch Igor pissing himself in fear.

ONE HOUR LATER, Igor lies on the floor of his kitchen with blood pouring from almost every part of his body. I was surprised by just how much pain he could take, but, I suppose when you’re covering for the head of the Bratva, you keep your mouth shut as long as you can. He is close to the end, but he clings on to life in desperation, because it’s human nature to fight death even when it stares us in the face.

I crouch down on my heels and lift his head by his hair, which is matted with blood. “Thank you for the information, Igor. We’ll make sure that Alexei learns exactly who betrayed him.” I smile at him as I watch the last spark of life flicker

from behind his eyes before I stand up. Walking to the sink, I begin to wash his blood from my hands.

“I’ll call someone in to clean this up,” Shane says as he leans against the doorframe. “I wasn’t sure he had anything to tell us. You have a gift, Con.”

I shrug. “People always know more than they think they do.”

“Hmm. I’ll call the twins and tell them to meet us back at the apartment. With Igor’s information we should be able to find her soon.”

“That’s if Jessie is linked to Alexei Ivanov, and it isn’t just a coincidence that Viktor worked for him back in Russia.”

“We have no other leads to go on,” Shane shrugs as I dry my hands on some paper towels. “Besides, I feel like this makes sense. It all adds up. And if Jessie’s family were linked to the head of the Bratva, then it would explain their murder too. The Wolf was the Bratva’s top assassin.”

Despite what I just said, I nod in agreement. I expect he’s right too. But why the hell did Jessie walk out of our apartment, either with, or to go to, Alexei Ivanov? It doesn’t make sense to me. I can only think of three plausible explanations. The one that kills me to consider is that she has been plotting against us all along, but, I hold on to the hope that there is every chance that she is that she’s being played herself, or she left because she was scared of something, or someone. Although, I have to agree with Shane; she didn’t appear scared when she walked into the elevator holding that guy’s hand.

It still makes me sick when I recall that image of her leaving us, or when I think about the words on that note which were written as though we were nothing to her, even after we’d made it clear that she was everything to us. I can’t bring myself to accept that everything we did and said was a lie. But perhaps I’m just fooling myself. I don’t trust my own judgment anymore, especially when it comes to Jessica Romanov, or whoever the hell she really is.

Jessie's leaving has hit us all hard. Perhaps Shane has taken it the hardest, although he would never admit it, but it took a lot for him to let Jessie in. I haven't seen him open up like that with anyone for a very long time. Her betrayal has cut him deep and I dread to think what he has in store for her when we find her. Because he's sure that she's stabbed us all in the back and right now he won't even consider an alternative explanation for her leaving.

CHAPTER

THREE

JESSIE

The aroma of Marfa's delicious cooking wafts along the hallway, making my stomach growl and rousing me from my sleep. I glance at the clock and realize I've slept the afternoon away. Sitting up, I shake my head to clear it and rub my temples, certain now that I'm coming down with the flu.

I wander down the stairs and along the hallway, past the kitchen toward my father's office, my bare feet padding quietly on the wooden floor. His door is closed, and I knock and wait to be permitted inside.

"Vkhodit," he calls, signaling me to enter.

Opening the door, I walk inside to see him sitting at his desk with his head bent over his computer. He glances up and I smile at him. "Evening, Papa."

"Jessica," he nods. "Dinner will be served shortly."

"Great. It smells delicious," I reply as I take a seat opposite him.

He frowns at me as though my entering his office is an intrusion and an annoyance, but I'm not leaving here until I have some answers from him. He doesn't get to rip me from my new life in New York and then refuse to speak to me about the things that are so important to me — to both of us. I'd imagined that when we got to this house, we would talk long into the night and again the next day, catching up on all we'd missed in the ten years since we'd last seen each other, but he had to attend to more important matters yesterday after breakfast and I haven't seen him since.

“I’ll see you at dinner, printsessa. I have some work to finish,” he snaps.

“I need to talk to you, Papa.”

“Not now,” he says with a sigh, and anger begins to bubble beneath my skin.

“Then when, Papa? I have been here for four whole days and you have barely spoken to me. We have so much to talk about. So much to tell each other. Don’t we? I have questions that I need answers to,” I say, aware that my voice is raised, but refusing to be dismissed like an errant child any longer.

He narrows his eyes at me and runs a hand across his thick beard. “Maybe I don’t want to talk about it, Jessica,” he snaps. “I searched for you for so very long and now I have found you. That is all that matters.”

“Not to me, Papa.” I glare at him.

He glares back at me, his blue eyes darker than I remember. “Fine. I have five minutes,” he snaps.

“Do you know anyone named Nataliya?” I ask, recalling the man who called me by that name when I was in a club with the brothers.

His jaw clenches at the sound of her name before he quickly regains his composure. “It was your mother’s name. Before she left Russia.”

“It was? So that was why he recognized me.” I frown into the distance as I gather my thoughts. “A man called me by that name. He must have known her, Papa. Perhaps it can help us find the Wolf?”

“What man?” he snarls.

I lean back against my chair. “I don’t know his name. And he’s dead now. But he worked for Dmitry Nureyev.”

“Dmitry knew nothing about the Wolf. You stay away from men like him.”

“But one of his men recognized me. Or he recognized Mama. He called me Nataliya.”

“Lots of people knew your Mama when we lived in Russia, printsessa. She was...” He shakes his head.

“She was what?”

For the first time since I saw him in New York, I see a flicker of emotion in his eyes. “She came from a very prominent family. She was the most beautiful woman in Moscow. She was highly prized amongst many.”

“Why did you both come to America?”

He looks behind me into the distance. “We were running from some people who wanted to kill us. Your Mama did a terrible thing.”

I blink at him. My mom was the kindest, most gentle woman I’ve ever known. What could she have possibly done that would have made them run so far and for so long? “What did she do?” I whisper.

His eyes dart back to me. “You look so much like her, printsessa. One day soon, you will marry into a good Russian family and make me lots of grandbabies,” he says with a smile that doesn’t quite reach his eyes.

“I don’t want to get married or have babies, Papa.”

He laughs softly. “Do not be ridiculous. I already have your husband in mind,” he says as he stands from his chair.

“What?” I frown at him as he reaches out his hand to me.

“He is from a good family.” He looks down at his outstretched hand as if to emphasize that I haven’t taken it. “And do not worry, I won’t tell him that you have been with any of those Irish pigs.”

The anger that has been bubbling beneath my skin for the past five minutes suddenly erupts out of my chest. “I did not endure two years being the plaything of the Wolf for you to marry me off to some man I’ve never even met,” I shout.

“Jessica,” he hisses, and something about the way he looks at me makes the blood freeze in my veins. “You will do as you are told.”

I am about to reply that I won't when Marfa walks into the room. "Dinner is ready, Sir," she says quietly.

"I have business to attend to. Jessica will be eating alone," he snarls and then he strides out of his office, leaving me watching after him in a daze.

I SIT at the dining table eating the delicious soup Marfa has prepared. Peering around the room, there is no doubt that the place is beautiful. It is full of antique furniture and enormous windows with thick, dark wooden frames. It should feel warm and full of character, but it has no soul. The staff here walk around the place like they're afraid to speak. Nobody ever calls my father by his name, referring to him as Sir or Boss. There are at least a half a dozen bedrooms, but only two are occupied as far as I can tell — mine and my father's.

Every day dozens of Bratva men come here and meet with him, leading me to suspect he's high up in the organization. I should be doing something more. I should be finding the Wolf. But my father refuses to allow me into any of his meetings or to share any of the information he's learned about the elusive assassin during these past years. I mean, if he was aware the Ryan brothers were reaching out to the Wolf to hand me back, then he must have heard some whispers about where he might be.

Thoughts of the brothers bring a lump to my throat. I swallow a mouthful of soup as tears prick at my eyes. I am so lonely here, yet, I never felt lonely in their huge penthouse. From the moment I arrived, they made me feel welcome. Why would they let me get so close if they were just using me? It makes no sense.

I place my spoon on the table as a wave of tiredness washes over me. I can't seem to think straight lately. I need to shake whatever bug it is that I'm coming down with so I can refocus on finding the man who slaughtered our family — with or without my father's help.

CHAPTER

FOUR

CONOR

Liam kills the engine of the SUV as we pull up in the side street opposite Alexei Ivanov's mansion in Connecticut. From the outside, it looks like a fortress, but thanks to Shane's contacts in the State department, we've managed to get our hands on a copy of the original blueprints of the property. Blueprints that reveal the hidden passageways that were made when the house was first built back in the 1920s.

"Are you sure we shouldn't just blow the gates off and fight our way through there?" Mikey asks as he peers out of the window into the darkness.

"No," Shane replies with a look of warning at our younger brother. "We need to do this with as little noise and disruption as possible."

"But you don't where she is. Or if she's even in there?" Mikey sighs. He's annoyed that he has to wait in the car and can't get in on the action.

"Which is exactly why we don't need to be drawing any attention to ourselves," Shane snaps. "If she's not there..." He doesn't finish the sentence and I know it's because he can't bear to. He is as desperate to get Jessie back as we are, and although I imagine some of his motives are the same as ours, I recognize that he also wants revenge. He has a murderous look in his eyes that makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.

"So, we wait here while you two break in, find Jessie, knock her out and bring her back to the car through one of the

secret passageways?” Liam asks, doing what he does best and trying to diffuse the growing tension in the car.

“Do we really have to knock her out?” I groan.

“Yes,” Shane snarls. “How else are we going to get her out of there quietly? She went there willingly, remember? I doubt she’s going to be thrilled to see us. It’s not like we’re putting her in a chokehold. A quick scratch and she’ll fall asleep in your arms,” he says with a roll of his eyes.

“If we hear shots fired, we’re coming in there,” Mikey grumbles.

“Fair enough,” Shane nods his agreement.

“Let’s fucking do this then,” I say as I open the door of the car. Despite everything, I am eager to get in there. I want to see her face. I want to bring our girl home, whether she wants to come with us or not.

Shane climbs out behind me and hands me a gun with a silencer on the end, and I tuck it into the back of my jeans. We don’t plan on using them, but it’s better to be prepared, because we have no idea what we’ll be facing once we get inside.

As we pull up the hoods of our black sweatshirts, we take a quick glance around us before jogging across the road to the small side gate that seems to double as the service entrance. It’s always manned by two armed guards. Shane and I approach from the East, hoping to appear like two guys out for an evening jog. The guards are talking quietly and smoking cigarettes, but they straighten up as we approach.

We jog right on up, as though we’re going to breeze past, and catch them both by surprise. I grab the bigger one, placing my hands around his neck and snapping it with ease. Shane does the same to his counterpart and the two men fall to the floor within a few seconds of each other. I hoist one of them up and rest his right thumb against the electronic keypad, and the metal gate clicks open. It’s lazy security to use the thumb of your dominant hand on a fingerprint keypad system. It’s the one that people always assume you’ll use, and most people do.

“Let’s get these two off the street,” Shane says, and we drag their lifeless bodies through the entrance, dumping them just inside the walls as we close the gate behind us. I reach into my pocket and take out my scalpel before I lean down and cut off the thumb of the guy who just kindly opened the gate for us. It slices easily through the bone and cartilage. I wipe the blood on my sweatshirt and pop his thumb into my pocket before handing the scalpel to Shane. “You may as well take his, too, in case we get split up?” I nod to the other dead man a few feet away.

“He was right-handed, wasn’t he?” Shane asks as he holds the blade against the dead man’s hand.

I nod and watch as my brother slices through his thumb and pockets it before we make our way toward the house. Another guard is patrolling just a few meters in front of us. Shane gives a low whistle, making him look in his direction and temporarily distracting him while I sneak up behind him and snap his neck, gently lowering him to the ground before pulling him into the nearby bushes. Snapping necks is my favorite way to kill someone. It’s quick and clean and a skill that I learned at a very young age, and have continued to perfect.

Once we’re inside the house, we make our way upstairs and walk along the dim hallway, past the bedrooms, sure that Jessie must be in one of them. But there are at least six doors on this floor.

“You start at this end, and I’ll start at the other,” Shane whispers, and I nod my agreement. He walks to the other end of the hallway while I try the first door. The handle turns quietly, and I peer inside the dark room. It’s a bedroom, but it doesn’t appear to be occupied. I look up as Shane does the same at the opposite end of the corridor before looking at me and shaking his head.

Two down. Four to go.

I move along to the next room and grab hold of the handle, and I’m just about to turn it when it moves in my hand.

Shit!

I step back into the shadows as the door swings open, ready to go for my gun if I need to. Then she walks out of the bedroom and I swear my heart stops beating in my chest. She looks like Jessie, but not like her. Like maybe she's sleepwalking or something. Her beautiful red hair is tied up in a messy ponytail and she wears a nightgown which has a food stain on the front.

I step toward her and her eyes dart to the shadows where I'm standing. "Jessie," I whisper, unable to stop myself from reaching out to her. I'm vaguely aware of Shane making his way toward us. At first, she seems to stare right through me. But then I see the flicker of recognition in her eyes and her face suddenly becomes more animated.

"Con-" she starts to say my name before she falls backwards into Shane's arms and I realize he's injected the sedative into her neck.

"Let's get her out of here before someone notices us," Shane orders.

I stand frozen to the spot as I stare at her, unconscious in his arms. There was something definitely not right about her.

"Conor," Shane says through clenched teeth, snapping me from my momentary trance.

"We need to make sure there's no one in that room waiting for her to come back in," I warn him.

He closes his eyes, as though the thought of someone being in there, in her bed with her soft warm body pressed up against them, pains him. I know that it fucking hurts me. I realize that if I look inside that room and see anyone in there, I'll shoot him in the head. I don't give a fuck if we're supposed to be keeping this low key.

"Go on," he eventually replies with a flick of his head toward the door.

I walk closer to her room with my heart hammering in my chest while blood pounds against my eardrums. I open the door wider. Reaching inside, I flick on the light. The bed is empty. Rumpled covers confirm she was sleeping there, but

she was alone. I sigh deeply and lean my forehead against the door frame. “It’s clear. Let’s go,” I whisper as I turn around. “You want me to take her?” I offer.

“No, she hardly weighs anything,” Shane replies as he hoists her up into his arms. I lift her arm and drape it around his neck, letting my hand linger on the skin of her wrist just a little longer than necessary. She’s cold to the touch, despite this house being warm. My gut tells me there is something definitely not right here. That woman I just saw was definitely Jessie, but not the Jessie I’ve come to know.

DESPITE THE SECURITY in Alexei’s fortress, Shane and I manage to make it out through one of the tunnels leading from the cellar without any further interference. We run over to the SUV as Mikey climbs out and opens the door to the back seat.

“She okay?” he asks as we approach.

“She’s fine,” Shane replies.

I jump in first and Shane places Jessie on the seat beside me. I pull her against me as he climbs in and Mikey runs back around to the front of the car. I lay Jessie’s head on my lap as Shane pulls her feet onto his knees.

“Let’s get moving,” he barks to Liam, who puts the car into gear and pulls away from the curbside.

As I look at her, my heart feels like it constricts in my chest. I brush the hair back from her face. She looks so fucking peaceful lying here, but I know that when she wakes up, there will be no peace for her. Not for a while.

Whatever reason she had for leaving us, I doubt it’s drastically changed in the space of four days. Shane is determined to make her talk, and I have no idea how he intends to do that, but I do know that he’s had the dingy cell in the basement prepared for her. It’s as small as a prison cell, but less comfortable. No natural light. A tiny metal bed screwed to the floor with a thin, bare mattress and a tiny stainless steel toilet in the corner.

We’ve kept plenty of people prisoner there before, but none that have ever got under our skin like this pint-sized little

redhead lying on my lap.

So many emotions flood my senses that I don't know what I'm feeling. Relief at having her back with us. Fear of what she might tell us, or of what lengths we might go to to make her talk. Anger that she left us. Jealousy that she might be in love with that man she left with, that she might be loyal to him in a way that she never was to us. And hope. Hope that, somehow, she has a perfectly reasonable explanation for everything and that it will piece my shattered heart back together.

I curl my fingers around her hair. Damn, Jessie! How the hell are we all going to get out of this in one piece?

CHAPTER

FIVE

CONOR

Mikey paces up and down the concrete basement while Liam stares at the heavy metal door, rocking back on his heels and rubbing his hand over the stubble on his jaw.

“What the fuck do we do now?” Liam eventually asks and I look to Shane, who is leaning against the wall beside the door with his arms crossed over his chest.

“Now we wait,” he replies with a shrug, as though it’s just some person who means nothing to us who we’ve just locked in that tiny room and not Jessie.

“One of us should be in there with her when she wakes up,” I snap at him. “She won’t have a clue where she is once those drugs wear off.”

“Well then, maybe she’ll have some time to think about the fact that she betrayed us,” Shane snarls at me.

“We don’t know why she left,” I remind him as I walk over to him.

“No. But she’s going to fucking tell us one way or another, isn’t she?”

I step closer to him. “And just what the fuck does that mean, Shane?”

He edges toward me, pressing his face closer to mine. “It means that she is going to talk, Conor. And I will cross any line I have to in order to make that happen.”

“But that’s Jessie in there.”

“Yeah? The same woman who promised us she’d never leave, only to walk out of here holding some cunt’s hand after leaving us a shitty note.” He snarls. “That Jessie? She’s a fucking snake, and she fucked us all over, and we were all too fucking pussy drunk to see it,” he rages.

I shake my head in exasperation. I know there’s logic in what he’s saying, but I don’t want to accept that it’s true. Turning, I look at Mikey and Liam. They’ve always believed in Jessie just as much as I have. They both stare at me without speaking.

“Liam?” I say when I can’t bear the silence any longer.

“I don’t know, bro,” he says with a shrug. “Shane has a point. You saw her walking out of here.”

I suck in a breath. Of all people, I figured he might back me up.

“Mikey?” I try.

“Hey, we’re not saying there isn’t a possibility she has a good explanation for what she did, but right now, it’s not looking likely, is it?”

“For fuck’s sake!” I bark.

“Conor,” Shane snaps. “You saw that house. The room she was staying in. She was a fucking guest there, not a prisoner. Whatever her reasons, she left willingly. There is no escaping that fact.”

I look up into my older brother’s face. I’ve always trusted his judgment and I accept there’s every chance he’s right about this. But I can’t let myself believe that she lied to me, to all of us, because I don’t think I can take it. And I fear what I might do to her if she tells me that Shane speaks the truth. I’m scared of what Shane, or any of us, might do to her.

“I’ll wait down here. I’ll check on her, and when she wakes up...” Shane offers.

“You’ll what?” I ask with a frown.

“I’ll speak to her. I won’t hurt her. Promise. Not unless she attacks me first, anyway.”

“Then I’ll stay here. I’ll talk to her,” I protest.

Shane stares at me as though I have just asked him to give me his kidney. In fact, he’d probably be more receptive to giving me one of his vital organs. “Fuck no. Not a chance.”

“Why not?”

“Because you can’t be trusted around her.”

“What?” I scowl at him, but he carries on.

“None of you can. She makes you all think with your dicks. I’d give it ten minutes before one of you either fucks her or lets her go.”

Liam and Mikey nod their agreement, but I slam my fist against the door beside his head. “So you’re saying you don’t trust me?” I snarl.

“Around Jessie? No,” he snarls back.

“Well, maybe I don’t trust you.”

“I’m the only one willing to do what needs to be done and you know it, Conor.”

“And that’s what I’m worried about. You’re not thinking straight either, Shane. You’re convinced she’s betrayed us and you’re not even willing to consider an alternative.”

“Well, neither of you can go in there if you’re at each other’s throats,” Liam says calmly from behind us.

“Exactly. So, you three go up to the apartment and I’ll wait down here,” Shane says to him over my shoulder. “And I’ll let you know what she says when she’s awake. I won’t lay a finger on her.”

“Okay,” Liam replies. “You okay with that, Con?” He asks, placing a hand on my shoulder. My youngest brother has a way of bringing calm to a situation that I’ve never quite been able to fathom. Perhaps it’s something in the tone of his voice, but something about him taps into something in us in a way that no one else can.

“Whatever,” I snap, because Shane is right. I’m not sure I trust myself around Jessie either.

“Good.” Shane smiles at me reassuringly and I trust that he won’t let anything happen to her. At least not yet.

CHAPTER

SIX

JESSIE

G roaning, I roll onto my side. My pulse throbs in my temples and my mouth is so dry I can barely swallow. Suddenly an image of Conor's face flashes into my mind. He was here. In my father's house. Someone was with him. The last thing I remember is the expression on Conor's face as a hand clamped around my mouth.

My eyes snap open. Where the hell am I? The room is tiny and dim. There are no windows. A small stainless steel toilet sits in one corner, about three feet away from the bed I'm lying on, which is nothing more than a bare mattress on a steel frame. My heart races in my chest, hammering against my ribcage as I sit up and try to get my bearings.

"About fucking time. I was beginning to think you'd never wake up," I hear a familiar voice growl from a dark corner. I spin my head toward the sound, noting the enormous steel door blocking the exit.

"Shane?" I croak, my voice hoarse from lack of fluids. How long have I been here? "Where am I?"

"Who are you working for, Jessie?" he snarls.

I blink at him as the memory of his hand over my mouth fills my senses. That was him in my father's house with Conor. Of course it was. I would recognize the touch of his skin on mine anywhere. "Did you drug me?"

"Who are you working for?" he repeats.

"Where am I, Shane? What the hell is going on?" I demand, but the tremor in my voice is audible. "Is the Wolf

here?" I gasp as my eyes dart around the small space.

"Don't try and fuck with me," he snarls. "I asked you a fucking question."

I turn back to him. "And I asked you some too. And you won't get another word from me until you answer them." I glare at him.

He stands quickly, pushing the chair he was sitting on against the wall, and I flinch, scooting back along the bed. He stands before me, bending low and leaning his face close to mine before wrapping one of his powerful hands around my throat. "Do not fucking test me, Jessie, or I will snap your neck like a twig."

I stare into his eyes, that are so dark they no longer appear green at all. Silently, I challenge him to do it. I've had enough of this shit to last me a lifetime. Will I ever not be at the mercy of men like him? How fucking ironic that just a few days earlier, I completely believed him when he told me that he loved me.

"Do you have any idea what you did to them when you walked out of here with him?" he spits, his face and his voice so full of venom, I shrink back from him. Why is he pretending my leaving hurt them? Like they weren't planning on betraying me all along. Where are his brothers, anyway? Don't they have the guts to face me after what they were planning?

Shane tightens his hand on my throat and I close my eyes and wait for him to do his worst. I am so damn tired of it all. A few seconds later, he releases his grip and pushes me back until I am lying flat on the bed. I lie still and listen to his footsteps crossing the room before he opens the steel door and slams it closed behind him. I listen to the silence for a while, making sure that he has really gone before I open my eyes.

CHAPTER

SEVEN

LIAM

As Mikey keeps himself busy cooking, Conor paces up and down the kitchen. He sits every few minutes and pulls out his cell phone, trying to focus on something, but it doesn't last long. Tension weighs heavy in the room as we wait for news from Shane.

"She must be awake by now," Conor barks.

"I'm sure Shane will let us know as soon as she is," I say.

"You think?" Conor pushes his chair back and walks to the refrigerator and takes out a beer. Twisting off the cap, he throws it into the trash.

"He's not going to hurt her, Con. He's not going to do anything without discussing it first. You know that." I frown at him.

"But he's not thinking straight, Liam. You've seen how he's been these last few days. He's so fucking furious with her. What if..." Conor takes a long swig of his beer and then walks toward the window and looks out at the New York skyline.

I look across at Mikey who simply shrugs his shoulders and goes back to cooking. I can't remember a time in recent years when Shane and Conor have been so at odds. They are usually on the same page about everything and them being on opposing sides on an issue upsets the whole equilibrium of our existence.

Shane is the boss. That is an undeniable and unquestionable fact. Conor is his second.

Mikey and I enjoy being the ones who don't have to make the difficult decisions, because we are never made to feel like we are anything but equal partners when it comes to our business. I trust both of my older brothers to do a better job of it than either me or my twin can, so it makes me uneasy when they're not acting like the cohesive team they usually are.

Mikey will often jokingly refer to them as the folks, and I see what he means. If I had any happy memories at all of my parents or my childhood, I suppose I might compare this situation to the feeling kids must get when their mom and dad argue.

I walk across the kitchen and stand next to Conor. "Why are you fighting him so much on this?"

He turns to me with a scowl. "Why aren't you?"

"She left us, Conor. After everything she promised us. After everything we said to her. She just fucking up and left."

His face softens and he turns back to the window. "She must have had a reason, Liam."

"I hope she fucking did. And who knows? Maybe she's down there explaining everything to him right now?"

Conor snorts and takes another drink of his beer.

"You know what it took for him to let her in, Con. You saw how happy she made him. And you know people only get one chance with him. I don't see how he's going to get past this."

"I know," Conor says with a sigh as he hangs his head low. "That's what I don't get, Liam. She worked so hard to get through to him. When she finally did, she was so fucking happy. That morning before she left, she was smiling. She looked at us like we were her whole fucking world. So, if that wasn't true, what was her game plan?"

"She left the day we put her fingerprints in the security system. That can't be a coincidence, Con."

He shakes his head. "But you saw how good she is, Liam. As sophisticated as our security system is, she could have hacked it in a day."

I put a hand on his shoulder and don't know how to answer that because he has a point. "So what could it have been then?"

"I don't know," he sighs. "But there must be some reasonable explanation, because if there isn't, what? She sucked us all in and made us fall in love with her for what? Plain old cruelty? I can't believe that."

I stare at my older brother and see the pain in his face. I understand the place he's coming from and the need to believe that Jessie is still the same person we thought she was. But what if she's not? "What if she doesn't have an explanation, Con? Have you even considered that? What are you going to do?"

He turns to me again and that haunted look in his eyes, the one I hoped I'd never see again, is back. "Of course I've considered it. But I can't think about what I'm going to do because it fucking terrifies me. I'm terrified of what he'll do to her. Of what I might do to her, Liam."

I swallow. I have no answers for him. I only hope that Jessie does. But I can offer him something. "I promise I won't let you do anything that you'll hate yourself for. Okay?" I wrap an arm around his neck and pull him to me.

"Yeah," he sighs.

"You two ready for some food?" Mikey shouts across the kitchen, interrupting the moment.

"I'm not hungry," Conor shouts back.

"What? I just spent an hour making this. And it's your favorite. You gotta eat, Con," Mikey snaps.

"Man has a point," I add.

"Fine," he snaps as he downs the last of his beer.

We're heading over to the table when Shane walks into the room and we all look up at him expectantly. My eyes scan his face and his body, looking for any clues as to what might have happened downstairs. He's not covered in blood, so there's that.

“Is she awake?” Conor asks.

“Yeah,” Shane says with a nod as he crosses the room to sit at the table.

“And?” I ask.

“She won’t talk,” he snaps.

“She didn’t say anything?” Conor frowns at him.

“She played dumb. Wouldn’t tell me who she was working for. And then she said some shit about the Wolf being here.”

“The Wolf?” Conor interrupts him.

“Yeah,” Shane says nonchalantly as he looks over at Mikey. “What’s for dinner?” he asks.

Conor’s entire body vibrates with anger. “Forget about dinner. What the hell did she say about the Wolf?” he shouts.

Shane turns to him and glares at him so fiercely, I almost shit my pants. I haven’t seen him look at any of us like that since we were kids. “She asked if he was here. She is playing the victim card, Conor,” he snarls. “Trying to make us feel sorry for her. She’s probably been fucking the Wolf all along.”

“Fuck you, Shane,” Conor snarls as he slams his fist on the table. Shane pushes his chair back, planting his hands on the table and leaning toward Conor as the two of them glare at each other, making the tension in the room ratchet up from uncomfortable to downright fucking unbearable. I feel like the kid in the middle of a bitter divorce here.

Against my better judgment, I stand by the center of the table and place a hand on each of their arms. “She’s probably still confused by the drugs we gave her. Why don’t we all have something to eat and then one of us can talk to her again?”

“I’ll be the only one doing the talking,” Shane snaps.

“And no one is going to argue with that. So can you calm the fuck down and sit,” I say to Shane before I turn to Conor who is practically foaming at the mouth. It fucking kills me to see my brothers like this. Damn, Jessie, better have a good

fucking reason for putting us all through this shit. “Con. Let’s sit down and eat, yeah?”

It takes a few seconds but the two of them back down and sit at the table and with impeccable timing, Mikey brings a huge bowl of chili to the table. Hopefully, he’s made his extra special recipe that is so freaking hot, none of us will be able to talk much at all after a few mouthfuls.

CHAPTER

EIGHT

JESSIE

I have no sense of how long I've been in this tiny cell. I suspect it's in the basement of the brothers' building because I hear the bass thumping from the club upstairs occasionally. Since I've been here, I have mostly slept, no doubt because the bastards drugged me but, surprisingly, my head seems clearer now than it has in days.

As I look down at the floor, I notice there is a bottle of water and a pre-packed sandwich on a tray beside the bed. Shane must have brought it in, because he is the only person I've seen since I arrived here. Once after I first woke up, and a few more times when he has stood near the doorway and fired questions at me for what has felt like hours. Each time I have refused to answer any of them until he answered some of mine. And it seems like he is the only person I'll have an opportunity to ask, as clearly his brothers don't have the balls to face me.

The rattling of the door handle makes me glance up just in time to see the enormous piece of steel swing open. Once again, it's Shane who walks into the room and I scowl at him as soon as I see his face.

"Why the hell are you keeping me locked in here?" I snarl at him.

He kicks the door closed behind him and then he stalks toward me. "You know why," he growls at me. "Because you're a liar and I don't trust you."

"I'm a liar? That's rich coming from you."

His nostrils flare as he advances toward me while anger radiates from him like heat from a furnace. “Don’t fucking push me,” he snarls.

I jump off the bed and square up to him, standing up onto my tiptoes so I can push my face as close to his as possible. “Or what, Shane?” I snap.

He wraps one of his huge hands around my throat. “Do you assume because I used to fuck you, that I won’t snap your neck, Jessica?”

“Oh, I know that you wouldn’t. I’m not much use to you dead, am I?”

“You’re no use to me alive right now, either. So, tell me what I want to know or I will leave you to rot in this filthy room for the rest of your days.”

He says it with such conviction that I believe him. Suddenly, the prospect of spending the rest of my life in this tiny cell while they wait to hand me over to the Wolf fills me with anger and terror.

“Just let me go, Shane. Please?” I beg as he tightens his grip on my throat. “If you feel anything at all...”

My words seem to flip a switch in him and his green eyes darken until they are as black as coal. “Don’t you fucking dare. You think I could ever feel anything but hatred for you after what you did?”

After what I did? Is he for real? I take a deep breath as I realize I am running out of options fast and I have no choice but to use the only weapon I have available. I stare into his eyes and press my body closer to his. He is semi-hard and I’m relieved that at least one part of him responds to me the way it always has. “Seems like some part of you feels something,” I purr at him as his growing erection presses against my abdomen.

“Just because my cock remembers what it was like to be buried in your cunt, doesn’t mean I feel anything for you. I’ve fucked plenty of people I didn’t like.”

“Me too.” I narrow my eyes at him and, as much as I despise him right now, my body remembers all too well exactly how good he used to make me feel. How he convinced me he loved me.

“I don’t doubt it,” he spits. “Because you’re a lying fucking whore.”

He releases his grip on my throat, and I lunge for him, clawing at his face. I scratch his lip but he grabs my wrists before I can do any real damage, spinning me around and pushing me toward the wall until I am pinned to it by the weight of his large frame. I feel his cock nudging at my ass and stifle a groan. The closeness of him makes my legs tremble and the smell of him and the sensation of his fingers on my skin floods my senses, causing wet heat to start to pool between my thighs.

“I bet you’re wet right now,” he growls in my ear. “Because you’ll take any cock that’s available. Won’t you?”

His hand reaches beneath my nightdress and I draw in a breath. “No. Shane, don’t,” I breathe, because he is going to find me ready for him and I can’t bear for him to realize that my body still reacts to his this way. He tugs my panties to one side and slides his fingers through my slick folds. “Soaking,” he hisses against my ear. “You want my cock, don’t you?”

“Fuck you,” I half snarl, half groan as his fingers slide over my clit and he rubs firmly.

“Do you remember how hard you used to come for me?” he sneers.

“I faked it all.”

He chuckles against my skin. “Even you aren’t that good, Jessica. I’m going to make you come right now. Right here. All over my cock. And you’re going to hate me for it.”

He releases my wrists and I hear the familiar sound of his belt and zipper opening that makes a shiver of pleasure and anticipation skitter up my spine. This would be my chance to elbow him in the nuts and run. But I want this. I want to feel something. I want to feel him. I want to hate him so much, but

my body is on fire for him. So I stand here, panting for breath and waiting for him to fuck me. A few seconds later, he pulls up my nightgown, fisting his hands in my panties and tearing them roughly over my skin before tossing the shredded material onto the floor. Then he bends his knees and pushes himself inside me, making my walls clench around him.

“Fuck,” he grunts against my neck. “Your cunt does love my cock, Hacker.”

I bite down on my lip to stifle a moan as he nails me to the wall while his hand reaches around and rubs my clit, making my entire body thrum with heat and energy. Our breathing is hoarse and ragged. Our bodies bead with perspiration in the small, stuffy room. I bite the inside of my cheek as familiar waves of pleasure begin building in my core. Damn him and his huge cock. Despite how much I want to cry out, I clamp my mouth shut. I refuse to give him the satisfaction of hearing me come.

He realizes I’m on the edge and I hate that he knows my body so well. “Say my name,” he growls as he runs his teeth along the delicate skin of my neck, making tremors of pleasure vibrate through me.

“No,” I snap.

He pushes in deeper, rubbing at the sweet spot deep inside me, and making my legs tremble violently. “Say. My. Name,” he orders, thrusting deeper into me with each word as his free hand reaches to one of my breasts and he kneads it roughly in his palm.

“Fuck you,” I groan as he maintains his focus on those perfect spots.

“Say my name and I’ll let you come.”

I shake my head. I won’t do it. I hate him.

Except I don’t.

“Damn. Shane,” I groan and he sinks his teeth into my neck as he increases the pressure on all the places he’s touching me until I come apart around him, trembling so much that he has to hold me upright.

My orgasm seems to send him over the edge too as he presses my body flush to the wall and fills me with his cum.

“Fuck, Jessie,” he hisses, and then he releases me, staggering backwards before zipping up his fly and buckling his belt.

I turn around and watch him. There are so many emotions raging through my body that I don't know which one to deal with. Stupidly, I hope for some sort of connection with him, but he doesn't even look at me. That can't have meant nothing. Two bodies don't do that together without there being something between them, do they?

But he doesn't glance my way again. Instead, he walks out of the room and closes the door behind him, tearing out my heart in the process. I have endured more pain and humiliation and torment in ten years than most people experience in a lifetime, but I have never felt so empty and worthless as I do right now.

I am nothing to him. I am nothing to anyone anymore. Even my father has changed so much from the man I knew. He wants a daughter who doesn't speak, doesn't question or challenge him in any way. One that will give him grandchildren and never cause him an ounce of trouble. And that is most definitely not me.

I slide down the wall until I'm sitting on the cold stone floor and start to sob quietly.

CHAPTER

NINE

SHANE

My blood thunders around my body as I stumble through the door and pull it closed behind me. Pressing my forehead against the cold steel, I suck in a lungful of air.

What the fuck have I just done?

I convinced my brothers that they should let me deal with Jessie, because I don't trust them to keep their hands off her and, clearly, I can't either. Five minutes alone with her and I have my fingers and my cock inside her. And fuck, I wanted to throw her down on that bed and taste her too, and I know she would have let me.

Whatever has happened between us, her body still responds to mine the way it always has. I close my eyes as the memories of all the times I have eaten her sweet cunt overwhelm me. All the times she has moaned my name. The times she told me that she loved me. The times she looked me in the eyes and swore to me she would never leave us. And I believed her.

Liar!

My pulse races and my heart pounds as I try to steady my breathing. Jessica Romanov has a hold over me that I can't explain. Even though I want to hate her with everything I have, I can't fucking resist her. Running my tongue over my lower lip, I taste the blood from where she scratched me. Unconsciously, I lift my hand and brush two fingers over the

small cut and instantly regret it because I taste her on me and the blood rushes straight back to my cock.

Why won't you just fucking talk to us, Jessie? Tell us this is all a huge misunderstanding so that I can fucking breathe again.

But she won't. Because she can't. She's a liar and a manipulator. And if she won't talk to me now, then I'm going to have to be a little harder on her.

Pushing myself back from the door, I walk back through the basement to the elevator. Conor is out of town for the night, which gives me the perfect opportunity to test Jessie's limits a little further, because he would never agree to what I'm about to suggest to the twins.

I FIND the twins in the kitchen. Mikey is making dinner while Liam sits at the island scrolling through his cell phone. They both glance up as I walk in and I wonder if they can see on my face what just happened downstairs. Or whether they will smell her on me if I get too close.

"How is she?" Liam asks, his eyes narrowed at me as though he knows what I've just done.

"Still not talking," I reply with a shrug as I walk to the refrigerator and take out a bottle of water.

"Shit! Still?" Mikey frowns before glancing at the stove. "Should I make her some dinner?"

"No," I say before taking a long drink of water. "If she refuses to talk, then perhaps we're being too nice?"

"Too nice? She's locked in a tiny room with nothing but a bed and a crapper. How exactly are we being nice?" Liam snaps.

"She's getting food and water. She's been here for two days and I've given her plenty of opportunities to talk to me. Perhaps what she needs is a little time to herself?"

"What are you suggesting?" Mikey says.

"Twenty-four hours on her own to think about where she is, what's she's done, and how her only way out is to talk to

us.”

“With no food or water?” Liam asks.

I shake my head in response.

“Fuck, Shane,” he snarls

“It’s one day, Liam. She’s got some water down there and she’s not going to starve.”

“Conor wouldn’t be happy about this,” Mikey says with a low whistle and a flash of his eyebrows.

“Well, Conor’s not here. Besides, last time I checked, I was the one in charge around here.”

“She’s going to hate us for leaving her like that,” Liam says with a shake of his head.

“She already hates us, kid,” I remind him before I turn back to Mikey. “What time is dinner?”

“Twenty minutes,” he replies.

“Good. I’ll be back in twenty then. I need to take a shower,” I say, not giving them a chance to ask me why. I need to wash her scent off me because it is driving me fucking crazy.

The last thing I want to do is leave Jessie down there all alone. I would much rather bring her up here, tie her to my bed, and keep her there forever. But I don’t trust myself not to fall for her lies again. And if she didn’t get to me, then she would get to one of my brothers instead. Because we all think with our dicks around her.

I tell myself that, but the truth is so much more devastating. We all gave her our hearts. We gave her everything and she threw it in our faces. And no matter what excuse she comes up with, whatever lies she might tell to convince my brothers, I will never forgive her for it.

CHAPTER

TEN

JESSIE

It seems like it's been a few hours since Shane left and the cramps in my stomach started shortly after. At first I wondered if they were brought on by the sex. Not that it was particularly rough, at least not by Shane's standards, but they have been growing stronger and stronger. I groan loudly as I feel the warm, sticky wetness between my legs and realize my period has started a few days early and has chosen to arrive at the worst possible time. I don't even have any damn panties since Shane tore them off me. Just this stupid nightdress. Not even a sheet on the bed to soak up the blood. I can't just sit on that awful uncomfortable toilet until he or one of his brothers decides I'm worthy of another visit.

I cross the room and bang on the door with my fists. "Hey. I need to speak to one of you," I shout.

No answer.

"Hey. Please? I need some things. I'm bleeding here."

Still no answer. Damn! I don't even know if any of them are out there.

I go on banging on the door, yelling until my voice is hoarse and my knuckles are bruised. No-one is coming. I'm bleeding heavily now and there's not a damn thing I can do to stem the flow. I crawl over to the mattress and lie down, curling into a ball as I start to cry again. Never in my whole life have I felt so alone. Knowing that the men I once felt so loved by are out there letting me suffer like this is so painful to me that all I want to do is fall asleep and never wake up.

WAKING WITH A START, I shiver in the cold room. My bottom half is soaked and sticky. I have no idea how long I've been lying on this mattress. I must have fallen asleep and now everything is soaked in my blood. My eyes and throat are raw from crying. I feel so weak I don't think I can stand even if I wanted to.

I don't have the energy to look up when the door opens.

"Oh fuck, Red," I hear someone say and assume it's Mikey because that was what he used to call me.

Someone else walks into the room then. "What the fuck," he says and I realize it's Conor and my heart almost breaks in two. I hear mumbling between the two of them, but I can't make out what they're saying and I no longer care. The Ryan brothers can all go to hell.

I have a sudden sense of movement and my eyes snap open as I realize Conor has lifted me off the bed. I try to recoil from him, but his arms are huge and I am wrapped in them. "Get your hands off me!" I can only croak the words because my voice is so damn hoarse from screaming and shouting for help.

"I'm not going to hurt you, Jessie," he says softly, "but we need to get you cleaned up."

I don't have the strength to fight him, so instead I close my eyes and wait for whatever fresh hell is in store for me next. I can smell gasoline and fresh air as he walks me through the basement and toward the elevator before he steps inside. A few moments later, I hear the ping of the door opening, signaling we've arrived at wherever he's taking me.

"What the fuck?" I hear Shane's voice saying from nearby and Conor's arms tense around me, but I still don't open my eyes.

"Stay the hell away from her, Shane," Conor growls. "She is not going back to that fucking basement."

I can't help but feeling a small surge of relief at that, because I hate that freaking basement. But it's a small comfort.

So what if they keep me in luxury? They're still planning on handing me back to the Wolf.

Conor keeps on carrying me through the apartment and I open my eyes to find we are in my former bedroom. I choke back a sob as I recall the memories we have shared in this room. And despite everything, being wrapped in Conor's strong arms is so warm and familiar.

Mikey comes out of the bathroom as we head toward it. "Bath is running. I used some of that vanilla stuff you like, Red," he says with a half-smile and my stupid face smiles back instinctively.

"Can you stand?" Conor asks.

"Yes."

He places me down on my feet and then holds his arms out around me as though I'm a child who is just learning to walk.

"I'm fine," I snap. "It's just my period. But I had nothing down there to stop it..." I shake my head and swallow the tears.

"I know. I'm sorry," Conor whispers.

"I'm going to leave you to it," Mikey says with a final anxious glance at me before he walks out of the room.

My head spins and I place my hand on the wall to steady myself, leaving bloody fingerprints on the pristine paintwork.

"You sure you're okay?" Conor asks.

I look up into his face, the one that I used to love so much. No, I'm not okay, Conor. You and your brothers have kidnapped me and left me to rot in some windowless, airless room, you bunch of heartless assholes! That's what I want to say, but instead I simply nod.

His Adam's apple bobs in his throat as he swallows, and I notice that his expensive gray suit is covered in my blood. Nice. Serves him right for leaving me with no sanitary products. "All of your things are still here. You can stay in this room now. I'll bring you some food in a little while."

I nod at him. “I should get cleaned up.”

“Yeah. Of course.”

“You wouldn’t want me looking a mess when you hand me over to the Wolf, would you?” I snap and he frowns at me, but I don’t give him a chance to reply. I turn and walk into the bathroom, locking the door behind me.

CHAPTER

ELEVEN

CONOR

Closing the door to Jessie's bedroom, I walk through the apartment to Shane's office. My head is spinning with questions. I'm pretty sure Jessie just accused me of wanting to hand her over to the Wolf, but right now I'm so fucking angry, I can't process any rational thoughts.

Walking inside Shane's office, I slam the door behind me. I didn't imagine I could be any angrier than I was thirty minutes ago when I came home to find he had left her down in that shit-box room without even checking on her for almost twenty fucking hours. But then I found her like that. And when I saw the blood, I thought she had really hurt herself and my world stopped turning. It was only as I was lifting her into my arms that I realized she had gotten her period and I have never been so relieved in my entire life.

Shane looks up and glares at me as I stride over to his desk. "Did you fuck her?" I snarl.

He continues glaring at me, his jaw set and a vein throbbing in his temple, but I clearly saw the pair of torn panties in that room downstairs. I'm pretty sure Jessie didn't rip them off herself.

"Did you fuck her?" I shout this time.

"Yes," he snaps, and I have to stop myself from jumping over his desk and punching him in the mouth.

"So, it's just me and the twins who have to keep away from her, is that it? But you can fuck her whenever you feel like it?"

“It just happened,” he snaps, his eyes narrowed at me in anger.

“Seriously? You just fell into her?”

“You know what I mean.”

“And you say I’m blinded by her. A few minutes in her company and you can’t help but bury your dick in her? And was she even okay with it?”

“Of course she fucking was, Conor,” he snarls at me.

“What the fuck, Shane?” I snarl back. “How could you just fuck her and then leave her down there like that? How could you not check on her?”

“She’s okay, isn’t she? Liam told me she got her period. I didn’t know she was bleeding. She was fine when I left her.”

“But you left her for almost a whole fucking day and night, Shane. Anything could have happened to her. Why the fuck would you do that?”

“What the hell else was I supposed to do, Conor? She won’t fucking talk. She’s working for the Russian mob and she won’t give us any answers. She’s had every fucking opportunity to talk and she refuses to.”

“You don’t know that she’s working for them,” I remind him.

He shakes his head at me, the way he used to when I was fourteen years old and I’d come home drunk after staying out all night. “You are so fucking blind when it comes to her.”

Planting my hands on his desk, I lean forward. “I’m blind?” I shout. “You refuse to consider any possibility other than her betraying us. There are other reasons why she might have left, but you won’t listen to any of them.”

He stands up and leans forward too. “She was holding his fucking hand, Conor. She didn’t look frightened or threatened or any of the other things you’ve suggested to me these past few days. In fact, she looked fucking thrilled to be walking out on us.”

“You don’t fucking know that though.”

“No, I don’t,” he snarls. “And while she refuses to give us any explanation, I suppose my theory will just have to do, won’t it? Maybe we’ll never understand why she left. But I do know that she ripped out our fucking hearts, and I will never forgive her for that.”

“So, what do you plan on doing with her, then?” I lean back, my arms crossed over my chest.

He shrugs. “Fuck knows.”

“You know that we’re going to have to let her go eventually?”

“What?” he frowns at me.

“If she doesn’t want to be here, then what’s the alternative, Shane? Because I’ll be fucked if I’ll let you hurt her any more than we already have, or send her back down to that basement.”

“I want answers, Conor. She needs to explain herself. I need to understand why she left with him and what the hell she was doing here in the first place.”

We’re interrupted by a knock at the door and I turn around to see Liam opening it. “Doc is on her way,” he says to Shane.

Shane nods in response.

“You called Lisa?” I ask him.

“I didn’t know what was up with her until Liam told me. Probably best we get her checked over anyway,” he shrugs.

“Yeah,” I nod in agreement, and it’s only then that I realize his anger is masking everything else he’s feeling. The pain of losing her. The guilt at the state we’ve just found her in. Shane loves her just as much as I do, but he will never admit it. It’s easier for him to pretend that he hates her. I wish I could hate her too. I wish I could let her walk out of here and be happy to never see her face again. But the thought of doing that makes me sick to my stomach. We need to find a solution to this nightmare we’ve ended up in. And soon.

CHAPTER

TWELVE

SHANE

I feel my brothers' eyes burning into me as we sit waiting for Lisa to finish checking Jessie over. When Conor walked out of the elevator with her and I saw her covered in blood, I swear my heart stopped beating. For a few awful moments, I thought she'd hurt herself, and that we would lose her for good. Conor was furious with me, and I couldn't blame him. It was Liam who started my heart again, whispering in my ear and telling me she had gotten her period. And because I'd left her in that room with nothing other than a bare mattress and a few sheets of tissue paper, she'd had nothing to soak up the bleeding.

As a precaution, I called Lisa and asked her to check Jessie over anyway. Perhaps it was a way of easing my guilt, although I would never admit that to anyone.

Lisa walks through to the kitchen and places her medical bag on the table with a heavy sigh.

"How is she?" Conor asks.

"She's sleeping now. It would do her good to get some rest," she replies, and the tone of her voice and the expression on her face are something I've never experienced before. Lisa knows what we do and she never judges — at least not usually.

"What is it?" I ask.

She swallows as she turns to face me. "Have you been giving her drugs?"

“We gave her a sedative three days ago when we brought her back here. Why?”

She narrows her eyes at me as though she’s deciding whether to believe me.

“Why, Lisa?” I snap.

“I took a urine sample, and that girl has so many drugs in her system, I’m surprised she’s able to function.”

“Like what?” Conor snaps.

“Everything. She lit up my tox screening like a Christmas tree. Where the hell was she?”

“Nowhere you need to be concerned about. So, what are you telling us here?” I ask.

“Well, if you didn’t give them to her then someone else obviously did.”

“So, she was being drugged?” Mikey asks.

“Or she took them herself?” I add.

“It’s a strange combination to take yourself,” Lisa says, shaking her head. “I never got any sense she was into drugs, did you?” She glances around at all four of us and my brothers shake their heads.

“That would explain why she’s been talking crazy about the Wolf?” Conor says with a frown.

“That or being kidnapped and held in a cell with very little light and no idea of what was going to happen to her,” Lisa snaps.

Conor closes his eyes as though he’s deeply ashamed.

“You have no clue what’s going on here, Doctor, so I suggest you tread carefully. Besides, you can’t believe half of what comes out of Jessie’s mouth,” I say.

Lisa walks up to me and looks me in the eye. “That’s just it. She didn’t tell me shit. I’m aware of the room downstairs because Mikey showed me where she’d been. I wanted to

know how much blood she'd lost because when Conor showed me her clothes, I suspected a miscarriage."

"Miscarriage?" I frown and I swear I'm going to have a fucking heart attack if I get any more surprises today.

"It wasn't. Don't worry. Her HCG levels were normal," Lisa says and relief washes over me. "She suffers from incredibly heavy periods. But she told me nothing. In fact, she barely spoke. I can hardly believe it's the same woman I saw here five months ago."

"Well, a lot has happened since then."

"No shit. Physically, she's exhausted, but fine. Emotionally – not so much. I don't know what your game plan is here, but she's in a vulnerable state right now. She is terrified of something, but she won't tell me what. You need to tread carefully, Shane."

I nod my agreement and her face softens.

"I told her that she has nothing to fear from you. Please don't make me a liar," she places a warm hand on my arm and then she glances at her watch. "I have an appointment to get to. I'll call back in a few days and see how she is."

"Thanks, Lisa."

"Any time," she nods. "Bye, guys."

Liam escorts her to the elevator and we wait for his return before we discuss what Lisa just revealed. When he does, it's Conor who speaks first.

"So, Jessie was being drugged by whoever took her. And then we drugged her, kidnapped her, and left her alone in a tiny fucking cell?" he snarls.

"Nobody took her. You watched her on that video. You watched her stroll right out of here," I shout.

"Just because she held the guy's hand doesn't mean there wasn't something else going on," he shouts back.

"Then why won't she tell us what the hell is going on? That's all she has to do," I remind him.

Liam and Mikey sit down at the breakfast bar, knowing better than to get in the middle of anything between me and Conor.

“You heard Lisa. She’s terrified. She was on a cocktail of fucking drugs. And then we drugged her and kidnapped her, Shane,” he says again, as though I might have forgotten this information in the last twenty seconds. “She woke up in that tiny fucking cell and who knows what the fuck she was thinking. And you wonder why she wouldn’t talk to you? Then you fucked her instead, before you left her to lie there for twenty fucking hours, shouting for help. Shouting for something so she wouldn’t have to lie there bleeding all over herself.”

“I didn’t know that she was going to get her period, Conor.”

“No. But you would have if you’d have fucking checked on her like we agreed. You’re convinced that she’s the enemy...”

“She walked out of here holding the hand of the head of the Russian fucking mob.” I stalk toward him, my face inches from his.

“You don’t know that,” he snarls.

I don’t even see Mikey or Liam move, but I feel Liam’s hands on my shoulders. “This whole situation is fucked up,” he says in that quiet tone he has that seems to tap into something in me that reminds me so much of our mother. “But, we can fix this, can’t we? Let’s give Jessie some time to rest and then we can talk to her tomorrow and straighten everything out.”

Tension slips from my shoulders. I realize my anger is fueled by my guilt too. Perhaps I have been too harsh on Jessie. What if there is an explanation for what she did? But I can’t forget the looks on my brothers’ faces when they realized she had left us. I can’t forget how my world ended when I read that note. She looked in my eyes and promised me she would never leave us, and like a goddamn fool, I believed her.

We made her family, and she walked out on us like we were nothing to her. I can admit I wanted to punish her for that. I don't believe in happy ever afters. To think that it might have been some sort of misunderstanding, and that everything she told us while she lived here wasn't a lie, is too hard. It's easier to be angry and blame her than to hope that she might come back to us.

“If she doesn't want to be here, then we have to let her go, Shane,” Conor says quietly, “because the alternative is unthinkable.”

I nod at him. I'll never forgive her, but I could never hurt her either. “I still want answers.”

He places his hand on the back of my neck. “Then we'll get some. I promise.”

CHAPTER

THIRTEEN

JESSIE

My eyelids flutter awake at the sound of the door opening. I sit up quickly and rub my eyes, watching as Conor walks into the room and toward the bed.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to wake you. I just wondered if you needed anything else?” he asks softly, almost as though I’m his guest again and not his prisoner now.

“No. I’m good, thanks,” I croak.

He looks at the uneaten sandwich and the unopened bottle of Gatorade on the nightstand and sighs. “You need to eat and drink, Jessie.”

“I ate the candy. And I drank some water from the faucet. I’m fine.”

“Why didn’t you eat the sandwich? Or the Gatorade? Blue is your favorite.”

I glare at him in the dim light of the room. “I couldn’t be sure they weren’t poisoned. The seal on the Gatorade was broken.”

“Poisoned?” he snaps. “Dammit, Jessie. What the fuck?” He runs a hand over his beard and shakes his head.

“You knocked me out and kidnapped me, Conor,” I shout at him.

He sucks on his top lip and holds his hands up in surrender as he steps closer to the bed and then he stares at me with those deep, brown eyes. “How did we get here, Angel?”

“Don’t call me that,” I say, my voice cracking with emotion as tears prick at my eyes. “You don’t get to call me that anymore.”

He drops his head low and then he just stands there for a few moments. I watch his chest rise and fall with each breath he takes and all I can think about is how much I loved him. How much I still love him. My heart feels like it’s breaking into a million pieces as he stands there right in front of me. Close enough to touch, but a million miles away.

“Get some rest, Jessie,” he says eventually in a low growl that vibrates through my core.

“Why?” I snap.

He glares at me, his dark brown eyes smoldering as his jaw works while he tries to keep his temper in check. He probably came in here trying to be nice. As if he could get me back on side by pretending that he cares about me. Cashing in on the fact that he rescued me from that horrible cell in the basement. I swallow hard as I recall how good it was to be held in his arms a few hours ago. How the warmth of his body against mine still brings me comfort despite everything that’s happened.

“Because I fucking told you to,” he eventually snarls before turning around and walking through the open door.

I lie back against the pillows, unable to stop the tears rolling down my cheeks. I wish I knew how we’d ended up here too.

CHAPTER

FOURTEEN

JESSIE

The following morning, Conor and Liam come to my room to tell me that I'm wanted for a family meeting.

Their family now, obviously, and no longer mine. I walk along the hallway behind Conor and with Liam trailing behind me. When we reach the dining room, Shane and Mikey sit at the table already waiting and I swallow as I glance around the room, recalling what happened the last time we were in here and we made our 'cum oath'. The night when I was officially welcomed into the family. What a crock of shit that turned out to be.

"Sit," Shane orders as I reach the table and, like an obedient puppy dog, I do as I'm told.

Conor and Liam sit next to their brothers and the four of them stare at me like I'm at a job interview. I glare back at them. They don't intimidate me.

"Shall we just get this over with?" I snap.

Shane scowls and rubs a hand over his jaw and Mikey grins, but it's Conor who speaks.

"You want out of here, Jessie?" he asks.

"What do you think, asshole?"

"I told you this isn't going to get us anywhere," Shane snarls.

"And like I said, what's our alternative?" Conor frowns at him and suddenly I'm wondering what that alternative is too.

Are they just going to kill me after going to all of this trouble to keep me alive?

Shane turns back to me. “You can walk out of here today. But in order for us to allow that to happen, you’re going to have to tell us the truth. Now, I appreciate that’s like asking the rain not to fall, but you can manage it sometimes, right?”

“You keep talking about me lying to you, Shane, but I only ever lied about who I was when I first met you,” I snarl at him. “You’re the liar. All of you are.”

He rolls his eyes while the other three frown at me.

“Who are you working for?” Shane asks.

“Nobody. I told you that.”

“You’re lying.”

“I am not. Who the hell would I be working for? What do you think you have here, the codes for Fort Knox or something? So, you have money? Anyone can take your money if they want it bad enough. What the hell would I be doing here for months?”

“Then why were you holed up in the fortress of Alexei Ivanov? The head of the Russian mob?” Shane snaps.

I frown in confusion. Who the hell is Alexei Ivanov? “If that’s his place, then I was just staying there with someone.”

“Who?”

“None of your damn business.”

“Really? Don’t you think you owe us that much, Jessie?”

“Owe you? I owe you nothing. I have never done anything to harm any of you. I did the jobs you asked me to do. I never asked for anything from any of you. What we did... I never,” I shake my head and don’t finish the sentence because thinking about what we were is too painful.

“For fuck’s sake, Jessie. You walk out of here with some Russian, holding his fucking hand. You won’t tell us who he is and you expect us to believe that you weren’t up to something?”

“I didn’t even know he existed until that day.”

Shane frowns. “What? You didn’t know him, and you just strolled out of here holding his hand? You expect us to believe that?”

I shift in my seat. “I did know him a long time ago... It’s complicated.”

“Then uncomplicate it, Jessie, or I swear to God, I will put a bullet in your head right now,” Shane snarls.

“How are you going to get your money from the Wolf then?” I challenge him.

“What the fuck are you talking about?” he scowls at me.

I clamp my lips together and sit back in my chair as Conor leans forward in his. “Is he worth losing everything for, Jessie? Tell us who he is and why you went with him and you can walk out of here.” He stares at me with those deep brown eyes and I remember all the times I looked into them and the love I felt. How did all of it come to mean nothing? Did it ever mean anything?

Suddenly, I am so tired of everything. I can’t do this anymore. I have been fighting for so long, I’m exhausted by it. “You promise?”

“Yes.”

I take a deep breath. I don’t know who I trust or what I believe any longer, but what have I got to lose when I’ve already lost everything? “He’s my father,” I stammer.

All four of them stare at me with their mouths open.

“So, your father wasn’t the guy who was killed by the Wolf?” Conor asks.

“Yes. But he didn’t die. He survived.”

“No. That’s impossible. I saw the police reports. You’re lying,” Shane snaps.

“I appreciate that it seems impossible. But it’s him. He managed to escape from our house that night and then there was some kind of cover-up.”

“Jessie,” Shane interrupts me. “You saw what the Wolf did to him. You’ve seen those police reports too. The autopsy reports. Your father is dead.”

Tears prick at my eyes. “I know. But he was here. That day I came back from the salon, he was here. He said he’d been looking for me all this time.” I sniff as I wipe the tears from my cheeks. “I know it sounds crazy, but it was him.”

“But why did you go?” Conor asks. “Why didn’t you wait for us?”

I swallow hard as I look at them. I suppose I’m all in now, anyway. “He told me that the reason he’d found me was because you were trying to reach out to the Wolf. So you could sell me back to him.”

“And you believed him?” Conor snaps.

“He’s my father!”

“No, he’s not,” Shane interrupts me.

“You don’t understand,” I say with a shake of my head. “I thought he was dead. And then he was standing there. Right in front of me. I was in shock. I wasn’t thinking clearly. And then he told me that was how he found me and I... I didn’t have time to question him. He said we had to leave.”

“Red,” Mikey says. “You can’t honestly think that we would do that?”

“Really? The four guys who kidnapped me and kept me in a cell for days with hardly any food or water?” I snap. “No. You would never do anything like that, would you?”

“But that was because we thought you were working for the Russians. We came home and you’d left that stupid fucking note. You didn’t think we’d check the security feed and see you walking out of here holding some guy’s hand? What the fuck did you expect us to do, Jessie?” Shane snaps.

I blink at him. I’m so damn confused. “I don’t know,” I look down at my hands. “But why would he lie to me? And how did he find me if it wasn’t because of you?”

“The guy from Balthazar’s,” Conor says with a sigh. “He didn’t die, Jessie. At least not for a few days. And he obviously recognized you as your mother’s daughter. That must be how he found you.”

“What?” I look up and blink at him, trying to process this newest piece of information.

Mikey whispers something to Shane who nods at whatever his brother said before he pushes a piece of paper across the desk to me. “These are the results of the urine tests the doc did on you yesterday. She double checked them in the lab and emailed these this morning. You see all of those drugs that were in your system?”

I reach for the paper and read over it. Barbiturates. Ketamine. PCP. Xanax. Some drugs that I can barely even pronounce or have ever heard of. I shake my head. “You gave me something,” I frown.

“We gave you a fast acting sedative that wouldn’t show up in any tests after forty-eight hours. That’s why we use it.”

“So?” I peer down the list. “Ketamine? That’s a hallucinogenic, right?”

“Hallucinogens can also make you more susceptible to suggestion,” Conor says.

“You’re saying I’ve been drugged?”

“That’s what the results say,” Shane replies. “Unless you took them willingly?”

“I don’t do drugs,” I snap. “And besides, this could be falsified. How do I know I’m not drugged now and you’re making this shit up to confuse me?”

Shane lets out a long breath and shakes his head. “Forget the drugs then. Why would we hand you over to the Wolf, Jessie? Discounting the fact that he has disappeared and nobody has a clue where he is, I offered you your freedom, remember? The car and the money and you told me to stick it up my ass.”

I stare at him because I don't know how to respond. None of this makes any sense. Except that it does, doesn't it? The zavarka in the car on the way to Connecticut. All of the tea and soup I was constantly given to make me feel better when I assumed I was coming down with the flu. Shit! The rational part of my brain is telling me that it all makes perfect sense, but I'm not ready to acknowledge it just yet.

"We put your fingerprints in our system. You weren't a fucking prisoner here. We made you one of us. Why the hell would we do any of that? And selling you? In case you haven't noticed, we've got plenty of money already," Shane snaps.

Tears run down my cheeks as my brain forces me to confront the reality of what has been going on for the past week.

"Did you think that everything we did and told you was a lie?" Conor asks.

I look up at him through tear-filled eyes. "Did you?" I sniff. "Because you were just as quick to assume I was working with the Russians."

He sits back in his chair and runs a hand over his jaw and all four of them stare at me as my world comes crashing down around my ears once again.

"All I know is my father was standing in front of me, asking me to go with him and telling me that I was in danger and you were betraying me. I was confused. I..." I shake my head. "I'm sorry."

"He's not your father, Jessie," Shane says again.

"Then who is he?" I say. "Because he looks just like him. He has the same voice. He even feels like him."

"Red," Mikey says softly and suddenly, the last piece of the puzzle falls into place.

"My brothers were twins." I put my head in my hands. "They run in my family and I still didn't think. I just saw his face. And he was so convincing. He swore he was my father."

“Perhaps he is?” Shane suggests. “Just not the one you know.”

“So you’re not planning to hand me over to the Wolf?”

“We’re not planning on handing you over to anyone, Angel,” Conor says, and my heart starts beating so quickly that it feels like it might burst out of my chest.

I sit there, blinking at them as tears stream down my face. I don’t even know what to say or where to begin, but I don’t have to, as the sound of an alarm pierces the air.

“Shit! We got company,” Conor shouts as Liam and Mikey jump up and go to open the huge safe on the wall.

“Looks like your daddy has come to take you home, Hacker,” Shane raises an eyebrow at me.

“Then you’d better give me one of those guns,” I say as I wipe the tears from my face and nod toward the array of weapons that Mikey has started laying on the table.

“Not a chance,” he shakes his head, but Liam tosses me one anyway and winks at his older brother.

“If she wanted to shoot you in the head, she’d have done it weeks ago,” Liam grins.

“You know how to use that thing?” Conor asks.

“Sure do,” I reply.

“This is fucking insane,” Shane mutters under his breath.

As adrenaline courses around my body, I take a deep breath and tuck the gun into the back of my jeans, before following Conor and the twins out of the kitchen.

CHAPTER

FIFTEEN

SHANE

Half a dozen of our men are already in the club by the time we get down there and there are at least a dozen Russians too now, from what I can see. I wonder if Alexei Ivanov has come himself to get his daughter back. I certainly hope so because I want nothing more than to come face to face with him. There are shots being fired in every direction and Jessie is sandwiched between me and Conor as we edge into the club.

A gunshot whizzes past us and we dive for the cover of the bar as Liam and Mikey stride into the room like they're made of titanium. Mikey tosses two grenades into the middle of the club while Liam shoots anything that moves that isn't Irish or female. The Russians return the gunfire amid lots of shouting and noise while the twins head to the safety of the DJ booth.

We crouch behind the bar and I sense Jessie getting twitchy beside me. "Don't do anything stupid," I warn her before I turn to Conor. "I think the twins have taken a few of them out. I'm going to head out and come at them from the side. Cover me."

Conor nods, but before I can act on my plan, Jessie moves while I'm distracted. She stands up from behind the bar and holds her hands in the air. "Papa," she shouts, and the gunfire stops.

I grab hold of her leg. "Get the fuck down. Now," I snarl at her.

She looks down at me and shakes her head. She is the fiercest woman I have ever known and I admire her almost as much as I hate the fact that she refuses to do as she's told. "He's here for me. I won't have any of you getting hurt because of me."

"You are not leaving here with him, Jessie," Conor snaps.

"I need answers. I need to know who he really is. Please let me do this my way."

I rub a hand over my face and sigh. "Fine. Let her try."

Jessie gives me a brief smile and then she walks from behind the bar as Conor and I stand and train our guns on the men opposite us.

"Jessica. Idite syuda!" Come here!

"I'm here, Papa. But please ask your men to lower their weapons. I don't want my friends hurt."

"These men are not your friends," Alexei snarls. "Friends do not steal you away in the night."

"They didn't steal me. I came willingly," she lies.

There are a few moment's silence. "If they will lower theirs first," the reply eventually comes in a thick Russian accent.

I grind my teeth so hard my jaw aches, but I do as he asks. "Stand down," I shout around the room and my men do the same, but I know that Liam has a sniper rifle in that DJ booth and he will have it trained on Alexei.

The Russians lower their weapons and a tall man, who I assume is Alexei, appears from the shadows. He holds out his arms to her. "Why did you run away?"

"Because you lied to me," she says.

He shakes his head. "It is not I who is lying to you. It is these Irish pigs. They fill your pretty head with nonsense, printsessa. And I will make every one of them suffer for taking you from me."

Conor bristles beside me, and I put my hand on his arm. We'll have our chance as soon as Jessie is out of harm's way.

Jessie glances around the room. The Russians appear to outnumber us, but they don't have the upper hand. Jessie doesn't know how good Liam is with a sniper rifle. Or how Mikey has explosives stashed in a floor safe beneath the DJ booth.

I see the exact moment she falters. "Then I'll come back with you, Papa. Promise me you won't hurt my friends and I'll leave with you right now."

I frown at Conor. She knows what he did to her. She knows he's probably the man responsible for killing her family, but she would do that? For us? Or so that she can exact her revenge? Or both?

"I told you. These animals are no friends of yours, Jessica," he shouts.

"At least they don't drug me to keep me compliant," she says as she takes a step toward him. "Is that what you did, Papa? I've seen the reports. Is that why I was always so tired in your huge mansion? Because you were drugging me?"

"I gave you something to help you. You were hysterical," he snarls, his mask slipping momentarily before he smiles at her again. "Everything I do is for you, printsessa. But you betray me by lying with these dogs. These men who were willing to sell you to the highest bidder. They know who you really are, Jessica, and why you are so valuable to me."

"And who is that?"

"My daughter. Your mother's daughter."

"My parents are dead," she snaps. "So, who the hell are you?"

He steps closer to her with a cruel grin on his face and I suck in a breath as my fingers squeeze the handle of my gun. Just give me a reason to shoot you in the head right now, Alexei.

“I am your father. I have been looking for you for twenty-six years,” he snarls. “They stole you from me. My own brother. It wasn’t enough that he took my wife. He had to take you too. And they poisoned you against me. But you belong to me, Jessica.”

“You paid the Wolf to kill my family?”

“I paid him to return what was mine.”

“But my brothers? They were just children,” she says. I hear the crack in her voice and wonder how much longer she’s going to be able to distract him for. Glancing up to where Mikey and Liam are, I give them a subtle nod.

“Their existence was an insult to me,” Alexei spits.

She moves quickly, pulling the gun from the waistband of her jeans and pressing it against his forehead, and it’s clear this isn’t the first time she’s handled a gun like that. An unexpected surge of anger wells up in my chest as I’m forced to think about the life that Jessie has lived. Always running. Never being able to trust anyone. One of Alexei’s men runs toward him, but Liam takes him out with a clean shot through the neck.

“Tell me why I shouldn’t kill you right now?” she says, the tremor in her voice clearly audible.

“Because, whether or not you approve of my methods, I am your father, Jessica. One does not simply shoot their own father in the head. It is a burden I would not wish on my greatest enemy.”

I step out from behind the bar. She’s not going to kill him. She doesn’t have it in her right now. I’m aware how much it hurts to hate your father so much you want him dead, but be unable to pull that trigger yourself.

Another of Alexei’s men moves toward him and Liam takes him out too. I sense the tension in my own men creeping around the room and I hold up my hand to signal they should keep their weapons low. Not until Jessie is safe. I step closer to her, but I hold my hands up in surrender as Alexei’s men eye me suspiciously.

“I hate you,” Jessie says to him as the tears run down her face.

“Regardless, you are my daughter. You belong to me. I will never stop looking for you. I will never rest until you are at my side where you should have been all along.”

“Never,” she spits

“Then you should shoot me.” He looks her in the eyes and her hands tremble as she squeezes the handle but she doesn’t pull the trigger.

“Jessie,” I say as I approach. “Put the gun down. You don’t have to do this right now.”

“I do have to, Shane. Because he will never let me go. And you’ll always be in danger if I stay here.”

“Come here and give me the gun.” I hold out my hand to her before I turn to her father. “There is a rifle aimed at your head right now, Alexei. Make a move and you’re dead. Do you hear that?” I shout the last part to his men. “Any shots are fired and your boss is dead.”

Jessie lowers her weapon and walks backwards toward me until she’s in my arms. I want to hold on tight to her and never let her go again. I want to savor the sensation of her body pressed against mine. There is so much I need to say to her. But I have to get her out of here. I press my lips against her ear. “You remember that freedom I offered you, sweetheart? The one you told me to stick up my ass?”

“Yes,” she breathes.

“It’s still waiting for you. The keys are where we left them. All you have to do is run.”

“What about you, and Conor and the twins?” she sniffs.

“It will never be the same after all this,” I tell her, even though it damn near kills me to do it. But this is the only way I see out of this right now. Alexei will never stop looking for her, and if she’s here, he knows exactly where to find her. “You’re not one of us. But you’re not one of them either. Run,

little hacker. Take your freedom. You deserve it more than anyone. Now go.”

She turns to me and plants a soft kiss on my cheek. Then we both look up at Conor and she hesitates. I know this will be breaking his heart, but I also know that he trusts me. He nods his head, and that’s all the permission she needs. She runs out of the nightclub and toward the silver SUV in the garage, and straight out of our lives.

I don’t have time to watch her go as Alexei shouts to his men to go after her. But they’re not quick enough for Liam’s sniper rifle and none of them make it anywhere near her. Alexei realizes he’s not going to win this particular battle, and he uses two of his men as human shields as he makes a run for the nearest exit. I drop one of them, and Liam takes the other one out just as they reach the door, but Alexei makes it out unscathed while the rest of his men scramble for the side door.

Fuck! Another day, Alexei.

THREE OF OUR men were injured in the shoot-out, but fortunately none were killed. The same can’t be said for the Russians and I have seven dead ones stinking up my club. Conor calls the clean-up crew to come deal with them while I debrief our own soldiers.

When we’re the only people left in the club , Conor walks over to Liam, Mikey and me.

“She would never have killed him. It was the only way I could buy us all some time,” I say as their faces search mine for answers.

“So, that car does have a tracker, right?” Conor asks.

I raise an eyebrow at him. Does he think I’m an amateur?
“Of course it does.”

He nods and lets out a long, slow breath. “Thank fuck for that.”

CHAPTER

SIXTEEN

JESSIE

Two months later

A bead of sweat trickles down my back and I blow a stray strand of hair from my face as I ring up a customer. The Arizona heat is stifling, and the air conditioning broke a week ago. My boss, Ray, is far too cheap to have it fixed by a professional and is intent on doing it himself as soon as the part arrives. From the time it's taking, I'm pretty sure it's coming from Outer Mongolia.

Asshole!

I pick up the bottle of Jack to put it back on the shelf and it almost slips from my hands when I hear that rich, velvety voice.

“You're a hard woman to find, Jessie.”

My legs tremble as I stand rooted to the spot. I place the bottle on the counter as a shudder runs down the length of my spine. If I don't turn around, maybe he won't really be here. I glance sideways at the exits, wondering if I can make a run for it.

“Oh, please go for it, Angel,” he chuckles softly. “Because you know I'll catch you. And when I do, I'll enjoy nothing more than throwing you over my shoulder and carrying you to my car.”

I spin around and my heart almost stops at the sight of him. He looks even better than I remember — if that were possible. In a shirt, open at the collar and rolled-up sleeves that show off

his muscular forearms. “I think you’ll find that’s kidnapping,” I scowl at him.

“Well, you seemed to enjoy it the first time I kidnapped you,” he winks at me. “What the hell have you done to your hair?”

I flick the ends of my now shoulder-length, brunette hair and shrug. “I felt like a change.”

“I prefer it red. And long.” He flashes his eyebrows at me and I have a vision of the way he used to wrap it around his fist to make me more compliant and experience a familiar fluttering between my thighs.

I fold my arms across my chest and notice his eyes drop to my cleavage as he unapologetically licks his lips. “What are you doing here, Conor?” I ask with a sigh.

“I’ve come to bring you home.”

I grind out a laugh. “I am home.”

“I’m talking about your real home, Angel.”

“You mean your home?”

He frowns. “Where else?”

“I think you and your brothers made it pretty clear that it wasn’t my home the last time you kidnapped me!”

His Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows hard. “We thought you’d betrayed us, Jessie. Just like you assumed we’d betrayed you.”

“Exactly. There’s no trust left between us. So, it seems the best thing to do is for all of us to go on doing our separate thing. Living our separate lives. So, please leave!”

He places those fine arms on the bar and looks around the place. There is no doubt it’s seen much better days, could do with a lick of paint, some new furniture — not to mention some air conditioning, but it’s the only bar for miles, so it’s busy every night. “You can’t seriously be happy here?” he asks with a tilt of his head.

“Why?” I scowl at him. “Not everyone needs five million dollar apartments and fancy sports cars to be happy.”

He frowns at me. “I know that. I meant that this place doesn’t exactly suit your talents, does it?”

“You have no idea what my talents are,” I snap.

A wicked grin spreads across his face. “Actually, I remember exactly what your talents are, Angel. The memories keep me warm at night.”

Heat sears between my thighs and I have to remind my treacherous body that we hate Conor Ryan and his brothers. “How the hell did you find me?” I say, trying to change the subject.

“With great difficulty,” he grinds out the words as though it pains him to say them.

“Well, I obviously didn’t do a good enough job of covering my tracks.”

“Are you fucking kidding me?” he growls. “I left less than two hours after you did, and it’s taken me two months to find you.”

I suck in a deep breath, momentarily winded by his revelation. I had assumed they were all happy to see the back of me. I’m not one of them — that was what Shane said. “You came right after me?” I whisper.

“Of course I did. That was always the plan. I told you that I would burn the world down to find you, Jessie. Didn’t you believe me?”

“Ryan?” a voice hollers from the other side of the bar and both Conor and I glance over at my boss, Ray. “If you ain’t gonna serve the guy, then I got plenty of work to keep you busy!”

I roll my eyes and turn back to Conor.

“Ryan?” he narrows those chocolate brown eyes at me and my insides melt like butter that’s been left out in the Arizona heat.

“Hiding in plain sight,” I say with a shrug as the heat flushes over my chest. Damn! What the hell had I been thinking choosing that name as my new identity. “Anyway,” I go on before he can press me further, but there is a grin on his face that I just know is going to take some time to fade. “As you can see, I’m working here. So, either order a drink, or be on your way.”

“You got any good whiskey?”

“Plenty. But we got no Jameson’s,” I say, aware that’s his favorite. “We have nothing Irish in this whole bar. Not until you rolled in. And I like it that way.”

“You’re here.” He licks his lips again and a memory of him doing magical things to me with that tongue flashes into the forefront of my brain before making a direct path straight to my pussy.

“I’m not Irish. Not even a little bit. I have Russian parents and I was born and raised right here in the USA.” I arch an eyebrow at him.

He leans across the bar and instinct makes me lean toward him. I regret it immediately when I realize how damn incredible he smells. “You’ve had so much Irish in you, I’m surprised you’re not talking Gaelic,” he says in a low rumble that vibrates through my whole body.

I draw in a sharp breath as a rush of heat sears between my thighs. Jesus! If I wasn’t hot enough before. My panties are going to melt if I stand here talking to him much longer. “Drink?” is all I can trust myself to say.

“If you’ve got no Jameson’s, I’ll take a glass of your finest Scotch,” he grins as he sits back.

I pour him a glass of the cheapest Scotch we have and place it on the bar in front of him. He takes a hundred-dollar bill out of his pocket and places it down on the bar. “Keep the change, Angel.”

I roll my eyes and take his money and pocket his change. Well, a girl has to eat.

“What time does your shift end?” he says as he takes a sip of the cheap whisky and winces.

“None of your business.”

“I’ll just hang around until you’re done, then. So, why don’t you fetch me a glass of that twelve year single malt you have up there?” He glances up at the top shelf.

“Oh, I can’t serve you that.” I shake my head.

“Why not?” he frowns.

“That’s reserved for people I actually like.” I sling the bar towel over my shoulder and flash him my biggest smile before I sashay down to the other end of the bar to serve another customer. I can almost feel his eyes burning into my ass and I’m so glad I wore my denim mini skirt today.

CHAPTER

SEVENTEEN

CONOR

Ray's place sure gets crowded for a run-down dive bar in the middle of nowhere. I sit on the bar stool sipping soda, my eyes never leaving Jessie. I swear every time she walks past me, she gives that sexy ass of hers an extra wiggle. The mini skirt she's wearing shows off her incredible tanned legs to perfection and her shirt has enough buttons open to give me a great view of her amazing tits too. Unfortunately, every other guy in this bar has the exact same view and that makes me pissed as hell. I've been sitting here for four hours watching her and I've had a hard on for three of those.

Each time I watch some asshole coming on to her, or drooling over her hot body, I want to jump off my stool and punch his teeth down his throat. But she handles them all with her irresistible charm and a disarming smile and none of them actually get close to laying a hand on her. I'm almost disappointed by the fact because I'd like nothing more than to take some of my frustrations out on any poor fucker who succeeded.

It has been so long since I've seen her and now that she's standing right in front of me, it is damn near killing me to sit here and keep my hands off her.

I close my eyes as she walks past me again, not even making eye contact, but I smell her as she passes me. Vanilla and cherries. My cock twitches at the memories that force themselves into my head. My head buried between her thighs. My cock buried in her hot, sweet pussy. My mouth waters as I

remember how good she tastes. I would love nothing better than to lift her onto this bar, tear off her panties and eat her out right here in front of all these jackasses who assume they have a shot with her. I'd love to make them all watch her come with my mouth on her, knowing that they will never get even a chance to touch or taste her.

The other server, Cody, walks toward me and opens his mouth as if to ask me if I want a drink. I scowl at him and he scurries back along the bar, whispering something in Jessie's ear as he reaches her. His face is so close to hers, he must be able to smell her. His lips graze her hair and my hands clench into fists by my sides. She glances over at me and even from here I can see her roll her eyes before she saunters over to me.

"You going to order another drink, big guy?" she asks with a smile. "Because I got plenty of customers who would like to sit at this bar."

"Sure. I'll have another soda," I say as I place my half full glass on the bar.

"Soda?" she raises one eyebrow at me. "You sure you don't want anything a little stronger?"

"Nope," I shake my head. "Your whisky tastes like rats' piss, and besides, I'm driving later. You don't want me driving you home drunk, do you Angel?"

She leans across the bar, and I get a perfect view of her perfect cleavage. "You won't be driving me home," she says with a smile. "I'd rather go home with any man in this bar before I let you drive me anywhere, Conor Ryan," she breathes.

"Is that so?" I narrow my eyes at her, trying to determine if she's being serious or not. I lean closer to her, standing on the edge of my stool and resting my arms on the bar. I'm so close that I feel her breath on my cheek and the hairs on my forearms stand on end. "I'd like to see you try, Angel," I growl. "You walk out of this bar with any man but me, and I'll make sure they are the last steps he ever takes."

I hear her breath catch in her throat and she pulls back from me. There is a fire in her eyes and the skin on her neck is flushed pink, and I suppress a smile because I recognize from experience that's a sign of her being just as hot for me as I am for her. I bet if I slipped my hand beneath her skirt and inside her panties, she'd be dripping wet for me. My hot, horny angel.

Two hours after she left our club in New York, I was on her tail, but she had dumped the SUV and was in the wind and I've been looking for her ever since. There were times when I worried I would never find her, and the prospect of living the rest of my life without her made me feel like I might fucking die. But, then I ended up here, in this tiny town in the asshole of Arizona, and there she was.

Even though she's changed her hair, I recognized her immediately. I sat in my car, in a spot just fifty yards up the road from her apartment, and watched her walk out of the door before climbing into a beat-up green Mustang. My heart almost stopped beating in my chest and I couldn't even move. I just sat and watched her and let the sight of her flood my senses until it felt like I was finally alive for the first time since she'd left.

An hour later, when I got here to Ray's bar, I wanted to pull her into my arms and never let her go. Kiss her smart mouth until she agreed to come home with me. I still do. But that is not the Jessie I know and love. She would never make it that easy on me.

"A soda then?" she says as she blows a stray strand of hair from her eyes.

"Please," I reply with a smile.

"Coming right up."

CHAPTER

EIGHTEEN

JESSIE

Conor sits at the end of the bar for the remainder of my shift. The place has been packed for the last five hours of it, and I've barely had a chance to speak to him, which is only a good thing. I tried to get my work buddy, Cody, to serve him, but he flat out refused. I suspect the fact that Conor spent most of the night glaring at him, especially when we had to squeeze past each other behind the narrow bar, kind of put him off. So, I've been serving him soda all night, most of which he's left to go warm in this intense heat.

When there is no one left but him, I walk over to him. "We're closing up. You need to leave."

"Let me give you a ride?" he offers.

"I have a car."

"I have a better one," he grins.

"Probably. But mine has one huge advantage."

"And what's that?" he smirks.

"You won't be in it."

"Ouch!" he says as he places his hand over his heart. "I'll be waiting outside anyway, Angel. In case you change your mind."

"I won't," I snap as he stands up and walks out of the bar.

Ten minutes later, I'm walking through the parking lot. Conor's huge Audi SUV is parked next to my old, beat-up

Mustang and he's leaning against my car with his arms folded.

"Can you move, please?" I snipe.

"Sure, Angel." He steps aside, and I eye him warily as I open my car and climb inside. He stands watching me as I start it up.

My car is old, but it's a beast and I love the roar of the engine when it fires up. Tonight, though, it sputters and dies. I roll down the window. "What the hell did you do to my car?"

He opens his mouth and feigns his indignation. "Me? Nothing," he smirks. "Do you need a ride?"

I get out and slam the door. Cody has left. Ray has gone too, and I'm so desperate that I would even consider getting a ride home with my handsy, jackass of a boss. We are in the middle of nowhere and my place is at least an hour's walk away and Conor Ryan is looking like my only option.

"This means nothing, Conor," I snap as I walk toward his car. "You can drop me at home and then hightail your ass back to New York."

"Whatever you say, Angel."

WE DRIVE in silence and I realize that I haven't given Conor my address, but he's heading straight to it.

"We could just stay on the road and head home to New York right now?" he says as he turns to me.

"Are you serious?" I scowl at him.

"Deadly."

"You honestly think I would just pack up and leave my whole life here to come back to New York with you? What planet are you living on, Conor?"

"What have you got here that's so important to you, Jessie, or Ryan, is it now? Are you seeing someone?" he growls.

"No!" I snap. "Not that it's any of your business. And what I have here is my life, Conor. It might not seem like much to

you, but it is freedom. It's paying bills, and grocery shopping, and going to work. It is life!"

I sit back in my seat and fold my arms across my chest, and he falls silent. A short time later, we pull up outside my apartment.

"Thanks." I snap as I go to open the door, but he locks it with the push of a button, and my heart lurches in my chest. "Let me out," I demand.

"Jessie. Can we just talk? Please?"

"I have nothing to say to you. Now, let me out of this car or, I swear to God, I will kick out the windshield."

He sighs and the next thing I hear is the doors unlocking with a click. My fingers curl around the handle, but something stops me opening it immediately.

"What time shall I pick you up for your shift tomorrow?" he asks.

"What?" I blink.

"You have no car. Remember?"

"I'll get a ride off Cody."

"That stoner you work with? I don't think so, Angel," he scowls at me. "I'll just sit out here all night if I have to."

I stare at him. I wouldn't put it past him to do just that. "Fine. My shift starts at eleven."

"I'll be here at ten then."

I sit looking at him and there is a gigantic ball of emotion in my chest that I can't deal with. I have thought about him and his brothers every day since I left, and seeing him sitting right here in front of me makes me realize how much I have missed them all.

What happens next happens entirely on instinct. I lunge for him, wrapping my hands around his neck and pulling his face to mine. He unclips his seatbelt and reaches over to me, lifting me with ease and pulling me onto his lap so I'm straddling him. His hard cock presses against me through my damp

panties as my skirt rides up my thighs, causing pleasure to flood my entire body.

My heart hammers against my chest as his fingers dig into my hips and he pulls me closer, grinding his cock against my pussy and making me moan softly. I press my mouth over his and he licks the seam of my lips until I open them and allow his tongue inside. The warmth in my core spreads through my chest and my limbs as I melt into his fierce kiss.

I press my breasts against his muscular chest and my nipples stiffen until they're almost painful. My hands run over his muscular shoulders and they flex beneath his shirt, reminding me exactly how ripped his body is.

"Jessie," he groans into my mouth, and his voice rumbles through my body. His hands slide down to my ass and he squeezes me exactly the way I like it until the memories of all the incredible times we have spent together flood my senses. I feel an intense rush of slick heat between my thighs as he fucks my mouth with his tongue. Damn! I'm about to reach the point of no return here. If we don't stop now, I'm going to ride him like a rodeo bull right here in his car.

It takes every ounce of willpower I have, but I pull back from him and wipe my mouth with my thumb and index finger. "Night, big guy," I pant.

"Jessie," he growls. "Let me come up to your place with you. Let me take you to bed, Angel. I need you so fucking bad."

I need him too. But I can't do this. "No. We can't," I shake my head.

"Then what the hell was that?" he blinks at me.

"That was goodbye. Go home, Conor," I say. Pain flickers over his face and I force myself to close my eyes because I can't stand to see it as I climb off his lap and out of his car. I walk toward my apartment with tears running down my cheeks. But this is for the best.

CHAPTER

NINETEEN

CONOR

Looking out the window at Jessie's incredible ass in that tiny mini skirt, sashaying up the steps to her apartment, has my cock weeping for her. What would she do if I jumped out of this car and ran up those steps after her? Pushed her against her front door and fucked her right up against it? Because that's what I want to do more than anything and it's taking every single ounce of restraint I have not to.

I press the call button on the steering wheel of my car and call Shane. He answers on the third ring. "Hey, Con. Any news?"

"Yeah. I found her, bro."

He sighs deeply. "Where is she?"

"Arizona. Working in some dive bar."

"A bar?"

"Yup. I had to sit and watch all night while a bunch of drunk assholes were hitting on our girl. I was praying that one of them would touch her, just to give me a chance to break some faces."

He laughs softly. "I take it no one touched her then?"

"No. She's still the same fiery little pocket rocket who left us two months ago. They wouldn't dare," I laugh too.

There are a few seconds' silence before Shane speaks again. "Is she with you?"

“No. She told me to go to hell, but, I’m working on her. I’m picking her up for her shift tomorrow.”

“Be careful she doesn’t run,” he warns. “I need you back here.”

“I know. But she has no wheels right now. I took the coil cable out of her car for her.”

“You think you can bring her back?”

“I sure as hell ain’t leaving here without her.”

“Hmm,” he mumbles, and I sense he’s distracted.

“How are you getting on your end?” I lean back in my seat and glance up at Jessie’s window.

“Still no sign of Alexei. He’s gone underground. Did Jessie mention if she knows where he is?”

“We didn’t make it that far, bro. She wasn’t exactly pleased to see me.”

“I guess not. I’ve been looking into the Wolf again too. Jessie is convinced he’s still alive and maybe he can give us some answers.”

“Any luck?”

“None at all,” he sighs and then he’s quiet again.

“Something else going on, Shane?” I frown.

A few seconds pass before he answers. “He’s sick.”

It takes me a second to register who he’s talking about and bile surges from my stomach, burning against the back of my throat as soon as I do. I swallow it down. “How sick?”

“Very. Lung cancer. It’s terminal.”

“Good. I hope he dies a very slow and very fucking painful death. I hope that cunt lives every second of the rest of his miserable life in excruciating pain. I hope he dies in a pool of his own vomit and piss. But, most of all, I pray that he dies alone, crying for someone to help him. Just like she did.”

“Yeah, me too,” he replies softly.

“When did you find out?” I snarl as adrenaline starts to thunder around my body.

“Yesterday. Erin told me.”

“Figures she’d know,” I snap. Erin is our family lawyer, and Shane’s ex-fiancée. She moved to New York from Ireland at the same time as we did, and she has the unfortunate role of being the conduit between my father and Shane. None of us have spoken directly to him since we left Ireland ten years ago, but Shane communicates with him via Erin when he absolutely has to. Shane was our father’s pride and joy. His first born son — he would have been his only son if my cunt of a father would have had his way.

“Are you visiting him?” I ask.

“Of course not, Con. What the fuck?”

I wince, feeling guilty for even asking that. The truth is, Shane probably hates our father even more than me and the twins do.

“But when he dies, I will have to go to Ireland and sort out his estate,” he says with a sigh.

“I know. Have you told Mikey and Liam?”

“Yeah.”

“They okay?”

“They need you back here. They need Jessie back too.”

“And what about you?” I ask him. He will never admit that he needs her just as much as we do, even though it’s completely obvious.

“Just get your asses home as soon as you can. I don’t care if you have to tie her up and put her in the trunk.”

“Yeah, well, that’s kind of my plan B,” I only half joke, because if Jessie doesn’t agree to come with me of her own free will, I don’t know what I’ll do, and I am not averse to kidnapping her for a third time.

“Erin’s here. I have to go. Keep me posted.”

“Will do. Bye, bro,” I say before I end the call. I lean back against the headrest and suck in a lungful of air as I try and suppress the memories of my childhood and teenage years that any mention of my father dredges up. I hate that vile piece of shit more than anyone in this world. The fact that he’s dying should bring me some comfort, or some peace, but it doesn’t.

I look up at the door to Jessie’s apartment again and unclip my seatbelt. I want her so fucking bad, I feel like I can’t breathe without her. My fingers grip the door handle and my heart races in my chest. What if she tells me to go when I need her to want me to stay so much?

The light in her apartment goes out and I sit back in my seat again and let out a long breath. I’ll have to wait until tomorrow.

CHAPTER

TWENTY

JESSIE

Walking through my apartment, I throw my purse straight onto the sofa and head to my bedroom. I should be exhausted. I usually am after a ten-hour shift, but my mind is racing and my body is sizzling with energy. As I lick my lips, I can still taste him on me and it makes the heat sear between my thighs.

I turn on the lamp on my nightstand and lie on my bed, taking deep breaths to calm my racing heart. I'd convinced myself that I'd never see any of the Ryan brothers ever again. And I made sure I covered my tracks well, or at least I thought I had. Maybe, subconsciously, I left a single breadcrumb for them to find.

Whatever it was, Conor has found me and I would bet my ass he's still sitting outside in his expensive car, watching, waiting to see if I'm going to run.

I'm tempted to go to the window and look out, but I daren't because if I see him out there, looking up at this window, I might just run out of this apartment, jump back into his car and ask him to take me home.

As if I've been living in a dream world these past two months, the reality of my whole life suddenly hits me. Who was I kidding, thinking I could disappear from the face of the earth and live anything like a regular life? That's not who I am.

I'll admit it's been kind of nice pretending to be completely normal for a while. But I'm not normal. I'm

Jessica Romanov and I've been seeking revenge on the men responsible for slaughtering my family for the past ten years. And now I have an opportunity to exact my revenge on one of them, at least: Alexei Ivanov - the man who claims to be my biological father.

Whether he is or not, he killed my family. My beautiful, kind mom. The only father I have ever known, a man I respected and adored and who taught me everything I know, and my adorable little brothers. And not content with taking that family from me, he took the only other family I have ever felt a part of too, when he found me in New York and filled my head with lies. For a short while, I was Jessie Ryan, and I was as happy as I'd ever been in my life.

Alexei took it all from me and I won't rest until he takes his dying breath. I told Conor that I'm not going back to New York with him and I wasn't exactly lying when I said that. I'm still fooling myself that I can stay here a little longer and be Ryan, the brunette from the bar who can do five shots of whisky in a row and still dance the Chattahoochee, instead of Jessie, the red-headed hacker whose father is the psychopathic head of the Bratva.

Reaching over, I turn off the lamp. If Conor is outside watching, maybe that will make him leave, and I won't have to think about him sitting out there alone in his car. I hope it will deter him from coming up here and knocking on my door, because if he does, I don't think I have the strength to turn him away.

My body aches for him. I had closed that part of myself off, and less than an hour alone in his company and I'm burning up with longing and dripping wet for him. Damn those Ryan brothers and their fine asses.

I pull up my skirt and slip my hand inside my panties, spreading my legs wide as I circle two fingers over my swollen clit. My fingers glide easily over the slick bud of flesh. Closing my eyes, I imagine that it's Conor's fingers on me instead of my own. My orgasm builds quickly until I'm pushing my hips up to meet my hand. Using my other hand, I slide two fingers inside myself and the rush of warm wetness

pools there. I recall the taste of Conor's lips. His tongue in my mouth. How good his tongue feels on my pussy. How incredible he smells and how hard he fucks me. I move my fingers faster as I picture his face and pretend that he's in here with me, watching me come for him and waiting to claim me for his own.

When my climax tears through me a few moments later, I bite down on my lip to stop myself from crying out his name, even though I know he won't hear me. I lie back against my pillow, breathless and wanting. Instead of relieving any tension, getting myself off has only made me want him more.

I need to remind myself that I came this far on my own. I don't need Conor or his brothers. I don't want any of it anymore. I am building a new life for myself, and the Ryans can't be any part of it.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-ONE

JESSIE

The following morning, I check outside as soon as I wake up and I'm both relieved and disappointed to find that Conor's car is not outside. I eat breakfast and make some coffee and wonder if he left for New York or whether he's still hanging around nearby. And if he has left, how the hell am I going to get to work today? I can't even ask Cody for a ride as he's on a late shift and he'll sleep until at least noon. I should probably call a cab.

As I head to the bedroom to look for my cell phone, a knock at my front door stops me in my tracks.

I freeze. I never have visitors to my place, so this can only be one person. Turning on my heel, I walk over to answer it and see the unmistakable figure of Conor through the glass. Despite everything I said last night, my stomach flutters in excitement.

Opening the door, I am confronted by his six foot two frame dressed in jeans and another tightly fitted shirt, looking good enough to lick from head to toe. "I thought you were going home?"

He leans against my doorframe, his legs crossed at the ankle and his arms crossed over his chest. "I've been looking for you every minute of every day for two months, Jessie. I'm not going home until you agree to come with me."

"Well, you'd better get used to this Arizona heat, big guy," I smile.

He narrows his eyes at me. "You ready?"

“Sure,” I shrug, grabbing my purse from the table and closing the door behind me. “I hope you’re going to pay for my car to get fixed?” I say as we walk across the road to his car.

“Why would I do that?” he grins at me. “I had nothing to do with that old rust-bucket refusing to start last night.”

“She is not a rust-bucket!” I snap. “And yes you did.”

He shakes his head and unlocks the doors, allowing us both to climb inside. Once we’re buckled up, he pulls away from the curbside and I turn the radio to a country music station, because I’m aware he hates it, but he doesn’t change it back. I sing along — badly — as we drive along the highway.

The AC is on full blast, but despite that, a bead of sweat trickles down my spine. Being so close to him, confined in such a small space, is maddening. I glance sideways at him and remember how I almost jumped his bones last night. How good it felt to have his hard cock rubbing against my pussy as I straddled him. He clears his throat and I wonder if he’s thinking about it too. I glance down at his huge thighs encased in his jeans, almost busting out of the denim as his muscles stretch the fabric taut. Damn. No man has any right to be so freaking fine.

He shifts gears and his knuckles brush the skin of my outer thigh as he does, making my breath catch in my throat and goose-bumps prickle along my arms. He keeps his hand on the stick shift and I edge a tiny bit closer to the center console, as discreetly as I can. All the while I look down at his huge powerful forearm and that sexy Breitling watch he wears, and recall all the times I have held on to that arm while he finger fucked me. The thought sends a rush of wet heat flushing between my thighs. I swallow hard and turn my head to the window. I need to get out of this car before I ask him to pull over and fuck me in the back seat.

“I’ve missed you, Angel,” he says softly, and I turn my head back to him.

“Don’t, Conor,” I say with a sigh.

“Why?” he frowns at me before turning back to the road.

I want to tell him that it doesn't matter if he missed me because he means nothing to me anymore. But I can't because I promised him I would never lie to him again and that would be the biggest whopper in the history of untruths. “Because it doesn't change anything,” I say instead.

“Did you miss me?”

I turn back to the window and don't answer. If I admit that I missed him, then it's only a matter of time before something more happens between us. The tension in the car is so obvious I feel like I can actually see it. The air sizzles with electricity and desire. I'm hyper aware of everything. Our breathing and the way it's steadily gotten heavier in the past few minutes. I can even hear him licking his lip and I can't stop the memory of him running his tongue all over my body from overwhelming me. I close my eyes and will him to let this go.

“Jessie,” he snaps and I draw in a deep breath before I turn back to him.

“You know I did, Conor. But things are different now.”

His hand still rests on the shift-stick and he reaches out his finger and strokes it gently across the edge of my knee, sending tiny sparks of electricity shooting straight up my thigh and making me visibly shiver in my seat. “Not everything though?” he growls, and the sound vibrates through my body until it rolls through my abdomen and straight to my pussy.

“No. Not everything,” I breathe and the corners of his mouth pull into a smile before we drive the rest of the way in silence.

CONOR INSISTS on helping me to open up once we get to Ray's bar, and I can't decide whether I'm annoyed or delighted by this.

“Are you here on your own?” he frowns at me once we're inside.

“Yeah. Ray will be here at one. We hardly get any customers before then, anyway. And we had a delivery this

morning. Ray comes in to take it in but he won't put it away on account of his bad back," I say with a roll of my eyes.

"So he leaves it all for you to put away?" he frowns at the huge stack of boxes near the basement door.

"I'm perfectly capable of hauling some boxes down to the basement."

"I know. But that doesn't mean he should just leave it all for you."

"Well, it's kind of my job." I arch an eyebrow at him as I walk to the basement and open the door, propping it ajar with one of the boxes.

Conor puts his keys and his cell on the bar and walks over to me. "Let me help."

"I'm fine," I snap.

"For fuck's sake, Jessie," he snaps back.

I stand and stare at him with my hands on my hips. His help would let me get the job done in less than half the time. "Fine. Start with that pile over there," I point to the stack of Bud Light near the jukebox.

I walk down the basement stairs with the first box before leaving it at the bottom. I'm about to head up for the next one when Conor walks down, carrying two at once. Show-off!

"You stay down here and put them away and I'll bring them down to you?" he suggests.

"Fine," I roll my eyes. "But once we've finished this, you need to leave. Ray won't be happy if he finds out you're distracting me."

"You think I give a shit what Ray thinks?" he says as he walks up the steps.

"I know that you don't, but I do, Conor. This is my job, and as much as Ray is an asshole, I kind of like it here. So, I need you to leave before he gets in."

He turns and stops at the top of the stairs. "Dammit, Jessie," he scowls at me as he bends to pick up a box. "Can

you please just-”

“Conor. Don’t ...” I shout, but he’s already headed back down the steps and the door is closing behind him. It slams shut with a loud bang, plunging the basement into darkness.

“Shit!” I hiss as I hear Conor’s footsteps reaching the bottom. He puts the box down by my feet and breathes heavily near my ear.

“Where is the light?” he whispers.

“There isn’t one.”

“What? Why?” Panic makes his voice crack.

“Because it shorted a week ago along with the air conditioning and Ray is too cheap to get someone in to fix it.”

“What the fuck? Then let’s get out of here.” He turns, as if to walk back up the steps but he doesn’t move.

“The door doesn’t open from the inside,” I sigh.

“What?” he breathes and I hear the panic setting into his voice. “That’s fucking illegal or something. It’s a fire hazard.”

“Yeah? Well, Ray’s not really big on health and safety. That’s why I had the box holding open the door, asshole.” I nudge him in the ribs, or at least I assume it’s his ribs, because I can’t see a thing.

“Jessie. We can’t stay in here. There must be a way out,” he says and the fear in his voice is clearly audible now, as well as the labored sound of his breathing, which grows heavier and faster with each passing second.

Shit. I forgot he’s claustrophobic. He hates the dark or confined spaces. He has done ever since he was kidnapped by the Russians almost two years ago and they kept him locked up in a basement.

“Hey,” I reach out, searching for his face and place my hand on his cheek. “Ray will be here in an hour or so. This room is huge. There’s plenty of air down here. We’re going to be fine.”

“We need to get the fuck out of here,” he snarls as he runs up the steps and pushes against the door. Then I hear him trying to kick it open as his breathing becomes increasingly labored.

“Conor. That’s a fire door. It’s not going to open. Please come back down here and sit with me.”

He ignores me and continues pummeling the door. “Conor,” I shout and he stops. The sound of his footsteps signal him coming back down the wooden stairs. I reach for him as soon as I sense him close to me. Running my hands over his chest, his heart hammers beneath my fingertips as his breathing grows faster and heavier. My own heart races too, but for an entirely different reason.

“Conor. Listen to me. We’re going to be fine. Ray will be here soon. Or a customer will come in. And then we can shout for help. Okay?” I say as softly and calmly as I can.

“What if no one comes?” he gasps for breath.

Shit! He’s about to have a panic attack. “Someone will come. I won’t let anything happen to you. I promise,” I say as I slide my hands up to his face. I lean up onto my tiptoes and press my lips softly against his. “We’ll be okay,” I whisper as I keep peppering butterfly kisses over his lips and jaw. I need to distract him and this is the surest way I know how.

He wraps his arms around my waist, and I press my body close to his. Electricity crackles between us. His heart is still pounding, but his breathing is becoming less erratic. I seal my mouth over his and kiss him softly as my hands move up to his hair and I tug it gently, just the way he likes it, making him groan softly.

I slide one hand to the back of his neck and press his face closer to mine. He seems hesitant at first, still panicking about being trapped in this room. As I slide my tongue into his mouth, I feel the change in him and the growl in his throat vibrates through his whole chest. His hands drop to my ass and he slips his tongue against mine as he walks me backwards. We stumble in the darkness until we come up against the cold

concrete wall and as our bodies press together, heat floods my core.

I wrap my arms around his neck and pull him closer to me as he pushes his hard body against mine, pinning me to the wall as he deepens our kiss. I claw at his neck. His kisses are always full of fire and passion, but this is like a raging inferno between us. He devours my mouth like he might never get the chance to taste me again and I melt into him, taking every single thing he has to give as he claims me for his own once more.

Every nerve ending in my body comes alive with electricity and fire as wet heat sears between my thighs and my body sizzles with the need for him. I reach for his belt, tugging it open before I unzip his fly. Sliding my hand into his jeans, I take hold of his hot, stiff cock and squeeze him.

“Jessie,” he groans. “Don’t start something you can’t finish. Because I need to feel you so bad, Angel, and I won’t be able to stop if we go any further.”

“I need you too, Conor,” I breathe as my heartbeat starts to pound in my ears. “I want to feel you inside me. There’s been no one else,” I assure him, because we have no condoms down here, and I hope that he can say the same.

“Good, because I’d have no choice but to kill anyone who put his hands on you,” he growls as his hands slide to my sides and he lifts my denim mini up over my hips until it’s bunched around my waist. Then his hand slips between my thighs, and my legs almost buckle as he roughly tugs my panties to the side and slides two fingers through my folds. The warmth floods my core and I experience an intense rush of wetness. I push my hips against his hand and moan loudly. My body remembers his touch so well, and every part of me aches for him. My pussy throbs with need as he glides over my entrance.

“Please, Conor,” I beg and he smiles against my skin.

“I’ve missed this hot, wet pussy, Angel,” he breathes as he slides two fingers deep inside me and the rush of slick heat almost makes me pass out. I cling to him and whimper shamelessly as he fucks me with his skilled fingers. He

reaches deep inside, curling the tip of them against my G-spot and causing tremors to vibrate through my stomach and thighs. The wet sound of my arousal echoes around the basement and it makes everything seem even hotter than it already is.

“You hear how wet you are for me, Jessie?” he growls. “I’m going to have to make you come with my fingers first because I am so fucking hard for you, I’m not going to last more than five minutes once I get my cock in you.”

“God, I’ve missed your filthy mouth,” I pant.

“You’re going to get my mouth later. But I might embarrass myself if I taste your pussy right now. I haven’t even jerked off this morning,” he chuckles softly and my insides melt like warm butter at the sound. Not being able to see seems to heighten my other senses. Even the smell of him is driving me crazy. I had forgotten how deliciously intoxicating he was.

“Conor,” I pant as my orgasm builds, pulsing through my thighs and my core. He rubs the pad of his thumb over my clit as he nuzzles my neck and my climax crashes over me like a tsunami. My walls clench around his fingers and my entire body trembles with the intensity of my release.

He sucks gently on my neck as he slides his fingers out, and then he lifts me so I can wrap my shaking legs around his waist. His cock nudges at my opening and I suck air through my teeth as the tip pushes into my wet heat.

“You want this, Angel?” he growls.

“Yes,” I pant as I claw at his neck and push my hips against him.

With a roll of his hips, he pushes deep inside me and I moan so loudly that it echoes around the basement. He fills me so completely and I’m overwhelmed by the feelings of relief and euphoria that course around my body as the tears roll down my cheeks.

“I’ve missed you so much,” I breathe as he starts to nail me against the wall. I no longer have any defenses against him

and realize I was only fooling myself thinking that I had any to begin with. He owns me completely.

“Your pussy feels so fucking good, Jessie,” he groans as he continues pounding me. “It was made for my cock. I am never letting you go again. Do you understand me?”

I don't answer him. I can't because I am completely lost in him.

CONOR SITS on the floor with his back to the wall and his legs outstretched. I'm curled on his lap with his huge arms wrapped around me and I smile in contentment. My hand is on his chest and his heart hammers beneath my fingertips.

“Are you okay?” I whisper.

“Better than okay, Angel.”

“Your heart is still pounding.”

“Yeah? But now it's fuck all to do with being stuck in this basement,” he laughs softly.

“Hmm. That was pretty amazing,” I smile as I snuggle closer against his chest.

“Tell me that wasn't a goodbye fuck?” he says, his lips pressed against my ear.

“Of course it wasn't.”

“Come home, Jessie,” he breathes against my hair.

“I can't,” I whisper.

“Why?”

“Because it's not the same. I don't think I could ever feel the same living there. Not after everything that happened. Everything that's been said.”

He brushes my hair back from my face and presses a kiss against my temple. “He wants you back too.”

A sob catches in my throat. “He doesn't, Conor. He hates me for what I did to you all.”

“No, he doesn't. Come home and talk to him.”

“I’m not sure I can face him,” I murmur.

“Then fuck Shane. I need you back home. Aren’t I enough for you Angel?”

I press my face against his neck. “You know that you are.”

“So, come back with me?”

“Stay with me?” I counter.

We’re both saved from answering by the door swinging open, flooding the basement with light once more. “Ryan! What the hell is going on down there?” Ray shouts.

I stand up, brushing the dust from my skirt, and Conor jumps up beside me. “That stupid door closed on me,” I shout back.

Ray peers inside and then his face wrinkles in disgust. “You think you can use my bar as a motel to screw your boyfriends?” he snarls, and Conor rushes past me, running up the stairs in two seconds flat.

“Don’t you ever fucking speak to her like that,” he snarls and Ray steps back as Conor advances on him. I run up the stairs and put my hand on Conor’s shoulder. “Please, don’t,” I whisper against his ear.

“You’re not getting paid for the time you’ve spent down there,” Ray snaps.

I push past Conor and square up to my boss myself. “I have put up with you being cheap and crass and condescending for the past six weeks, because I liked this town and this job. But we were just trapped down there for over an hour because of your cheap ass ways, and I will not have you putting your shit on me, Ray. You can take your job and shove it up your fat ass.”

Conor chuckles behind me, but Ray stands there staring at me, his mouth opening and closing like a goldfish. “Okay,” he holds up his hands. “I won’t take it out of your pay.”

“Too late,” I snap as I start to make my way toward the door.

“But, Ryan. Who’ll cover the lunch shift?” he wails, but I am already halfway out the door and Conor is on my heels.

I walk out into the parking lot and blink in the glare of the midday sun. I glance over at my old green Mustang with its windows that will only roll part way down, and then at Conor’s shiny SUV, with working air conditioning and luxury leather seats.

He holds out his hand. “Come home, Angel? Everybody wants you back. They sent me to get you because we couldn’t all take two months off work to find you.”

I look at his outstretched hand.

“Please?” he says.

As I think about the stuff in my apartment, I realize there is nothing there that I need. My cell isn’t even a smartphone. I always travel light — a few clothes and toiletries. Turning away from Conor, I walk over to my Mustang and pop the trunk.

“Jessie,” Conor shouts after me, his dark brown eyes imploring me.

I take the backpack from inside. I’m always ready to move on at a moment’s notice and this bag contains everything I need for a two and a half thousand mile road trip. Hoisting it over my shoulder, I close the trunk.

Conor narrows his eyes as I walk back toward him, as if he’s not quite sure whether I’m about to run. “Come on then, big guy,” I say, nodding toward his car, and his handsome face breaks into a huge grin. He steps closer to me, picks me up in his arms and spins me around, making me giggle. “I love you, Jessie Ryan,” he says before he seals my mouth with a kiss.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-TWO

CONOR

I look across at her as she fastens her seatbelt and smile. Leaving this dust bowl without her was never an option, but I can't describe the sheer relief I feel at having her sitting here in my car after agreeing to come back to New York.

"Shall we hit the road?" she says as she kicks off her sandals and puts her feet up on the dash, ensuring I get an incredible view of her tanned legs in her denim mini.

"Do you need to go to your place on the way?"

"No," she shakes her head. "There's nothing there I need."

"Good," I breathe a sigh of relief. Stopping by her place could have been an opportunity for her to run. "But before we set off, I need to do something." Taking my cell out of my pocket, I dial Liam's number. A few seconds later, his face fills the screen.

"You got some good news, bro?" he says when he answers.

"I sure do." I grin at him as I turn the phone so he can see my passenger.

"Jessie," he shouts. "Please tell me you're coming home?"

I watch the blush creep across her cheeks as she smiles. "Yeah," she says with a shrug. "If you're all okay with that?"

"Okay with it? Fuck, baby, we miss you like crazy," he chuckles. I shift over in my seat so both Jessie and I can see

the screen. “Mikey,” Liam shouts and a few seconds later my other younger brother’s face appears on the screen too.

“Red!” His grin lights up his face. “What the fuck have you done to your hair?”

“It will grow out,” she says with a roll of her eyes.

“It better. So, you coming home?”

“Yes,” she laughs.

“Great. Get your asses on a plane right now and we’ll be waiting for you at the airport,” Mikey says and Liam nods in agreement.

Jessie looks across at me, biting her lower lip in a way that makes me want to bite every part of her body, and I wink at her. “Actually, we’re going to drive back,” I say.

“What?” Liam groans.

“Fuck, no,” Mikey shouts.

“I can’t just leave the car here—” I say.

“It’s just a car. We’ll have someone pick it up,” Liam interrupts me.

“Jessie. You want to fly, right?” Mikey asks. “You don’t want to spend three days in a car with Conor, do you?”

“Three?” I shake my head and glance sideways at Jessie, and she grins at me. “More like five?”

“Yeah. I’d say five,” she nods in agreement.

“No,” the twins shout in unison. “You got to get your asses back here right now. Conor, you know what a pain in the ass Shane is when he’s in a bad mood. Please don’t subject us to more of his moodiness than is necessary,” Mikey adds.

I sense Jessie bristle at the mention of Shane’s name. I slide my hand over her thigh and squeeze gently as Mikey and Liam go on grumbling. “Boys,” I shout in order to be heard over their grumbling. “Let me show you something.” I tilt the phone down so they can see Jessie’s gorgeous legs in her tiny skirt and my hand sliding between them. They both groan and

growl in appreciation and I laugh as I lean back in my seat and turn the phone back to me. “Now, can you honestly tell me that if either of you were in my shoes, you would be doing anything but driving back to New York – very slowly?”

They both frown at me and voice their disapproval, and Jessie chuckles in her seat beside me.

“You’ve got four days, Conor,” Liam snaps. “And then we’ll be coming to get our girl ourselves.”

I nod. “Deal. Now say goodbye to Jessie, and she’ll call you later tonight when we stop at a motel.”

As I turn the screen again, I watch while Jessie waves and blows them a kiss. “See you soon, boys.”

“See you in four days,” I wink at my brothers before ending the call. “You sure you’re okay with driving home to New York?” I ask her as I put the car into drive.

“Four days on the road with you? Staying at cheap roadside motels every night?” she bites on her lip again as though she’s deep in thought and my cock twitches at the sight. “I’m sure I can handle that.”

I pull the car out of the parking lot and raise an eyebrow at her. “Hmm. But can I, Angel?”

“Well, I can’t wait to find out, big guy,” she smiles at me.

“Me neither.”

WE HIT the road as soon as I ended the call to Liam and Mikey and I’ve been driving for six hours by the time we stop at a motel.

“You want me to drive us a little further?” Jessie asks.

I roll my neck, making it crack. “No. I’m beat. Besides, I need food. Man cannot survive on candy alone.” I wink at her. I asked her to get some snacks when we stopped for gas earlier and she bought candy, and more candy. “Besides, by the time we’ve eaten, it will be late. We can set off again early in the morning.”

“Okay,” she climbs out of the car and takes her backpack from the back seat. “Should we see if they have a room first?”

“Sure.”

TEN MINUTES LATER, I open the door to our motel room. It’s nothing fancy, but it’s clean. Jessie walks inside and flops down into the middle of the large bed and my cock stirs to attention. Suddenly, I feel like a horny teenager. When we had sex in that basement earlier, it was incredible. But it was rushed and frantic. The fulfilling of a carnal need. And the thought of spending the entire night with her, naked and in that bed, makes me nervous and excited. I don’t think I have ever felt like this in my whole life about the prospect of spending the night with a woman.

She looks up at me, her blue eyes dark with desire, and I have to drag my eyes away from her as my stomach growls and reminds me I need food — like now.

“Come on. Let’s go eat?” I drop my bag on the carpet and hold my hand out to her.

“That place next door looks like it does takeout,” she says as she stretches her legs and yawns. “I don’t want to go out. Let’s lay on the bed, watch TV and eat until we can’t move?”

I stare at her as I consider her offer. I could go for takeout. It would probably be quicker too. “Okay.” I run a hand over my jaw. “What do you feel like?”

“A big dirty burger,” she grins. “And a Coke.”

“Dirty burger and a Coke,” I nod. “I’ll be back in fifteen.”

I OPEN the door with the bag of takeout in my hand, and the first thing I notice is that Jessie isn’t lying on the bed. I step inside. She’s not in the room.

“Jessie,” I shout as I head to the bathroom, but the door is open and I already know instinctively that she’s not in there. My heart drops through my chest. The first opportunity she got, she ditched me. How the fuck does this girl keep making a fool out of me?

“Fuck,” I shout, punching the bathroom door and putting a hole right through it, just as I hear voices outside.

The door opens and Jessie is standing there with an old lady with gray hair. “Here he is. I’m sure Conor will be able to sort it for you,” Jessie says as she smiles at me.

“What?” I can’t help but frown as adrenaline is still thundering around my body.

“This is Barbara from down the hall. She can’t get the faucet to turn on and there is no one at the desk. I tried, but it’s stuck fast. You think you can take a look?”

I take a deep breath and will my heart to stop racing. “Yeah. Course,” I say walking out of the room and along the corridor behind Jessie and Barbara.

A few minutes later, I’ve fixed the stuck faucet and Jessie and I walk back to our room after Barbara insists that I take a packet of M&M’s for my trouble. As soon as the door is closed behind us, I pull her into my arms. “Don’t disappear on me like that again, Angel,” I warn her.

“I’m sorry. But she knocked, and she needed help. I was only a few minutes.”

“I thought you’d left, Jessie. Or something had happened to you.” I swallow the emotion that wells up into my throat.

“I’m not going anywhere, big guy,” she smiles at me and I press a kiss on her forehead.

“Good. Now let’s eat before I fucking pass out.”

We finally sit down at the small table and Jessie takes the food out of the bag. It smells incredible and my stomach growls in agreement. We eat in silence for a few moments and I can sense the tension growing in the small room. She looks across at me and I know the question is coming.

“What happened after I left?”

“We didn’t kill him,” I tell her. “When you left, I don’t know, maybe we got distracted. Your father—”

“He’s not my father,” she interrupts me.

“Alexei got out of there. Him and a few of his men.”

“And the rest?”

“Dead. He basically used them as human shields. Didn’t you know he was still alive?”

She shakes her head. “No. I ran here and then I haven’t even opened a laptop or been online at all. I didn’t even have a smartphone. I wanted to leave it all behind. I thought perhaps if I tried to be this completely different person, he would never find me.”

I finish my burger and wipe my hands on a napkin. “You really didn’t want anyone to find you? You’d rather have stayed in Arizona?”

“Well, I thought so. But then you showed up and I now all I can think about is how much I’ve left behind. And how much Alexei Ivanov has already taken from me. Not just my family, but the new family I’d found too,” she says as tears form in her eyes.

I reach out and place my hand over hers. “Your new family is still right here, Angel.”

“Some of you are,” she sniffs.

I lean back in the chair. Shane. She worries so much about what he thinks of her, but then we all do. He’s the head of the family, after all. My brothers and I can’t stand to disappoint him, and it seems that Jessie feels exactly the same. I wish I could help her understand him a little more, then she would see how much she means to him. But it’s something she needs to figure out on her own.

She wipes her eyes and pushes her chair back, leaving her half-eaten burger on the table. “Thanks for dinner. I’m going to grab a quick shower. I feel sticky,” she says, bending to give me a kiss on the cheek.

I watch her walking away, contemplating following her in there, but I get the sense she wants to be alone.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-THREE

JESSIE

I flip through the TV channels as I lie on the bed while Conor takes a shower. He has more clothes than I do, so I'm wearing one of his t-shirts and nothing else. No sense wasting a clean pair of panties for bed when I'm on limited rations.

He wanders out of the bathroom with his skin still damp and a white towel wrapped around his waist, and my stomach does a little somersault at the sight of him. As he reaches the bed, he whips off his towel and starts to dry his hair with it, while I lie here looking at his magnificent body. When he's done, he pulls on a pair of boxers and lies down beside me.

"Are you wearing my clothes?" He arches an eyebrow at me.

"Yep. Because I only brought a few pairs of clean panties and a few changes of clothes, and you have a lot more than I do."

He lies back against the pillow with his arms behind his head. "What are we watching, Angel?"

"Some old movie with John Candy in," I shrug.

"Uncle Buck," he grins. "I love this."

We lie in silence for a while and I wonder why this seems slightly awkward between us, as though we didn't screw each other's brains out earlier in the basement of Ray's bar. Eventually, I can't take the tension any longer, and as funny as John Candy is, Uncle Buck just isn't doing it for me tonight. Rolling onto my side, I place my hand on Conor's chest. His

muscles flex beneath my fingertips as he takes a deep breath. As I slide my hand down over his abs until they are dangerously close to his boxers, I nestle against him. “Are you nervous, Conor Ryan?” I purr as he groans softly and his cock twitches in his shorts.

“Yeah,” he breathes.

I lift my head to look at him. “Really? With me? After everything we’ve done? After this morning?”

He reaches down and grabs me by the hips, pulling me on top of him until I’m straddling him and his semi-hard cock is nudging against my pussy. Placing my hands flat on his chest, I look down at him as he stares into my eyes. “This morning was incredible. But it happened so fast, I didn’t have time to think about it. I was so fucking hot for you, I could barely think at all. And when I could, I was too busy worrying about how we were going to die in that fucking shit-box basement.”

I press my lips together to stop from laughing out loud.

“But now I have you for the whole damn night, Angel, and I have thought about nothing but this for two long months. I wasn’t even sure I’d ever get to do this again.” His voice is thick with emotion and it makes my heart ache. I bite on my lip as I stare down at him.

“Aren’t you wearing any panties?” He suddenly looks down at the space where our bodies join.

“No,” I grin at him. “No sense in wasting a pair if I’m only going to wear them for a few hours, is it?”

“I suppose not.” He arches at eyebrow at me. “But you are ruining my clean boxers with your cream, Angel. I haven’t even touched you yet and I can feel it soaking through to my cock.”

“Well, if you’re worried about your clean underwear, you should have thought this through like I did then, shouldn’t you?” I tease him.

He narrows his eyes at me. “Take off the t-shirt. Right now,” he growls.

“Okay,” I breathe as I reach down and peel it over my head until I’m completely naked. Reaching up, he cups my heavy breasts in his hands and squeezes, making me groan as I press myself into his rough palms. “You kept this body away from me for too long, Angel.”

“Then you shouldn’t have told me to leave.” I stare at him. He doesn’t get to be the only injured party here. I’ve been hurting too.

He flips me over and pins me beneath him so fast my heart skips a beat, and I giggle. “I hope you’re not tired, because I’m going to make up for every night you’ve been away from me.”

“Promises, promises,” I say with a dramatic sigh.

“I want all of you, Jessie,” he says, brushing my hair back from my face and staring into my eyes.

“You already have every single part of me, Conor Ryan.”

He presses his lips over mine and wet heat rushes between my thighs as he kisses me so hard my lips feel bruised. One hand slides down my body until he’s between my thighs. I open them wider for him, allowing him to brush his thick fingers between my folds. He groans into my mouth when he realizes just how wet I am for him.

“Fuck, Angel,” he grunts, breaking our kiss. “I’m going to eat you alive.” He trails soft kisses down my neck, over my breasts, sucking each nipple into his mouth and gently nibbling while his fingers toy with me, rubbing over my clit and slipping down to my entrance before he dips the tip of one finger in before starting the maddening cycle again. As his kisses flutter over my stomach, I press my hips against him. “Conor. I’ve missed you too. Stop teasing me,” I pant.

“I’m savoring you, Angel, not teasing,” he murmurs against my skin as his lips move even lower. I pull my fingers through his hair as he reaches the apex of my thighs. “This where you want me, Angel?” he growls.

“Yes,” I pant as his lips brush over my clit, causing a rush of heat.

“Jesus. I almost forgot how sweet your pussy is, Jessie,” he groans as he presses the flat of his tongue against my opening and licks the length of my folds before settling over my clit, grazing it with his teeth and nudging it with his tongue as he slides two fingers inside me, making me arch my back with the thrill of pleasure that shoots through me. Curling his fingers inside, he presses against my G-spot as he rims my clit with his tongue, bringing me to the edge so quickly that my head starts to spin and I see flashes of light when I close my eyes.

“Conor,” I shout as he tips me over the edge.

“I gave you that one for free, Angel. I’m going to make you work for the next one.”

“Really?” I gasp.

“Really,” he flashes me a wicked grin, and I can see that his beard is wet with my arousal. He spends the next twenty minutes taunting me relentlessly with his fingers and his tongue until I am almost crying as I plead with him to let me come. When he finally takes pity on me, the rush of blood to my groin and the torrent of my wet release almost makes me pass out. I don’t even have time to recover when he’s nestling himself between my thighs and driving his cock into me. The wet sounds reverberate around the small motel room and he growls his appreciation. “I have missed this pussy, Angel.”

I wrap my legs around his waist as he takes my wrists and pins them beside my head. “You want hard or gentle?”

“Hard,” I breathe. “I want everything you’ve got, big guy.”

“Fuck, Jessie,” he groans as he rails into me, nailing me to the bed so hard that the cheap headboard ricochets off the wall and snaps in two.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-FOUR

CONOR

I rub my hand over the warm, soft skin of Jessie's hip and she groans softly in her sleep and presses her beautiful ass against my cock.

"Morning, Angel," I whisper in her ear before trailing soft kisses down her neck and onto her shoulders.

"Morning, big guy," she purrs, reaching behind her and curling her fingers in my hair.

"You have no idea how much I've missed this."

"Missed what?" she giggles as I slip my hand over onto her stomach.

"Waking up with your skin against mine, Angel," I growl as my hand slides between her thighs. She opens them wider for me with a soft moan and my cock throbs against her ass. "This body is so fucking soft and hot," I slip two fingers between her folds and suck the air between my teeth. "And wet."

"I missed waking up with you too, Conor," she breathes as she rolls her hips, rubbing her ass over my cock.

"So why did you leave me, Angel?" I nip at her sensitive skin and push one of my fingers inside her dripping pussy.

"Because you and your brother told me to," she gasps out loud.

"Open wider," I growl in her ear and she lifts her thigh, hooking her leg back over mine and allowing the tip of my

cock to slip inside her as I slide my finger out and work my way up to her clit.

“Conor,” she groans as she tries to push back against me to take more of me, but I don’t let her. She doesn’t get all of me until I’m one hundred percent sure I have all of her.

“Why did you run away?” I ask again.

The muscles in her body tense as I keep teasing her clit and nudging my cock deeper inside her. “Because Shane told me to,” she snaps. “And you did. I looked at you, and you...”

“I what?”

“You gave me that look. Like I should go. Don’t try to pretend that you didn’t, Conor,” she pants as she tries to stay pissed at me while her body reacts to the pleasure my fingers are bringing her.

“But you knew there was a tracker in that car. You knew we would come for you. You knew we would never let you go, Angel.” I slide in another inch as I press harder against her clit and drag my teeth along her shoulder blade.

“I didn’t know any of that,” she insists. “Shane told me it would never be the same. That I would never be one of you.”

“He was trying to buy some time with Alexei. You weren’t supposed to do such a good job of running. But you disappeared off the face of the fucking earth, Angel.”

“I thought you didn’t want me,” she groans as she tries to buck her hips against me. “I would never have left if I’d known you wanted me to stay.”

“I want you more than I have ever wanted anything in my life, Jessie. I love you so fucking much, I felt like I was going to die when I couldn’t find you. When I thought I’d never touch you again, I wanted to tear off my own skin. And now that I’ve found you, how do I know you’ll never leave me again?”

“Because I love you too. Please, Conor?”

That is all I need to hear. I push my cock deep inside her and her walls squeeze me, pulling me in deeper and milking

me as she moans my name. I suck on the spot beneath her ear that drives her crazy, tasting her sweet, salty skin as I bury myself inside her.

ONCE I HAVE FUCKED us both to a release, Jessie and I lie on the bed facing each other.

“You are fucking beautiful,” I say, making her blush as I reach out and brush her hair from her face.

She raises an eyebrow at me. “You’re high on cum.”

“I probably am. But you are still the most beautiful woman I have ever known, Jessie Ryan. And you need to learn to take a compliment.”

“Then thank you,” she whispers.

“How did you manage to ditch that car so quickly?” I ask her. Shortly after she drove out of our apartment building, I drove right after her, but by the time I caught up with the car in Baltimore, Jessie was long gone.

“You do remember how nice that car was, right? It was easy to sell it with no questions asked.”

“But you didn’t keep the Camaro you traded it for?”

“No, of course not. I had six cars before I finally settled on my old Mustang. She was a real beauty. Until you killed her, anyway.”

I hold up my hands in surrender. “I did what I had to do, Angel. And I would do it one hundred times over, because it got you here with me, didn’t it?”

She shuffles closer to me, placing her hand on the back of my neck. “I suppose so,” she smiles. “I’m glad you busted my car and busted me out of Ray’s bar.”

“How long do you expect we could stay holed up in this motel before my brothers come looking for us?” I flash my eyebrows at her.

“Shall we try it and see?” she giggles. “Or we could just travel the whole of the States, staying in cheap motels and picking up bar jobs when we need to earn some cash?”

I slide my hand onto her ass, pressing her body closer to mine. “As long as I get to do this with you every day, I’m game for a life on the run, Angel.”

“You would never leave your brothers,” she purrs as she brings her face closer to mine and brushes her lips across my cheek.

“Neither would you,” I remind her.

“True. But we can pretend for a few days, can’t we?” She trails her fingertips over my chest.

“We can pretend anything you like, Angel,” I whisper before I press my lips against hers. She opens her mouth and lets me slip my tongue inside and the blood rushes straight to my cock. I love this woman more than I could have ever dreamed possible, and while she’s lying here with me like this, the rest of the world doesn’t even exist.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-FIVE

JESSIE

After lying in bed longer than we should have, we were late setting off again, so Conor has driven like a demon for the past hour and a half to try and make up some time. We figure driving eight hours a day will get us back to New York in four days and leave us plenty of time to rest in the evening.

As we drive along the highway, I flip through the radio channels, trying to find some decent music.

“No country,” Conor warns.

“But I love country,” I pout.

“I’ve got something much better,” he says with a grin as he takes his cell from the center console and pushes a few buttons before turning up the volume. “Do you remember this?” he grins at me as the sound of Ride It by DJ Regard fills the car.

A flush creeps over my cheeks. Of course I remember it. It’s one of my favorite songs in the world and he and I danced to it one night at his club. It was so hot we were practically banging on the dance floor.

I settle back against the seat as the thumping bass vibrates through my body and I recall in vivid, Technicolor detail Conor’s hands on my ass and his lips on my neck as he rubbed his thick cock against me. “Conor. Pull the car over,” I say sharply and he looks at me in alarm as he swerves to the side of the road.

“What?” he frowns.

Unclipping my seatbelt, I climb over onto his lap, feeling a powerful surge of heat between my thighs. I've only been with him for a little over twenty-four hours and he has already turned me back into a raging sex addict. I can't get enough of him.

"Oh?" he growls at me and then presses a button to push his seat back before unclipping his own belt. I reach down and unbutton his jeans and he lifts his hips so he can pull them down slightly to allow his impressive cock enough room to spring free.

"I fucking love these sexy little denim skirts you've started wearing, Angel," he chuckles as he reaches beneath my skirt and pulls my panties down my legs. I push myself up onto my knees and between us we manage to wriggle them off completely. Conor keeps hold of them and stuffs them into the pocket of his jeans. I look into his deep brown eyes and they are dark with lust. As I shift my hips closer to him, he lifts his hands to my hair, brushing it off my face before he leans forward and runs his teeth over the soft skin of my throat and sucks gently on a tender spot beneath my ear.

"Conor," I groan loudly as I roll my hips over his cock, coating it with my slick arousal and whimpering at the friction as it rubs against my clit.

"Take it whenever you want it, Angel," he whispers against my ear. "I'll let you be in control just this once."

The music fills the car and the beat pulses through my body as I reach down and take his cock in my hand before guiding it into my hot entrance. I have no time for patience or for teasing him right now because I am desperate to feel him inside me. I sink low onto him and moan loudly at the absolute relief I experience when he fills my pussy so completely.

"Fuck, Jessie," he grunts as my walls squeeze around him. I'm on the edge already and we're barely even moving. He slips his hands under my skirt again and grabs hold of my hips, his fingertips pressing into my soft flesh. "Show me how much you want me, Angel. I want to watch you make yourself come on my cock."

“Conor,” I breathe as I plant my hands on his muscular shoulders and start to ride him, just like the song lyrics tell me to, as it plays over and over on repeat. Pressing my forehead against his, I bite my lip as I watch him slowly lose control while I move my hips over him, sinking deeper and deeper as his huge cock stretches me wider and my arousal coats the two of us.

“Damn, Angel, you feel so good riding me. You’re going to make me come too fast.” He grinds out the words as he tries to hold off from his impending release. His breathing comes fast and heavy and his fingers dig further into my hips as he drops his head to my neck and begins to nuzzle at that perfect, sweet spot beneath my ear that he knows drives me crazy. I throw my head back and thank God for the tinted windows in this car because I am about to come right here on the side of the highway while cars pass by.

Conor knows my body far too well, and as soon as he realizes I am on the edge too, he pulls my hips down, holding me in place while he thrusts upwards into me.

“Oh, God,” I gasp.

“You take my cock so fucking good, Jessie,” he groans as the tip of his length rubs against that place deep inside me and a few seconds later my orgasm tears through my body, and I come with a violent shudder as I shout his name. Wrapping his arms around me, he holds me tight as I grind down further onto him and a moment later, he bites down on my neck as he finds his own release.

When we have both stopped trembling, he lifts his head and looks into my eyes. “I think this is going to have to be our song now,” he chuckles softly.

“I guess it will,” I smile at him. “I will never hear it again and not think of you.”

He pulls my face to his and kisses me deeply while his cock still throbs in my pussy and I melt into him as he fucks my mouth with his skilled tongue.

“Damn, Angel,” he groans when he eventually pulls back. “I could go again in about two minutes, but I think we need to get going before a cop stops by and I have to roll down this window. And if anyone were to get a glimpse of your beautiful pussy, I would have to kill them. Cop or no cop. So, even though I was intending on keeping these panties, I’m going to give them back to you because your bare pussy is far too distracting.”

I smile as I climb off him. “Fine. I can’t be having some poor cop’s death on my conscience, can I? Besides, we need to make up time from this morning.”

He pulls up his jeans and fishes my panties from his pocket before handing them to me. “Yeah, and that was your fault too.”

“My fault?” I arch an eyebrow at him as I slide my underwear back on. “I seem to remember it was you who wouldn’t let me get out of bed.”

“Well, how the fuck am I supposed to do that when your naked ass is pressed up against me, Angel? We’ll never make it home in time if you don’t stop tempting me with this sexy body of yours.”

I can’t help but grin as I crawl back into my seat and Conor laughs as he starts up the engine.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-SIX

JESSIE

After we had spent another whole day driving, I persuaded Conor to take me to the dive bar across the street from our motel. We sit at a small table with a beer each and I smile widely at him, but he only rolls his eyes in response. There is a live band singing country, which he hates, but I love.

“Come dance with me,” I say, standing up and reaching for his hand.

“I don’t dance, Angel.”

“You danced with me in the club that time.”

“That was because the music was good. This is shit,” he smiles before he takes a sip of his Bud.

“I’m going to dance on my own then.” I walk backwards, dropping his hand as I do.

“Knock yourself out, Angel,” he says with a wink.

I walk over to the dance floor and choose a spot directly in Conor’s eye-line before I start to dance. The band is playing a cover of Body Like a Backroad and I sway my hips in time to the music. I’m aware of the two guys nearby and Conor’s eyes are drawn to them momentarily, before they flicker back to me. He narrows his eyes in warning, and I bite my lip as I drop my ass to the floor and pop back up.

The two guys edge closer, until they’re standing on either side of me, close enough that I can smell stale beer and

cigarettes on their clothes and skin. I ignore them, keeping my eyes trained on my hot bodyguard.

“You shouldn’t be dancing like that here on your own, darlin’,” one of them says as he moves to stand in front of me, blocking Conor’s view.

“Oh, and why is that?” I glare at him.

“Someone might take advantage of your sweet nature,” he smirks at me, revealing a gold canine tooth.

“I’m pretty sure my boyfriend would have something to say about that.” I nod toward Conor and they both turn and look at him. He looks so out of place in this bar. He’s fucking beautiful and he’s huge. Way bigger than any other guy in here. Aside from all that, there is just something about him that oozes danger and violence. I guess my two new buddies see it too, as they slope away without another word.

I keep dancing and can’t help but smile as Conor downs his beer and makes his way over to me. When he reaches me, he slides his hands onto my ass and pulls me close to him until our bodies are pressed tightly together. I have to crane my neck to look up at him, but he bends his head low, his lips brushing over my ear. “Don’t think I don’t know what you’re trying to do, Angel,” he whispers.

“And what’s that, big guy?” I flutter my eyelashes at him.

“I can tell you’re in the mood for a little danger tonight, but you can grind that beautiful ass as much as you like, and I’m still not going to punish you. I will fucking kill anyone who touches you, though.”

The surge of heat between my thighs makes my knees buckle and the look in his eyes tells me he’s well aware of it too. Even the thought of him punishing me makes me wet and desperate for him. He brushes the back of his knuckles over my cheek and I stifle a groan. “You want to stay in this shit hole and dance? Or you want to come back to the motel and dance for me?” he growls.

I blink up at him. I can’t deny that a part of me wants to stay in this bar and dance because I like this band and this

music. But the prospect of what he will do to me once we're alone has me a hot, trembling mess. "Let's go," I whisper, and he winks at me before guiding me out of the bar.

AS SOON AS we're back in the motel room, Conor kicks the door closed and pushes me up against the wall. He wraps one hand around my throat while the other reaches under my skirt and he tugs my panties to one side.

"You're dripping, Angel," he groans as he slides two fingers through my folds.

"I know," I pant as I push my hips against his fingers. "Please, Conor. I need you inside me right now."

"You want to be fucked against the wall like a stray I just picked up in a bar?" he growls in my ear.

"Yes," I groan as he plunges his fingers inside me.

"Take out my cock," he orders and I do as he tells me, unzipping his fly and squeezing his hard shaft, making him groan loudly. I plant soft kisses on his neck and a moan rumbles through his chest and throat.

"Turn around," he orders.

When I do as he asks, he pulls my tank top up and off over my head before tossing it into the corner of the room. His warm fingertips trail softly down my back before he unhooks my bra and pushes it over my shoulders, letting my heavy breasts fall free. Once my top half is bare, he reaches around to my front and unzips my skirt before pushing it down over my legs, hooking his thumbs beneath the waistband of my panties as his hands slide over my hips and pulling them off too. I step out of my clothes until I'm standing completely naked. His lips graze my back as he presses me against the wall. "You are so fucking beautiful. Every guy in that damn bar wanted you," he growls against my skin.

"Conor," I pant as I lean back against him. He pulls me toward him and begins walking me across the room until we're standing in front of the dresser and the large mirror, with my back flush against his hard chest.

His powerful hands slide down the back of my thighs and then he lifts me and places me onto the wooden dresser so I'm kneeling directly in front of the mirror. Pressing his body against mine, he drags his teeth along my shoulder blade as his hands slide over my hips and between my thighs before he pulls them wide apart until I'm spread open for him. I watch him in the mirror as one hand slides up to my throat and the other slips between my slick folds.

"You remember the first time I fucked you, Angel? Just like this?" he growls against my ear.

"Yes," I whimper, recalling the afternoon in the boutique when he had me try on clothes and underwear for him for hours until we could no longer keep our hands off each other. I am as desperate for his touch right now, needing him to sate this burning desire I have to have him inside me.

"You look so fucking beautiful when you come apart for me, Jessie. I want you to watch me fucking you. I want you to see how good you look when I make you come and know that no one knows your body better than I do," he whispers as he starts to draw slow, teasing circles over my clit while he increases the pressure on my windpipe slightly.

"Conor. Please?" I groan as I grind my hips against his hand until he gives me what I want and slides one of his thick fingers inside me, coaxing a rush of intense wet heat from me.

"Watching all those jackasses looking at you tonight made me so fucking hard, Angel. Seeing how much they wanted you and knowing they could never have you made me want to fuck you right in the middle of that dance floor." His hand on my throat slips down to my breasts, and he squeezes one roughly. "Who do you belong to?" he demands, as he adds a second finger to my wet entrance.

"You," I breathe.

"Hmm," he mumbles against my skin. "And if you ever let any man other than my brothers touch you, I will fucking kill him. You got that?"

“Yes,” I gasp as the warmth spreads through my thighs and stomach. As if he wasn’t already hot enough, this possessive side of him makes me practically pant with need.

“This is mine, Jessie,” he snarls as he slips his fingers out of me and palms my pussy roughly. “Mine,” he repeats just before he bites down on my shoulder.

“Yours,” I agree.

“Now look in that mirror and watch me fuck you,” he says as he shifts himself between my thighs and nudges the end of his cock into my entrance. I drag my eyes to meet his in his reflection and the fire in them almost takes my breath away.

He tugs on one of my nipples and pinches my clit between two fingers just as he drives his cock into me, and I cry out in pleasure. “You feel that, Angel? I fit inside you so fucking perfectly. Your pussy was made for my cock.”

I love this side of him so much. The filthy talking, possessive alpha that he doesn’t let out very often back in the penthouse in New York. “Who do you belong to, Conor?” I purr.

He thrusts his hips harder, almost lifting me off the dresser as he rails into me. “You, Angel. Only you. Always.”

AFTER HE HAS FUCKED me for the second time tonight, I lie on the bed, tracing my fingers over Conor’s chest and down to his abdomen. “Why won’t you punish me?” I whisper.

He sighs deeply and grabs hold of my hand, lacing his fingers with mine. “I want to be everything you need, Angel. And I would love to put you over my knee and spank that incredible ass. Or tie you to my bed and stripe your skin with my belt. But I don’t want to hurt you.”

“But I like a little pain,” I remind him.

“I think you like more than a little, Jessie, and that’s the problem.”

I lean up on my elbow. “I don’t understand,” I say and he turns to face me.

“I love the way we fuck. I don’t want to lose that. And I’m scared of losing control with you, Angel. That first time we had sex in my room, I tied you up, and I spanked your ass. Hard. And you fucking giggled, Jessie.”

“Sorry,” I blush.

He shakes his head and laughs softly. “I don’t want you to apologize. You didn’t hurt my feelings, but, you scared me.”

“Why?”

He takes a deep breath. “When I was a little kid, I hated violence. I was terrified of my father and the beatings he used to give me and Shane, not to mention my poor mum. The sight of blood used to make me feel sick. But when I was eleven, my father made me start bare knuckle fighting. I pretty much sucked when I first started out, but if I wanted to avoid getting my ass kicked every week, I had to learn to get used to it. So I did. And I got real good at it too. You saw me in that basement back in New York. You saw what I did to those men. To do that, I have to go to a place where nothing can touch me, Jessie. And I can’t do that with you.”

I lean forward and press a soft kiss against his temple. “I could reach you when you’re in that place, though. You would never hurt me. I trust you.”

He smiles at me and brushes his fingertips lightly over my cheek. “But I don’t trust you, Angel.”

His words are like a knife twisting in my heart and I try to shrink back from him, but he’s too quick. Slipping his arm back around my waist, he holds me close. “How can you say that?” I blink at him.

“Don’t get upset. I trust you with my life and my darkest secrets, but I don’t trust that you’d tell me when you’ve had enough. I’m not sure you’d even know when you’ve had enough. And if I went to that place and you didn’t pull me out, I might really hurt you, and I would never forgive myself. I couldn’t stand for you to look at me after that.”

“You think I don’t know how much pain I can take?” I snap, unable to hide my annoyance.

“I think there is a difference between how much pain you can take and how much I’d be willing to give you. Or how much you need. I’m pretty sure you can handle a hell of a lot of pain, Angel.” He runs his hand down to my ass and squeezes softly. “And that’s why I won’t go there with you. Not yet.”

“But you might one day?”

“Maybe,” he shrugs. “When you appreciate what your limits are.”

“And how will you know that, though?” I arch an eyebrow at him. “If you think I’d let you push me too far, how could you be sure when I know what my limits are?”

He leans down and dusts his lips across my cheek. “Because Shane will tell me,” he chuckles softly. “He’s desperate to see how far he can push you.”

“So you think it’s okay for him to punish me, but not you?”

“Yep,” he nods. “Because he loves spanking your ass. And there is no danger of him losing control with you. Not like that, anyway.”

“Do you guys talk about me?”

Conor grins at me. “Course we do.”

“Like, really talk? About what we do and stuff?”

He stares at me for a little while as though he’s thinking about his answer, and my heart flutters in my chest. I mean, all of his brothers have watched me with each of them at some point, however talking about what we do privately seems a step too far. But then Conor’s face breaks into a grin and he pulls me closer to him. “Don’t look so worried. We don’t talk about that stuff. Of course we talk about you though, just like we talk about each other. Shane knows you. He knows me. And he knows what you need, just like I do. He’ll tell me when you’re ready.”

I close my eyes and press my head against Conor’s chest, and I can’t help but think about Shane and the time he

punished me with his belt. He did push me to the edge of my limits, but then he sent me away, all hot and needy for him. Afterwards, he promised me that the next time it happened, it would end the right way, with him inside me. So despite the fact I am lying completely sated in Conor's arms, the thought of a spanking from his older brother still makes my pussy contract in anticipation.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-SEVEN

CONOR

I roll onto my side and press myself against Jessie's warm body. She moans softly in her sleep and wiggles her perfect ass against me. I will never get used to waking up next to her. She makes me feel like I'm invincible.

"Your boner is poking me in the ass," she says with a chuckle that makes my cock twitch.

"I can't help waking up like this when you're lying naked next to me, Angel," I say quietly in her ear. "Now stop wriggling or he'll be doing more than poking you."

"I think we need to pace ourselves, big guy, or I won't be able to walk by the time we get back to New York." She laughs again and I press my lips against her neck.

"You're really not helping," I growl.

She rolls onto her back until she's staring up at me. "Let's talk about something else then?"

"Okay. Tell me what you got up to during the two months I was looking for you."

She rolls her lips together and flutters her eyelashes at me in that way she does that makes me want to fuck her mouth.

I lean on my elbow so I'm looking down at her beautiful face. Tracing my fingertips over her breasts and down onto her stomach, I smile as I watch her shiver beneath my touch. "Well?"

"I didn't get up to much at all," she shrugs. "I moved around a little, selling the cars I had bought on to new owners

so that anyone looking for me would end up on a wild goose chase.”

“Well, you certainly achieved that, Angel,” I fake scowl at her, recalling the two months I trawled half the country looking for her.

“I’m sorry,” she whispers. “But I was obviously sloppy somewhere. I must have left a breadcrumb for you to find.”

“Hmm,” I smile now. “I was chasing my tail until I found that guy you sold the Chevy to.”

“Why?”

“He told me a brunette with an Irish accent sold him the car, so I ruled you out. But then he mentioned that you left a copy of Tolstoy in the glove compartment.”

“That’s how you found me?”

“Yeah.”

“A breadcrumb only you could find,” she smiles at me and the blood rushes to my dick.

“So, what did you do then? How long were you in Arizona?”

“Six weeks.”

“And?” I raise my eyebrows at her.

“And, not much. I got that job in Ray’s bar after two days. I found that little apartment and paid three months’ rent with the leftover money from the SUV. I worked and then I went home.”

“That was it?”

“Yes. It was pretty boring, but I liked it.”

I reach up and tuck a strand of hair behind her ear. “But you hate being bored?”

She raises an eyebrow at me. “Jessie Heaton hated being bored. Ryan Smith quite liked it,” she shrugs. “I don’t know. I guess I wanted to be a completely different person. I didn’t even have a smart phone.”

“It kinda seemed like you didn’t have a lot of money? That place you were living at? Working in that bar?”

“I don’t have money,” she says softly.

I frown at her because I can’t comprehend how someone with her talent isn’t sitting on a secret fortune.

“What?” she whispers. “You know Shane didn’t leave that half of a million dollars lying around in that SUV, right?”

“I know that. But you’ve worked for some of the richest people in New York. You’re the best at what you do. I guess I don’t understand why you’re so broke?” I grin at her because I don’t want that to sound like an accusation.

“Well, money isn’t really that important to me. Besides, it draws attention. People notice you when you’re rich and I kind of like being unnoticed.”

“You could never go unnoticed, Angel,” I say, brushing my hand over her cheek and leaning down to steal a quick kiss.

She smiles back at me. “You know what I mean.” She pushes gently against my chest. “Besides, I know how to get money if I ever really need it, and I suppose there is some security in that. There are plenty of billionaires with fat, offshore bank accounts that I could tap into whenever I need to. And as for those rich people I worked for, it’s not like Nikolai Semenov paid me for my services. And that was fine by me because I always had an ulterior motive.”

“And we didn’t pay you either,” I add, feeling guilty at that realization.

“You gave me room and board, and everything else I ever needed,” she purrs softly.

“So, you didn’t look into Alexei at all?”

She shakes her head. “Not once. I suppose I was trying to convince myself if I didn’t think about him, or any of it, I could really be this new person. I know it sounds crazy now, and I know it wouldn’t have lasted, but it was nice to be normal for a little while. You know?”

“I get that, Angel.”

“I should probably get a new laptop,” she shrugs.

“We’ll stop by somewhere and get you one today. Okay?”

“Yeah. Thank you.”

“And what about guys?” I ask as my hand slides lower again and a wave of anger and jealousy rolls into my chest at the thought of anyone but me and my brothers putting their hands on her.

“I told you there was no one else,” she whispers.

“Some must have tried, though? I mean, you’re hotter than fire, Jessie Ryan.”

A blush creeps over her cheeks and she blinks at me. “A few asked me out, but I told them to go to hell.”

Leaning down, I brush my lips over her cheek and the smell of her skin makes my cock throb. “You did, huh?”

“Yes,” she breathes. “I much preferred my own company.”

Fuck! “And who did you think about when you were getting yourself off then, Angel,” I growl as I press soft kisses along her jawline and onto her neck.

“Your brothers,” she giggles.

“My brothers? Really?” I growl as I slide my hand between her thighs and rub two fingers softly over her clit.

“And you of course, and those magic fingers of yours.” I slide my fingers lower until they reach her hot entrance. “Conor,” she groans and winces slightly as I push a finger inside her.

“You sore this morning, Angel?”

“Yes. A little,” she murmurs.

I grind my cock against her hip. “I need some part of me inside you, Jessie,” I growl. “You think you can handle my mouth?”

“Yes,” she gasps as I slide my finger out of her pussy.

“Come up here and sit on my face then?”

She grins at me as she sits up, scooting up the bed until she's straddling my face.

"I said sit, Jessie."

"I am sitting," she protests.

Wrapping my arms around her thighs, I prepare to pull her down and hold her in place. "No. If I have to lift my head even half an inch for my lips to be touching yours, then you're not sitting, Angel. You're hovering. Now sit that beautiful pussy on my face now."

"What if I suffocate you?" She pops one eyebrow at me.

"Then I'll die a very fucking happy man. Now sit!" I pull her down onto my face as soon as the words have left my mouth and my cock throbs appreciatively as I taste her. "You're so fucking sweet," I mumble against her as I run my tongue the length of her pussy lips before sucking on her clit. She rides my face as I suck and lick at her delicious cunt and the sound of her whimpering and moaning my name makes me as hard as iron. She holds onto the headboard as she gets closer to the edge, until she's coming apart in my mouth.

I wipe my mouth as she climbs off me and grin up at her. "You are fucking delicious."

"Hmmm," she purrs contentedly. "I think you have a magic tongue too." She flashes me a wicked grin as she shifts down the bed and bends her head low until her lips are just inches from my cock.

"I'm pretty sure you can work some magic yourself." I flash my eyebrows at her and she grins at me before she grabs hold of my cock and licks the pre-cum from the tip, and the look of pleasure on her face makes my balls draw up into my stomach.

Jessie gives head like she enjoys it as much as I do and it's such a fucking turn on to watch her while she sucks my cock. She bobs her head and takes me all the way into her mouth until I'm nudging against her throat and a groan of pleasure rumbles through my body. If my tongue is magic, then hers is fucking miraculous. She runs it along my shaft as she sucks

me greedily while she massages my balls, making me feel like a teenage boy when a few minutes later I spurt hot and heavy against the back of her throat.

The sounds she makes as she sucks me clean give me a warm feeling in the pit of my stomach. I lie back and smile as she crawls back up the bed and nestles herself against my chest. I love this woman more than I have ever loved anyone in my life.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-EIGHT

JESSIE

I leave Conor in the motel room talking on the phone to Shane while I go to reception to check out. They were discussing some business in Ireland that seemed to involve Shane's ex-fiancée, Erin, and I didn't want to hang around and listen to any conversation involving her. She brings out a jealous streak in me I didn't even know I had until I met the Ryan brothers.

After handing in our room key, I push open the doors of the motel reception and walk around the building to the parking lot where Conor's car is parked, almost bumping into two men as I round the corner. One of them nudges the other and they share a look like they know me. I try to step past them, but they block my path.

"Hey, you're the girl from last night?" one says and I recognize them as the two men from the bar.

"Yeah! The cocktease who shook her ass like a whore and then pretended she didn't want us to touch her," the other one adds.

I take a deep breath and count to five in my head. These are two big guys and while I'm pretty sure I could take one of them if I caught him by surprise, both of them might be a stretch. Since Conor is in the motel room talking to Shane, I should avoid riling these assholes any further, so I resist the urge to make a snappy comeback. "Can you let a lady past please, gentlemen?" I say with as sweet a smile as I can muster.

“You ain’t no lady. Tramp!” the bearded one snorts and his buddy starts to laugh loudly and I see the flash of his gold canine tooth.

I shake my head and try to move past them again, but they move as I do, blocking my path to the front and side and preventing me from walking away.

“Guys? Please?” I say with a sigh.

“Please?” one says in a whiny voice as they both edge closer to me until I feel the heat from their bodies. Anger bubbles up from the pit of my stomach and comes out of my mouth before I can stop it.

“Why don’t you pair of dickless wonders crawl back under whatever rock you slithered out from under and let me be on my way?” I snarl.

“Dickless?” The bearded one snarls as he grabs his crotch. “I’ll show you dickless, bitch.”

He grabs hold of my left arm and I swing my right one back and punch him in the jaw, making him stagger backwards. His buddy steps in and grabs me from behind, pinning both hands behind my back. “You gonna take that from this little whore, John?” he laughs as I try to wrench myself from his grip. But he holds me tight, his thick, sausage fingers digging into the soft flesh of my arms.

“Bitch!” The one I now know is John snarls as he wipes some blood from his mouth and steps back toward me. I stamp my foot down on the toes of the one holding me and he cries out in pain, but he doesn’t let me go. Instead, he holds me tighter as John pushes his face close to mine. “Whores like you need to be taught a lesson, darlin’,” he leers at me as his hands drop to his cock again. “Get her in the truck. Quick,” he demands as he looks around the empty parking lot.

“The fuck you will,” I growl before I spit in his face. He raises his hand and slaps me hard across the cheek with the back of it, making my head snap back. Running my tongue over the inside of my cheek, I taste blood and I spit at him again.

“Fucking hell, Jeff. Muzzle her, will you?” he snarls at his buddy standing behind me and a few seconds later, a large, sweaty hand clamps over my mouth. “You need to be taught some manners, little girl,” he says as he nods toward the truck and Jeff starts to walk me toward it.

I try to scream, but Jeff’s grubby palm muffles the sound. I kick and wriggle as they drag me to the truck, but Jeff carries me with ease. I glance around, desperate for someone to see me. Where the hell is Conor? This isn’t playtime any more. These two psychopaths are seriously going to kidnap me. Fuck.

My heart starts pounding in my chest as my eyes search for a weapon or something I can use to my advantage. John opens the truck door and Jeff lifts me by my waist with my arms still pinned behind my back. He’s about to throw me onto the back seat but I plant my two feet on either side of the door frame to stop him.

“Get her the fuck in there,” John barks, as he quickly looks around us.

“Help me the fuck out then,” Jeff snarls his reply.

John grabs hold of my legs by my knees, forcing them together to try and release them from the door frame. “Come on darlin’. I promise these legs will be spread wide for the rest of the day and night. But I need to get you in this truck first.”

Jeff chuckles behind me. ‘We’re going to tear you apart, little girl,’ he says against my ear and bile surges up my throat from my stomach.

“Not if I tear you apart first, you sick fuck,” I hear Conor’s familiar growl behind me and almost cry with relief. He grabs hold of John first, pulling him away from me and punching him so hard in the face that he knocks him out cold.

Jeff releases me, turning to face Conor, who glares at him with a murderous look on his face.

“I’m going to rip off every part of your body that you touched her with,” he snarls, his teeth bared like a rabid dog.

“And then I’m going to make you beg for your momma while my girl watches me torture you to death.”

Jeff’s face turns a deathly shade of white, but he throws a punch at Conor, who ducks it easily, before he punches Jeff in the face, causing his nose to burst open like a ripe peach. Jeff howls in pain and drops to the ground as Conor starts raining blows down on his head. Although there is no doubt Jeff deserves whatever Conor has planned for him, I just want to get out of here. I look up to see two men walking out of the bar across the street and wonder if they might be buddies of John and Jeff.

I grab hold of Conor’s arm. “Conor. Please stop. You’ll only draw attention to us. This isn’t New York. If someone calls the cops, they’ll arrest us both. You’ve made your point. Let’s go.”

He turns to me, his eyes narrowed. “They were about to put you in their truck, Jessie. They were going to rape and probably kill you. They’re going to fucking die for putting their hands on you.”

“I know they deserve to, but I really want to go. Please?” I glance across the street at the two approaching men before I look back to Conor.

“For fuck’s sake,” he snarls as he takes his cell out of his pocket and snaps a picture of the license plate before taking my hand and walking us to his SUV. He picks up our bags from the ground on the way, which he must have dropped when he saw me almost being thrown into that truck.

“Why did you take a picture?” I whisper.

“You think I’m going to let them away with what they just did to you, Angel. I won’t kill them, but I’ll make damn sure someone else does. They will never put their hands on anyone else ever again. Now get in the goddamn car,” he snaps and I climb inside with a lump in my throat. It seems like he’s mad at me.

Once he’s put our bags in the trunk, he jumps into the driver’s seat. Reaching out his hand, he rubs the pad of his

thumb over my lip. "Please let me go back there and fuck them up," he breathes.

Turning around, I see the two guys from the bar are now helping John and Jeff get to their feet. I have no doubt that Conor could take all four of them, but I don't want to hang around and have him prove my point. "I just want to get out of here, Conor. Please?"

He frowns and starts the ignition, before gunning the engine and wheel spinning out of the parking lot.

I sit in the passenger seat in silence as Conor glares at the road ahead. When we've driven about a mile, he pulls the car over and takes off his seatbelt before unclipping mine too. "Come here," he orders and I blink at him for a few seconds before I climb out of my seat and move onto his lap until I'm straddling him.

He draws in a deep breath and brushes my hair back from my face. "Are you hurt?"

"My cheek stings a little. But I'm okay. Why do guys like that think that they have a right to put their hands on women that way? Assholes." I rub my cheek as though I can rub the stain of their hands from me, and he takes my hand and kisses my fingertips. Then he brushes his fingers over the mark on my face, much gentler than I did.

"Because they're backwards thinking, misogynistic assholes, Angel."

"They called me a cockteasing whore," I whisper. "Because I was dancing last night."

His whole body tenses beneath me. "Fuckers. You should have let me deal with them. I would rip their fucking limbs off and shove them up their asses," he snarls.

"They're not worth us getting into any trouble for, Conor. The last thing we need is to draw any unwanted attention to ourselves. I just want us to get home." I place my hands on his chest and his breathing slows.

"Home?" he smiles at me.

“You know what I mean,” I whisper.

“But it is your home, Angel. I’m just happy to hear you calling it that again.”

“I’m happy to be calling it that too,” I say as I lean forward and place a soft kiss on his lips.

“How do you manage to have me eating out of the palm of your hand, Angel?” he breathes. “You have a power over me like no one has ever had before.”

I bite my lip as I look into his warm brown eyes. “That’s not true.”

“Yes, it is, and you know it. I would do anything for you, Jessie Ryan. You’re all I think about every second of every day.”

Wrapping my arms around his neck, I press a soft kiss against his cheek. “I love you, Conor Ryan,” I breathe. “And I would do anything for you, too.”

CHAPTER

TWENTY-NINE

CONOR

I lean against the doorway of the gas station with my cell phone to my ear as I watch Jessie choosing candy from the shelves. Shane answers my call on the third ring.

“Hey, Con. Everything okay?” he says.

“Yeah. And no. I’m going to send you a license plate after I end this call.”

“Okay?”

“These two guys tried to take Jessie.”

“Take her? What do you mean, take her?” he snaps and I can picture him frowning while he sits at his desk.

I peer through the door to make sure she’s still there, and she smiles at me as she holds up a huge bag of candy. I shake my head and she pouts before putting it back on the shelf. “I mean like kidnap and rape her.”

“What?” he shouts. “What the fuck happened? If you’re sending me a plate then I assume they’re still breathing? So why is that?” he snarls.

“They were two assholes from a bar we were in. They are still breathing because she just wanted to get out of there and begged me not to hang around and beat the two cunts to death.”

“Fuck! Is she okay?”

“Yeah. She has a mark on her face, but she’s okay.”

I hear a sharp intake of breath before he answers. “Send me the picture and I’ll make sure they’re dealt with.”

“Thanks.”

“Rape and kidnap her?”

“Yeah.” I swallow as I imagine what might have happened if I hadn’t got to her when I did. “Our girl is a magnet for assholes.”

“Well, I’ll make sure they suffer then.”

“You got any news at all on Alexei yet?” I keep my eyes on Jessie as she walks to the cash register to pay.

“No. Has Jessie got any idea where he might be?”

“No. We talked about him and she hasn’t looked for him at all since she left. She’s been completely off grid.”

“I could really use her fucking help finding him, Con.”

“I know. We’ll be passing by a mall later today. We’re going to stop off and get her a laptop. Once she’s all set up, I’m sure she’ll find him in no time.”

“Yeah, well I hope so. Because as soon as he knows we have her, he’s going to be back here with a fucking army.”

“Yup. You thought about if maybe we should get out of the city for a while?”

“No,” he barks. “I’m not being driven out of our city by the fucking Russians.”

“I know, but if it protects Jessie...”

“We’ll protect Jessie. He’ll never lay another finger on her.”

“You’re right.” I nod my agreement, although trouble has a habit of finding our girl even when she’s not looking for it. “You heard any more about the evil cunt who spawned us?”

“No.”

“How are Liam and Mikey?”

“Mikey’s okay. But Liam is... well, you know how he gets. He’s too hard on himself.”

“Yeah, I know. Tell him Jessie will give him a video call later. That should cheer him up.”

Shane laughs softly. “I’m sure it will.”

“You want a call too, bro?”

“No. What I need to say should be said face to face,” he says with a sigh.

“Okay. She misses you though.”

“I gotta go,” he says, clearly changing the subject. “Send me that license plate and I’ll speak to you tomorrow.”

“Okay. Bye.”

Jessie walks through the door as I finish the call. “Everything okay?” she asks with a smile that damn near takes my breath away.

“Yup. Just checking in back home. Now let’s hit the road and go find you a new laptop.” I put my arm around her shoulder and we walk back to my car.

CHAPTER

THIRTY

JESSIE

Wrapping a towel around myself, I step out of the bathroom to see Conor is still fiddling with the laptop he bought me earlier.

“I thought you might have joined me.” I arch an eyebrow as I walk toward him.

He reaches out and pulls me onto his lap, rubbing his nose along my throat and inhaling deeply. “You smell incredible, Angel. And if you wanted me to join you, you should have asked. I thought you wanted me to get this thing up and running?”

“Have you?”

“Yep. And I’ve installed all of your apps from the cloud. You’re good to go.”

“Shall we video call the twins now? You promised them a call, didn’t you? And then we can just relax for the rest of the evening?”

“Relax?” he growls as he runs his hand up my thigh. “I have no intention of relaxing, Angel.”

“Well, we’ll be in bed at least,” I say as I bite my lip.

He gives an exaggerated groan. “You’d better call them now then. You’re connected to the WiFi.”

Leaning forward, I open up the FaceTime app and dial Liam’s number. He answers on the fourth ring. “Hey, baby,” he grins as his handsome face fills the screen.

“Hey, Red,” Mikey says as he nudges Liam out of the way.

“Umm, I’m here too,” Conor adds with a wave and a grin.

“We’re not interested in you, bro,” Liam laughs. “In fact, why don’t you go out for half an hour? We want some time alone with our girl.”

Conor tightens his grip on my waist. “Not a chance, boys.”

Mikey and Liam grumble and complain and I can’t help but laugh. “We’ll be back in a few days, then you can have me all to yourselves,” I say with a smile.

“Are you only wearing a towel, Red?” Mikey says as he brings his face closer to the screen.

“Yeah. I just got out of the shower.”

He groans loudly. “Fuck. You’re such a tease. Take it off.”

I tense instinctively at the word tease after those two assholes this morning, but I know Mikey means nothing by it, and there is no way he would ever disrespect a woman like that.

Conor obviously feels my reaction, and he kisses me softly on the shoulder as he rubs a hand over my hip and I melt against his chest. Then he reaches for the screen and tilts it slightly so his brothers can see my thighs. Or more likely, his hand sliding between them. “Say goodnight, gents. We’ve got things to do here,” he chuckles.

“If what you’re doing involves your hand sliding up any further, I think it’s only fair that you leave the camera on,” Liam says in all seriousness.

I look up at Conor who flashes his eyebrows at me. “You want to watch me fucking our girl, boys?” he says in that smooth, velvety voice that turns my insides to jelly.

“What?” I say, shaking my head.

“We’ve watched you in real life, Red. Why not on the computer screen?”

I look between the twins on the screen and Conor, and they all seem to be totally up for this. I suppose Mikey has a point about them watching me before. “You wouldn’t record it, would you?” I ask.

“And risk someone seeing our girl being fucked in the ass? No way,” Mikey laughs.

“Who said the ass?” I gasp.

Conor laughs and shakes his head. “Hey, it wasn’t me, Angel.”

“Whatever you two feel like doing is fine with us. As long as we get to watch it all,” Liam says as he nudges Mikey away from the screen.

“You sure you want to do this?” Conor rubs his hand over my back and nuzzles my neck.

“Yes,” I breathe because the prospect of him fucking me while his brothers watch from thousands of miles away is so damn hot.

“Come on, then.” He taps me on the ass and I stand as he picks up the laptop and places it on the nightstand. He turns to me with a look of deviance in his eyes and beckons me toward him. I step closer and he reaches up and pulls off my towel until I’m standing entirely naked.

“You’re fucking beautiful, you know that?” he growls as his hands run over my body, while Liam and Mikey mumble their agreement. His hand slips between my thighs and he dips one finger inside me, making my legs tremble. Reaching out, I hold on to his shoulders as he quickly slides in another finger and I moan out loud.

“Fuck, Con,” Mikey groans loudly making Conor chuckle before he withdrawing his hand. “Lie on the bed, Angel,” he growls as he holds his fingers up and sucks them clean.

I step backwards and lie down as I look up at him while being acutely aware of Mikey and Liam watching us on the computer screen.

“How does she taste, bro?” Liam asks.

“As fucking sweet as you remember, but I’m not doing a running commentary here, boys,” Conor says as he undresses. “So stop asking questions and just sit back and enjoy the show.”

When he’s naked, Conor crawls onto the bed over me, holding himself up on his forearms and nudging my thighs apart with his knee. “Shall we give the boys a show that will keep them satisfied until we get back, Angel?” he whispers in my ear.

“Yes, please.”

He trails kisses down my body until he settles between my thighs and for the next half hour he makes me come over and over again with his tongue and his fingers while his younger brothers watch from the sidelines. They encourage him whenever I’m close to the edge and voice their approval each time he makes me come. When he finally pushes his cock inside me, I’m beyond desperate for him. My walls clench around him as I pull him in deeper.

“Conor,” I pant in his ear.

He growls against my neck, but it’s the sound of the twins shouting and groaning that fills the room. “I think we just made my little brothers come, Angel,” he laughs softly.

“I think we did,” I laugh too.

“Hold on,” he pulls out of me and I groan at the loss of him.

Conor pushes himself up onto his knees and leans over to the computer. “Show’s over for tonight, boys. I’m glad you enjoyed yourselves, but this next segment is for my eyes only. Say goodnight.”

“Aw, Con,” the twins protest.

“Goodnight, boys,” I shout to the screen before Conor presses the button to end the call.

He leans back over me and presses his lips against my ear as he nudges the tip of his cock against my entrance. “You’re so fucking wet, Jessie.”

“I know.”

“I love fucking your pussy, but I want to fuck your ass.”

My insides melt like butter. “Is that why you turned the laptop off?”

“Hmm,” he mumbles against me and it vibrates over my skin, making me shiver. “I don’t want those animals watching me the first time I fuck this juicy ass,” he says as he takes hold of it and squeezes. Then he slides his hand to my pussy and dips a finger inside. “We don’t have any lube, Angel, but I think we got enough of your cream here to do the job. What do you say?”

“Yes,” I breathe.

Fire blazes in his eyes and he pushes himself up and climbs off the bed.

“You want me to flip over?” I arch an eyebrow at him.

He shakes his head. “Nope.” Then he reaches down and grabs me by the hips, pulling me to the edge of the bed as he drops to his knees. “This motel bed is the perfect height.”

“Oh.” I chew on my lip. I’ve never done it this way before.

Conor lifts my legs until my knees are hooked over his shoulders and my hips are slightly raised off the bed. His cock nudges at the seam of my ass. He was right. This is the perfect height. Slipping one of his hands between my thighs, he coats a finger in my juices before sliding it to my ass and pushing it inside up to his knuckle.

I groan loudly as I instinctively raise my hips. He places a firm hand on my abdomen, applying the perfect amount of pressure to keep me in place. “Your ass is so hot and tight,” he growls as he slides his finger deeper inside. At the same time, he edges forward, lifting his hips and sliding his cock deep inside my wet pussy.

“Conor.”

“That good, Angel?” he whispers.

“Uh-huh,” I nod as he finger fucks my ass while he gently thrusts in and out of me.

“You think my cock is slippery enough yet?” he chuckles and heat sears across my cheeks because we both know that it is. I am dripping for him.

He withdraws his finger and his cock and I take a deep breath as I prepare for what’s about to happen. He switches hands, using the fingers of the one he was pushing down on my abdomen with to slide through my slick folds as he pushes his cock into my ass. “Fuck, Jessie,” he grinds out as he works the tip inside.

Instinctively, I tense my muscles and he sucks in a deep breath before he looks at me with a frown on his face. “You okay?”

“Yeah. I’ve just never done it like this before,” I whisper. “It feels so much more intimate to be looking at your face while you’re doing that.”

“That’s kind of the point, Angel.”

I chew on my lip. “I know.”

“Let’s make you a little more comfortable then.” He winks at me just as he slides two thick fingers deep inside my pussy.

“Oh, fuck,” I groan as my back arches in pleasure. He presses his free hand down on my abdomen again, holding me in place as he finger fucks me, coaxing an intense rush of wet heat from me. It trickles down the seam of my ass, providing him with more lubricant. He takes the opportunity to slide his cock further inside and this time he meets no resistance. “That’s it. Let me all the way inside you,” he growls as he pushes deeper.

“Conor,” I groan. “That feels so good.”

“I know, Angel,” he grunts. “I’m so desperate to fuck you.”

“Then do it. Please,” I breathe as waves of pleasure roll over my body. He moves his hips slowly at first, allowing me to adjust to him while at the same time pumping his fingers in

and out of my pussy. I close my eyes as the feelings of euphoria threaten to completely overwhelm me.

“Look at me, Jessie,” he commands and my eyes fly open and lock on his. His eyes stay fixed on mine as he works my body expertly, bringing me to the edge of my limits before easing me back down again. When I feel like I can’t take any more, he shifts his hand on my abdomen slightly lower, still holding me in place, but close enough that he can rub my clit with his thumb and I swear my eyes almost roll out of my head.

“Conor,” I half groan, half scream his name. He glares down at me with his dark, fiery eyes as he maintains his slow, steady pace and coaxes the longest, most intense orgasm from me. It releases a gush of fluid and he growls his appreciation.

As I blink up at him as a flush creeps over my cheeks. Only Shane has ever made that happen before, and I know how much he loves it, but I always feel a little embarrassed. However, Conor looks down at me with such love and desire burning through him that it makes me smile.

“That was fucking incredible,” he growls, rubbing the last of my orgasm out with his fingers before he releases my legs, planting them on the floor as he leans over me. “I have no idea how I’ve stopped myself from coming yet,” he says, pinning my hands to the bed.

“Neither do I,” I pant. “Because that was something else.”

“Wrap your legs around me,” he whispers against my ear.

I do as he asks while he presses deeper into my ass. “I’m going to fuck you real hard now. Okay?”

“Okay,” I breathe as he releases my hands and I snake my arms around him too. He seals his mouth over mine and kisses me hungrily. Then he fucks me so hard I almost pass out. When he finds his own release, he throws his head back. “Fuck, Jessie,” he growls like a wild animal as he fills me with his release.

He eases out gently and then he folds over me, his head resting on my breasts as he remains kneeling on the floor.

“I love you,” I whisper as I curl his hair around my index finger.

He smiles against my skin. “Love you too, Angel.”

AFTER WE’VE both showered again and eaten some food, Conor and I lie on the bed watching TV. My eyes are drawn to the laptop on the nightstand.

“You want to fire that up now?” he asks, cupping my chin and tilting my head so he can look at my face.

I shake my head.

“You sure?”

“I want one more day of pretending we’re just a normal couple before I have to go back into that world. Is that okay?”

“Of course.”

We lie there in silence, but that damn laptop is calling me. I refuse to switch it on, though. I refuse to spend the next few hours trawling the dark net trying to find Alexei.

“I assume he’s no longer at his fortress in Connecticut?” I whisper.

Conor runs a warm hand over my arm. “No. Shane has been looking for him, but he’s gone to ground again. We have no idea where he is.”

“You understand he’ll come for me as soon as he finds out I’m back in New York?”

“Yes.”

“Are you all okay with that?”

“Of course we are. We’ll be ready for him this time, Angel.”

I sit up and shuffle back until I’m leaning against the headboard.

“You want to talk about it?” Conor asks.

I chew on my lip because the answer isn’t so straightforward. “I don’t want to. But, I’m not sure I can avoid it any longer.”

He sits up too and puts an arm around my shoulder. “Okay. Let’s start with what we already know” he suggests.

That sounds like a good idea. Perhaps putting things a little straighter in my head will stop my mind from racing for now. I take a deep breath. “Alexei and my father were twins. He believes he’s my father though, and that my mom and dad stole me from him.”

Conor nods. “And Alexei is the head of the Russian mob.”

“You’re certain of that?” I ask.

Conor nods. “One hundred percent. His identity has always been a closely guarded secret, but, well, when you disappeared with him, let’s just say we turned over every stone we could to find out who he was.”

I swallow, recalling the heartbreak I caused myself and the brothers, believing that Alexei was the father I had watched murdered by the Wolf, and leaving with him that day. As if reading my mind, Conor reaches up and strokes my cheek with the back of his knuckles.

“What else?” he whispers.

“We know that Alexei was married to my mom two years before I was born. And that her name was Nataliya then.”

“But your mom left Russia when she was pregnant with you. And she changed her name to Veronica?”

I nod. “So, my mom was married to Alexei? But she fell for my dad? Or maybe she always wanted my dad?”

Conor nods his agreement. “Maybe.”

“We know for sure that Alexei paid for the hit on my family and that the Wolf was supposed to deliver me to him, but decided to keep me for himself.”

“Yeah.”

“I wonder why, though? The Wolf was the Bratva’s top assassin. Why would he risk his whole career for some girl? He defied the head of the Russian mob to keep me prisoner. I mean, I get what he wanted from me.” I shudder at the

memories and tears prick at my eyes. “But he was so powerful, I’m sure he could have had his pick from so many women.”

Conor presses his lips against my forehead and his body tenses. “I will never let him hurt you again, Angel.”

“I know.”

“We will find Alexei and the Wolf, and we will make sure they give you the answers you need before we make them pay for everything they have ever taken from you.”

“I’m not sure there’s anything you could do to them that would make them pay for everything, Conor,” I say as a shiver runs down my spine. A tear rolls down my cheek and Conor brushes it away with the pad of his thumb. “I don’t know who I hate more. I suppose the Wolf was just doing his job, and if it wasn’t for Alexei, I would still have my family. But the Wolf...” I shake my head. “He took everything I had left,” I whisper.

“You’re a fucking warrior, Jessie Ryan.”

I don’t want to think about the Wolf or Alexei Ivanov any more. “I like being a Ryan,” I say with a smile.

He arches an eyebrow at me. “We could swing by Atlantic City on our way home and make you a Ryan for real?”

“As in get married? Are you serious?” I shove my hands against his chest. “The twins would kill us.”

He laughs out loud. “Liam and Mikey would get over it eventually, as long as I agreed to share you, but Shane would cut off my balls.”

“Why? Does he hate me that much?” I ask as my heart flutters in my chest. I don’t think I will feel okay about anything until I can speak to him again. There were so many things we left unsaid. I will never forget the look in his eyes when he told me he would never forgive me for leaving them. He was right too. I had promised them all I would never leave. But I still did.

Conor cups my chin in his hand and leans closer to me. “No. He doesn’t hate you at all. But I can’t have this

conversation with you, Angel, because I promised him that I wouldn't."

I blink at him. "What conversation?"

"This one. About you and him."

Closing my eyes, I snuggle into his chest. I don't imagine I will ever understand Shane Ryan.

"He's not the cold-hearted bastard you think he is, Angel," Conor says as he brushes my hair behind my ear.

"I know that," I say, because I don't think he's cold hearted at all. But he's as stubborn as a mule.

"He never wanted to come to New York, you know? He was happy back in Ireland."

I look up at him again. "Really. So, why did he?"

"Because of our father."

"Didn't he and Shane get along?"

"They did once. Shane was always our dad's favorite. In fact, he didn't want any more kids. He barely tolerated me, but he plain despised Liam and Mikey, and he made no attempt at hiding it either."

I sit up straighter again so I can look at his face. "Really?"

He nods. "Growing up, he was cruel and spiteful. Our mum tried to protect us as best she could, but she couldn't even protect herself. He killed her when I was nine. The twins were only one."

My hand flies to my mouth. I knew that there was a history with their father, but I had no idea it involved anything like this. "He killed her? Did he go to prison?"

Conor shakes his head and scowls. "Patrick Ryan rules Belfast, Jessie. He's Teflon. Invincible, and completely fucking untouchable. He told everyone she fell and hit her head and no one dared to disagree with him. My mum had a sister, Em, and she tried to help. But she was no match for him. He drove her away just like he did his own brother. No

matter what he ever did, he always walked away without a scratch.”

“Wow!” I blink at him. “What happened to you all after she died?”

“We stayed with him. He was our dad and, as far as he was concerned, we were his property. Shane was thirteen, and he became our protector after that. He did a good job most of the time. But our dad decided I needed to start taking care of myself. No son of Patrick Ryan was going to let other people fight his battles. So, he started me bare-knuckle boxing. I was a scrawny kid, believe it or not. Tall and skinny. I hated fighting. I came home every single week with a bloody nose or a broken bone, but he kept on sending me out there, fighting kids older and twice the size of me. He said it would build my character. And when I lost, he would give me a beating too, for being weak.”

“Conor,” I reach for him and take hold of his hand as my heart breaks for the little boy he was.

“Maybe he had a point because I sure as hell got good at winning pretty quick. I didn’t have much choice. Shane taught me the most effective ways to disable guys twice my size, and I started to win all of my fights. Shane always stuck up for me at home, but I tried to stay out of my dad’s way as much as possible. But then, the twins got older and, fuck, Shane spent almost every hour of every day having to look out for those poor little bastards.” Conor shakes his head. “I swear our dad would have killed the two of them if it wasn’t for Shane.”

I have to take a deep breath as I think about the four wonderful men I know and what they must have endured at the hands of the man who was supposed to protect them. “God. You must have all been terrified of him?”

He nods.

“So what made you come to New York, though? Did something happen?”

Conor nods. “My dad only got worse as he got older, and we got bigger and stronger. The less able he became to

physically control us, the crueler and more vicious he got. Particularly me and Shane. By the time I was sixteen, we could both kick his ass, and he knew neither of us were scared of him. But as he'd already taken our mum, he used the twins to keep us in line instead."

"Shit!"

"Yeah. He's a piece of work," Conor says as he looks beyond me and into the distance.

"He's still alive?"

"Unfortunately, yes. Although not for much longer. He's sick. Lung cancer. Apparently, he hasn't got long left. But death is too merciful for that fucker. Shane almost killed him the night before we came to the States, but, well that's Shane's story to tell, Angel, not mine."

"So you all came here to the States after that?"

"Yes, but not because Shane almost killed him. Because of why Shane tried to kill him."

"And why was that?"

"Hmm? Well, that one is the twins' story to tell," he arches an eyebrow at me.

I place my hands on his face. "I'm sorry you went through all that."

"Made me the man I am today," he says with a shrug.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-ONE

SHANE

I sit at my desk staring at the blank computer screen, so lost in my own thoughts that I don't even hear Liam walk into the room.

"You okay?" he asks quietly as he takes a seat opposite me.

"What?" I blink at him as he narrows his dark eyes at me in concern. "Yeah. Just thinking."

"Did I hear you on the phone to Aunt Em earlier?"

I nod in response. Our Aunt Emma is our mother's younger sister. She and her daughter, Siobhan, are the only members of our family in Ireland that we have any contact with. Emma did her best to look out for us when we were kids, but she was barely more than a kid herself. My father terrified her, as he does most people, and eventually he drove her away completely. We reconnected when me and my brothers moved to New York. She hates our father almost as much as we do.

"She give you any news?" Liam asks with a frown.

"He's still alive," I reply. "Barely."

His only response is a snort.

"Apparently, he's asking for us."

I see the change in Liam's face instantly as it contorts in pain and anger. "What?" he snarls. "All of us? Or just you?"

"All of us," I reply with a sigh. There is no escaping the fact that I have always been our father's favorite — a curse

rather than a blessing.

“Cunt,” Liam spits. “Why? What has he said?”

“Em spoke to his nurse. She said he’s been asking her to contact his sons for him. He told her he had four and they’d all moved away and left him. Seems this nurse is doing her best to get our contact details, but Em wouldn’t give them up.”

“Four sons?” Liam shouts before banging his fist on my desk. “Four? Did he conveniently forget he all but disowned me and Mikey the moment we were born?” He’s unable to contain his anger and he slams his fist down on my desk. “He is no fucking father of mine.”

“I know.” I reach across the desk and place my hand on top of his. The things our cunt of a father put my younger brothers through still gives me nightmares and I can’t imagine the horrors that even hearing his name bring up for Liam and Mikey.

He looks up at me with tears in his eyes and I have to force myself not to look away from him, because it kills me to see him like this. I haven’t seen Liam cry since he was three years old and recalling that day slices a fresh welt across my heart. Mikey used to cry. It was a pitiful sound that used to cut through me like glass. But Liam never cried, because he understood from a very young age that his tears gave our father some sick sense of satisfaction.

He’s twenty-six years old now and he’s on the brink of breaking down in front of my eyes. “When you speak to Aunt Em again, you give her a message for that nurse of his,” he spits. “You tell her that I am no fucking son of his. He gave up the right to call himself my father when he tried to drown me at birth, and every other fucking time he tried to kill me.”

“I’ll tell her,” I say, squeezing his hand.

“Why did he fucking hate me so much, Shane?” He hangs his head low and sniffs loudly, trying to stop himself from crying.

“Because she loved you so fucking much, that’s why.” I place my free hand on top of his head. “Mum was over the

fucking moon when she found out she was having twins and he hated that she wanted you so much. She hid everything from him as much as she could, but when he wasn't there, she would tell me and Conor about all her plans for you both. Her dreams for all of us. She used to let us feel her stomach whenever you kicked. He despised that he already had to share her with me and Conor, and he couldn't handle how much of her time and attention you needed. She named you both after her grandfathers. And he hated that too."

"Did he kill her because of us?" Liam sniffs.

"No. He killed her because he's a jealous, sadistic cunt, and don't ever forget that."

Liam wipes his cheeks with the back of his hand but keeps his head bent low because he doesn't want me to see his tears. As though I might think him weak, when he's one of the strongest men I have ever known.

"I don't even remember her," he whispers.

"I know, kid," I say as emotion almost chokes me. Our father murdered her when the twins were only a year old. I am both blessed and cursed by memories of her. She had a smile that could make you forget any hurt you felt. She had the softest hands. She was kind and smart and funny. She was everything our father was not. And despite everything he ever did to her, she always woke us each morning with a smile and a kiss on the forehead. "You remind me so much of her. The way you can make people see things differently. She could do that. Your eyes crinkle the same way as hers when you smile too," I say, swallowing the lump in my throat.

"He took everything from us," Liam spits.

I sit and look at my youngest brother and the guilt of what happened the night before we left for New York weighs heavy on me. "I'm sorry I didn't kill him for you, kid."

He looks up at me and wipes his eyes with the pads of his thumbs. "What? That's not on you, Shane."

"It is," I swallow hard. I've never told Liam or Mikey this before. "The night before we left, I found him. He was at

mum's grave. He was drunk. And alone. Crying about how much he missed her."

Liam frowns at me, but he doesn't speak.

"I pressed a gun against his head, Liam, and all I had to do was pull the trigger, but I couldn't do it. I couldn't let him die on her grave. Not after what he did to her. I couldn't tie him to her in death too." I feel the tear run down my own cheek and wipe it away. "But I should have dragged him out of there and put a bullet in his head for what he did to you and Mikey. I let you both down."

Liam stares at me for what seems like a goddamn eternity. He's always looked up to me. He's held me on some kind of pedestal, and I can't help but think I just knocked myself off it. "No," he finally answers with a vigorous shake of his head. "You didn't let us down. Not even for a second. You raised us, Shane. All of us. If it wasn't for you, none of us would have survived at all. You could kick our asses onto the street and never speak to us again for the rest of our lives and you'd still have done more for us than any brother could ever ask. I would still owe you everything."

"I didn't do anything that you wouldn't do for me," I say dismissively, uncomfortable with the fact that he thinks he owes me anything at all. For all I have done for my brothers, they have done just as much for me.

Liam smiles at me. "You say I can't take a compliment?"

"Well, I already know I'm awesome," I laugh. "And I did a pretty fucking good job of raising you, didn't I?"

Liam grins at me and I see the little kid who used to sneak into my room in the middle of the night to make sure I hadn't left him. When I called off the wedding to Erin, she blamed my brothers. She couldn't accept the fact that it was due to her deceit and manipulation. And while she was wrong about a lot of things, she was right about the fact that I would never leave them. Not for anyone.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-TWO

MIKEY

“You seen Liam anywhere?” I pop my head into Shane’s office as I look for my twin.

“He was in here about an hour ago,” Shane frowns. “Why? Can’t you find him?”

“No.” I shake my head as I step inside the room.

“You checked the gym?”

“Checked this whole damn apartment and the club.”

“Fuck!” Shane barks.

“What?” I frown at him.

“He was talking about mum before-”

“And the sadistic prick who we once called dad?” Mikey interrupts me.

“Yep.”

“Shit. He’ll be down by the river then. I’ll go get him.” Liam likes to go and sit by the Hudson when he’s feeling particularly melancholy. He says it reminds him of Ireland, although why he wants to be reminded of the place I’ll never know. It’s a beautiful country, but our lives there were miserable.

“You want me to come with you?” Shane offers.

“Nah.” I shake my head. “I’ll bring him back.”

“Call me if you need me,” Shane frowns.

“Yeah, I will,” I say as I turn on my heel.

“Mikey,” Shane shouts as I’m halfway out of the door.

“Yeah?” I turn back to him.

“Are you okay?” He narrows his eyes in concern.

“You know me, Shane. I’m good.”

“Yeah, I do know you. So that’s why I’m asking if you’re okay?”

I walk into his office and sit on his desk. He does know me. Apart from my twin, Shane knows me better than anyone. He’s always been my father really. Ever since he saved me and Liam from being drowned in a bathtub when we were a few hours old by the lunatic who actually spawned us. It was just one of the many times he saved our lives. “What else should I be? A man I hate, who hates me, who I barely know, and who lives on the other side of the world, is dying. It has no impact on my life really, does it?” I shrug.

“I suppose not when you put it like that.”

“Liam is cut up though,” I say because these past few days I have watched him become more and more withdrawn. The only time he has a smile on his face is when Jessie calls and I wish she’d hurry her ass up and get back to us, because I miss her like crazy too.

“I know.”

“It’s funny how he never feels good enough, isn’t it? He’s one of the best people I know, but he always doubts himself. Yet the most horrible bastard to ever walk this earth is sitting back in Ireland, riddled with disease, and yet still thinks he’s the goddamn king of the world, when Liam is one hundred times the man he ever was.”

“Yep,” Shane nods. “But we’re still talking about Liam and I asked how you were doing?”

“I told you,” I snap.

“I don’t believe you.”

“I miss Jessie,” I admit. “And I miss Conor too. Nothing’s the same around here without them.”

“They’ll be back soon,” he says and I see the change in him at the mention of her name.

“How are you, Shane?”

He frowns at me. “Fine.”

“I don’t believe you.” I tilt my head as I watch him trying his best not to tell me to fuck off out of his office. “Don’t like that, do you, bro?”

“Fuck off, Mikey,” he says with a sigh.

I shake my head. He, of all people, doesn’t deserve my attitude. The truth is, I’ve been completely off kilter since I found out our father was dying of cancer, because it has dredged up so many long buried memories. And all of the people I could talk to about it are hurting too. Except Jessie.

Fuck, I miss her so much. She would make it better even if she didn’t realize that was what she was doing. Just watching TV with her or playing cards soothes my soul in a way that nothing else can.

“I’m sorry,” I say to him. “But I know you’re not fine, Shane. You try and hold everything together for everyone else, and you can’t do that forever, bro. One day soon, something is going to give.”

“Since when were you all deep and philosophical?” He narrows his green eyes at me.

I shake my head. “I mean it, Shane. You can’t keep living like this, bro.”

“Like what?” he scowls.

“Half a fucking life. Never letting anyone in.”

“Is this about Jessie?” he says with a sigh.

“You tell me. Do you miss her?”

“Go and bring Liam back. You two have work to do,” he says with a wave of his hand.

“Answer me and I’ll go get our baby brother back,” I challenge him.

“What the fuck, Mikey?” he shouts. “What the fuck do you want from me?”

I stand up from my chair. I don't want to fight with him, but he's the most stubborn bastard I have ever known. “It's just a question, Shane. Do you miss her?”

“Every minute of every damn day,” he shouts and I see the veneer of control he always hides behind slipping slightly. “Is that what you want to hear? That I can't go more than two minutes without thinking about her? Well, now you know. But it still doesn't change the fact that she tore my fucking heart out. Now, go and get Liam and get your asses back to work,” he snarls at me and I walk out of his office with his words ringing in my ears. Damn! I have never pushed his buttons like that before. And now I feel like shit for making him lose control because I know how much he hates it.

I walk down the hallway and press the button to the elevator as I prepare to go and find my twin and talk some sense into him. How is it that suddenly I am the sane one in this apartment?

I START the engine of my car and dial Conor's number.

“Hey, everything okay, bro?” he asks.

“I just made Shane really mad,” I say with a sigh.

“Why? What did you do?”

“I made him talk about feelings.”

“Ouch,” Conor says with a laugh. “What the hell did you do that for?”

“He started it. Asking me how I'm doing.” I suck in a deep breath.

“How are you doing, kid?” Conor asks.

“Don't you start, Con,” I laugh to ease the tension because I'm not calling to have a heart to heart with him. In fact, I'm not calling him at all. “Can I talk to Jessie?”

“Sure. She's right here. I'll hand you over.”

I wait for a few seconds until her sweet voice fills my ear. “Hi Mikey,” she says and all the tension I didn’t even realize I was holding in my chest and shoulders melts away.

“Hey, Red.”

“You okay?”

“Are we on speaker?”

“No. Just me and you,” she says softly. “Conor is watching TV. Is something wrong?”

“No. I just wanted to hear your voice. I miss you, Red.”

“I miss you too,” she says quietly. “We’ll be home in a few days. I can’t wait to see you. Are you sure everything’s okay?”

“I made Shane really pissed at me,” I admit as tears spring to my eyes completely unexpectedly.

“Well, that’s not exactly difficult,” she laughs softly but I know that she gets it because she gets me. “He won’t stay mad at you for long. The two of you will be arguing over the Giants and the Jets before you know it.”

“Ah, I don’t know. I really pushed his buttons this time.”

“What did you do?”

I can’t tell her what I asked him about because I know she’ll already be worried about facing him when she comes back here. I imagine that Conor has told her it will all be okay once she speaks to him and straightens it out, but I’m not sure it will be. Shane will have Jessie back in our home because the rest of us want her here so badly, but I’m not convinced that he’s as thrilled at the prospect of her return as we are. “Just being an asshole. You know me.”

“You’re not an asshole,” she admonishes me. “Not even a little bit.”

“Really?” I laugh.

“Well, except for that time at that wedding when you boinked the bride at the reception.” She starts to laugh and the sound warms me from the inside.

“Yeah, I was definitely an asshole that day,” I laugh too. We spend the next few minutes chatting about nothing in particular as I drive through the streets of New York to Liam’s favorite spot by the river. But talking to her makes me forget how angry I feel at the world and by the time I see Liam, sitting on his own, staring out over the Hudson, I feel like I could conquer the whole world again.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-THREE

SHANE

Liam and Mikey are walking through the elevator doors just as I'm heading out. Mikey sent me a text to let me know that he'd found him and he was fine, but it's still a relief to see him back here. I wrap my arms around his neck. "You okay?"

"Yeah," he says as he hugs me back.

"Good." I pull back from him. "You gonna be okay on your own downstairs tonight?"

He nods and I turn to Mikey. "I need you with me."

"Where are we going?" he asks with a worried look on his face.

"To break some faces," I wink at him and his face breaks into a grin.

"Aw. Why can't I come then?" Liam asks.

"Because someone needs to watch the club. And you've slacked off enough for today."

"Fair enough," he replies with a roll of his eyes. "I'll just go get changed. You two don't have too much fun without me now."

"As if we would," Mikey says before we both step into the elevator.

We ride down to the basement and get into the car in silence. I feel Mikey's eyes burning into me as I drive out of the parking garage. "What?" I say as I turn to him.

“I’m sorry. You didn’t deserve that. I felt like shit all day.”

“Forget about it.”

“Where are we going?”

“To find some assholes.”

“Yeah, well that narrows it down,” Mikey laughs.

“Those pricks from Angelino’s have been causing trouble again is all. I thought I’d pay them a visit. And now you are too.”

“But isn’t this like using a pneumatic drill to crack a walnut? Can’t our bouncers deal with this?”

“Yes,” I frown at him. “But I want to.” It’s true that dealing with some local low-life bouncers from a club in Brooklyn that is about a quarter the size of ours is way below our pay grade, but they have been bothering us for a while now, and it needs to be stamped out before it escalates. Besides, sometimes I just need to let off some steam.

“Oh, I see,” Mikey says with a grin as he rubs his hands together expectantly. “I haven’t done this with you for a long time.”

“I know.”

“I should push your buttons more often,” he chuckles to himself.

“Don’t,” I warn him.

A LITTLE OVER half an hour later, we pull up outside the club in Brooklyn. It’s not open yet but the bouncers are already showing up for their shifts.

“What’s it to be? Fists or we brought weapons?” Mikey asks.

“Some brass knuckles should do just fine,” I wink at him as I nod to the glove box.

He takes out a brass knuckle with a blade on the end and holds it up so the metal catches the light. “Nice. These new?”

“Conor got them a few months back. Hand me mine,” I say and he reaches into the box and pulls out a second one. I slide it onto my right fist and we climb out of the car. The bouncers hanging around outside spot us as we walk over the road and they shout for their colleagues who walk around the side of the building.

“How many you think there are?” Mikey asks.

“At this time of night? Six, tops,”

“Then why do I count eight, bro?” he replies as another two come out from inside.

“Six? Eight? Who gives a shit?”

“Fuck me, you *are* in the mood for some fun, aren’t you?” he chuckles to himself.

“Yep,” I nod as I start to jog across the road. One of them starts toward us, not quite sure yet why we’re here. He’s brought up to speed pretty fast as I punch him in the jaw with the brass knuckle and knock him out cold.

That rallies his colleagues into action and amidst some hollering and whistling, the remaining seven men come running toward us.

“Here we go,” Mikey flashes his eyebrows at me and we run toward them. I punch the biggest one in the stomach as he reaches me and he drops to his knees before I punch him in the face and his nose busts open. The rest of the men surround us, but Mikey and I have faced much tougher odds and much tougher men than these before, and we make short work of them in less than ten minutes. They lie on the ground around us, groaning and clutching their broken limbs and faces and I stare down at them.

It was a simple brawl. That was all I came for and it released some of the pent up tension I’ve been feeling these past few weeks. I look around for Mikey, who has one of the men on the floor. He straddles his chest and rains blows down on him. I watch for a few seconds and when he doesn’t show any signs of letting up, I jog over to him and put my hand on

his shoulder. He doesn't stop though. I'm not sure he even knows I'm standing right here.

The guy on the floor no longer has a face and is most definitely dead, but it doesn't stop my younger brother from laying into him like he's fighting for his life.

"Mikey. Come on, son. We need to get out of here."

He turns and looks at me, blood spattered over his face and a look in his eyes that I haven't seen for a very long time. I grab his arm and pull him up, just as one of the men from the floor stumbles over and looks at his dead coworker in horror. I grab him by the throat and squeeze. "You know who we are?" I snarl at him.

He nods, his eyes wide with fear.

"You tell anyone who or what you saw here tonight and I will hunt you and every single member of your family down. You understand me?"

"Yes, Mr. Ryan."

"This is the end of it. Right here. Right now," I snarl at him and he nods his agreement.

I drag Mikey to the car and we jump inside before I drive us away from the place as fast as the jeep will take us.

"I saw him, Shane," Mikey says as he stares at me. "I was punching that guy but I saw his face."

"Who?"

"Patrick Ryan," he spits the name out as though it leaves a bitter taste in his mouth.

"You feel better?" I ask him.

"Yeah," he nods.

"Good. And I doubt they'll be giving any of our bouncers any more shit, so, mission accomplished."

Mikey leans back in his seat and closes his eyes and I drive us back to our apartment.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-FOUR

JESSIE

It's our last night on the road as we'll be home tomorrow evening and I such have a mixture of feelings about the whole thing. I'm excited to see Liam and Mikey. A little sad to end my time alone with Conor. And nervous as hell to see Shane. Despite what Conor tries to assure me, I don't think our differences can be fixed with a simple conversation.

I walk across the parking lot toward the motel as Conor takes his bag from the trunk. The lot is almost empty except for a light blue pick-up a few yards away from me. I barely notice it, until the driver starts the engine and it sputters to life. Glancing over at it as the driver pulls out of his space and turns the vehicle, I get a glimpse of him. He looks directly at me and my legs nearly buckle beneath me. My blood freezes in my veins as time seems to stand still. I have seen those eyes before. I'm sure I have.

My body moves entirely on instinct. I turn and run in the opposite direction, straight into Conor's arms. He places his hands on my shoulders as I struggle to run past him. Has he brought me here to hand me over, after all? Was Alexei telling the truth about the Ryan brothers?

My heart pounds in my chest. Blood thunders in my ears and tears run down my face. I have to get out of here. I try to wrench my arms from Conor's grip so I can run, but he holds me tight to him. He is speaking but I can't hear him because my senses are completely overloaded. My feet stumble on the asphalt and I'm falling. I can't breathe. I gasp in a mouthful of air, but it doesn't quite reach my lungs. I'm going to pass out.

Right here. And he's going to take me. The Wolf is going to take me away.

"Jessie!" Conor shouts loudly, penetrating the fog of confusion I'm enveloped in.

I blink up at him as he stares down at me, his dark brown eyes full of concern. "What's going on?" he asks, his voice softer as one of his hands slides through my hair until it rests against the back of my neck. "Talk to me, Angel."

"Volk," I whisper, reverting to the name he made me use for him. Russian for Wolf. "He's here."

Conor looks around the parking lot. "There's no one here but us," he frowns as he looks down at me.

"The blue pick-up," I mumble as I lean my face against his chest.

"The one that just drove out of here?"

"It was him, Conor."

He takes a sharp intake of breath and the muscles in his chest and arms tense and flex. "Let's get into the motel, Angel," he says softly.

I turn my head, my eyes darting around the now empty car lot to make sure he's really gone before I allow Conor to walk me toward the motel with one of his huge arms wrapped around me. My legs continue to tremble and my heart is still hammering against my ribcage, but I can see and hear clearly now. I wipe the tears from my eyes with the back of my hand. Conor is on high alert too, checking all around us as we make our way to our motel room.

As soon as we're inside, he bolts the door behind us and pulls his Glock from his bag, tucking it into the waistband of his jeans. "You want me to go check outside?" he asks.

I shake my head. "No. Stay in here with me."

"Okay," he whispers as he pulls me back to him, wrapping his arms around me and pressing a kiss on the top of my head. "Tell me what you saw, Angel."

I suck in a shaky breath. “That guy in the pick-up. He looked straight at me. And his eyes. I would never forget those eyes.” I shudder.

“You’re sure it was him?” he asks as he smooths my hair with one hand.

I close my eyes and picture his face again. He looked right at me. Did he smile at me like he knew me too? Did he even look like the Wolf? Here in the safety of Conor’s arms, I’m not sure at all. “I don’t know,” I sniff. “He was far away. He didn’t look exactly like him. He was clean shaven. I never saw the Wolf without a beard. But he had those same grey eyes.”

Conor looks down at me, cupping my chin in his hand. “How would he know we were here, though? We didn’t even know we’d be here until about thirty minutes ago.”

“I know. I just saw him... and I...” I shake my head and press my face back against his chest. I feel like such an idiot. I have been preparing to face that man down for the past eight years, but the minute I see someone who looks like him, I have a full on panic attack.

“You’re safe now, Angel,” he whispers against my ear. “I will never let anyone hurt you. I promise.”

“Can we just stay in here for rest of the night?”

“Sure. I’ll order us some takeout and we can veg in front of the TV. Okay?”

I nod, my face brushing against his shirt as I wrap my arms around his waist and out of nowhere tears start running down my cheeks. I suck in a deep breath as I try to stop sobbing, but it only makes me worse and I let out a strangled, choking noise that causes Conor’s whole body to tense as he squeezes me tighter to him. “Jessie,” he says softly and the concern in his voice only makes me cry more.

WHEN I’VE FINALLY STOPPED CRYING and shaking, Conor and I sit at the small table in the motel room. I pick at my fingernails while he stares at me and I feel concern and anger coming from him in waves. I look down at my hands, avoiding his gaze because I can’t bear to see the hurt in them.

“You want to talk about it, Angel?” he asks softly.

“I don’t know. I’ve never told anyone about what he did.” I shudder and Conor reaches for me and takes hold of my hand, brushing his fingertips over my palm and soothing my frayed edges the way that only he can.

“Maybe it will help?”

I look up at his face and stare into his deep brown eyes, which are so full of love and concern that it makes me feel completely safe and protected. “After he murdered my family... the Wolf, he tied me up with duct tape. He put some over my mouth too, and then he put me in the trunk of his car and we must have driven for almost a day before he stopped and let me out. We were at his house in the mountains. It was so dark, like pitch black. There were no streetlights or anything. I couldn’t see a thing as he made me walk to the house.”

I swallow hard as my heart begins to race again and Conor squeezes my hand gently. “It’s okay, Angel. We’ve got all night.”

I give him a faint smile before I continue speaking. “That first night, he took me to a room and he...” I choke down a sob as I recall the first time he raped me. “I tried to fight him. I kicked and scratched and I screamed so loudly that I felt like my throat was bleeding, but he just laughed at me.” I feel the tear running down my cheek and Conor brushes it away with his free hand. “I’d never even kissed a boy before. It hurt so bad, like nothing I’d ever experienced. I thought I was going to die. But even worse than the pain was the smell of him. He stank of cigarettes and stale sweat, and it was suffocating. *He* was suffocating. His pale, clammy skin against mine. I closed my eyes and tried to block it all out. My mom was big into meditation and she taught me how to tune out the world, but I couldn’t escape the smell of him, no matter what I did.” I draw in a shaky breath and realize tears are running down my cheeks again.

“Jessie,” Conor whispers as his eyes search my face and I see the anger and the pain I’m causing him. It’s the same kind

of hurt I experience when I think about what Conor and his brothers endured as children. It is the same pain I feel when I think about my parents and my innocent little brothers and the night they were slaughtered in front of my eyes. I know that it doesn't come from a place of pity or sympathy, but from pure love.

“After that night, he would come to my room most nights. And when he started to trust me a little more, he would summon me to his. The house was a fortress. I knew I could have overridden the security systems, but I was always locked in my room or his, and when I wasn't, he was always watching me. I swear he hardly slept. I tried to escape almost every day for the first few weeks I was there, but he always caught me and punished me and I realized I would have to play the long game. And that was when I started to pay attention to what he liked and what made him lose control. Even at sixteen, I understood that when he'd just gotten off was when he was at his most vulnerable. He used to tie me up for sex most of the time. Duct tape was a favorite of his, but after he began to trust me, he would untie me after. I think he even believed that I was beginning to develop feelings for him.”

I brush the tears from my eyes and smile at Conor who still watches me intently. That actually did make me feel better. Saying those things out loud made them seem less powerful. They are memories now. They do not define me. The Wolf and what he did to me will not define who I am.

Conor leans forward and takes both of my hands in his. “You are a goddamn warrior, Jessie. And when we find the Wolf, we will make him pay, Angel. I promise I would die before I let him ever touch you again.”

I lift his hand to my face and press a soft kiss on his knuckles. “You'd better not die, Conor Ryan. Not ever.”

“Well, I'll certainly do my best, Angel,” he smiles at me.

TWO HOURS LATER, I'm lying on the bed with Conor's Glock beside me while he takes a shower. I still feel jumpy and anxious, but at least I can breathe now. We ate our takeout an

hour ago, and I finally relaxed enough for him to consider leaving me alone for five minutes to take a shower.

I'm watching *Fast and Furious*, and although this is one of my favorite films, I am barely concentrating on it. When Conor walks back into the room a moment later, with a towel wrapped around his waist, some of the tension slips away from me again. Being around him makes me feel so much better. I feel completely safe when I'm with him, and I wasn't sure I would ever experience that feeling ever again.

He dries himself off and pulls on a pair of shorts before lying on the bed beside me. He holds out his arm and I snuggle against his muscular chest, taking comfort from his warm skin against mine and the sound of his heartbeat against my ear.

"You okay, Angel?" he whispers as he pushes my hair back from my face.

"I am now."

CHAPTER

THIRTY-FIVE

CONOR

I glance down at Jessie, fast asleep in my arms, and kiss the top of her head before moving her carefully off me. The panic and the terror in her face earlier scared the living shit out of me. This girl has balls of fucking steel. I have never seen her scared like that before, not even when I stuck a semi-automatic in her face that first day I met her. Not when those assholes tried to drag her into their truck the day before, or when we drugged her and kidnapped her. But today, she was genuinely, bone shaking terrified.

Sliding out of bed, I take my cell phone off the nightstand and walk to the bathroom to make a call so I don't wake her.

Shane answers the phone on the second ring. "Hey. What's up?"

"You answered that fast," I say, glancing at my watch and seeing it's almost 2am, but then my overprotective big brother rarely sleeps, and he sleeps even less when Jessie isn't in his bed.

"I saw your name and wondered why you're calling me at this hour of night."

"Yeah, well. Something happened today, bro."

"What now?" he asks, the edge audible in his voice.

"Jessie thought she saw the Wolf."

"What? Where?"

"In a pickup in the parking lot of our motel. But he drove away and I've checked the lot a dozen times since and he

hasn't come back. I'm not sure it was him. I mean, how could he know we were here? And it's some coincidence for her to just run into him otherwise."

"Did you get a look at him? Did he seem like he recognized her?"

"I didn't see anything. By the time she'd told me, the guy was long gone."

"You think it was him?"

"I don't know. But, fuck Shane, I have never seen our girl act like that before. She almost ran straight through me trying to get away. It was like she couldn't even see me. I thought she was going to fucking pass out from terror."

"Is she okay?" he asks, the concern in his voice clear to hear and I wish that she could realize just how much he cares for her.

"Yeah, she is now. She's sleeping. You really got nothing on this Wolf guy yet? Or where he might be?"

"No. And if Jessie and Alexei have been looking for him for the past eight years and never come close to finding him, I don't hold out much hope that I will. Not without Jessie's help anyway. When will you be home?"

"Tomorrow night."

"Good. The sooner we have you both back here, the better," he says with a sigh.

"You okay?" I ask him. He carries so much responsibility on his shoulders and I wish he would share more of it with me and our younger brothers. We're not little kids anymore. He doesn't have to protect us all from everything. I poke my head out of the door to check on Jessie and smile when I see she hasn't moved from the position I left her in. She makes Shane more relaxed and much less tense, and I need to get her home to him as soon as I can.

"Yeah," he replies. "Just dealing with some shit from back home."

"That old cunt not dead yet?" I snarl.

“Nope.”

“Good. Dying is too good for that fucker.”

“I know. Erin told me he doesn’t have long left though.”

“Erin’s been there a lot lately.”

“What the fuck does that mean, Conor?” he snaps.

“Just an observation. I’d hate for you to get sucked into any of her shit, that’s all. That woman is fucking dangerous.”

“I’m pretty sure I can handle her. Besides, she’s just dealing with some paperwork for me. That deal I told you about back in Ireland is almost done.”

“Good,” I nod my head. He’s about to make us a fortune selling some old family property.

“Look after her, Conor. And if she sees that guy again, or you sense anything untoward going on, call me and we’ll come meet you both.”

“I will. Thanks. But I’m sure everything is going to be fine, and we’ll see you tomorrow night.”

After I finish the call to Shane, I slip back into bed and Jessie stirs beside me. “Where have you been?” she whispers as she cuddles back into me.

“I just called Shane.”

“Why?” She sits up. “Is something wrong?”

“No.” I reach out and tuck her hair behind her ear. “I wanted to tell him what happened today, that’s all. Just in case he’d heard anything about the Wolf being active again.”

“And has he?”

“No. He would have told me if he had. I just wanted to speak to him, I suppose. I was worried about you.”

She lies down again, resting her head on her elbow. “I have to tell you something, Conor,” she whispers and my heart constricts in my chest.

“What, Angel?”

“When I saw him today, or thought I saw him, I thought about what Alexei said to me. About you and your brothers wanting to hand me over to him...” She chokes back a sob and doesn’t finish the sentence.

That fucking hurts. But, I suppose I can’t blame her. I don’t think anyone in Jessie’s life has ever been completely straight with her. Even her parents lied to her, and although I completely get their reasons why, I guess that leaves a mark. I have always had my brothers, and their honesty and respect means the world to me. Jessie didn’t have that for so long, I guess she’s forgotten what it feels like to know without a doubt that someone will always have your back, no matter what.

I turn on my side so I’m facing her and brush the back of my knuckles over her cheek. “What is it going to take for you to trust me, Angel?”

“I do trust you, Conor. It was just for a second. I was terrified. I know you would never hurt me,” she whispers.

I roll on top of her, taking hold of her wrists and pinning them to the side of her head. “You do?”

“Yes,” she breathes.

“Then show me, Angel.”

“How?”

I release her hands and reach down to the edge of her tank top, pulling it up her body, I stop when I reach her neck and pull her arms out. Then I roll it up over her face until it rests over her eyes. “Don’t move,” I whisper in her ear, and her body shivers beneath me. Pushing myself up from the bed, I go to my bag and take out the duct tape I always carry. It comes in handy in my profession when you never know when you might need to tie someone up and throw them in the trunk of your car.

I pull the end of the tape and the distinctive sound makes her flinch slightly. “What’s that?” she breathes.

“You know what it is, Angel.”

“What are you going to do with it?”

I kneel on the bed and take hold of her hands, pulling them down by her sides. “What do you think?”

She bites on her lower lip in that adorable way that makes me want to eat her alive, but she doesn't ask me to stop. Maybe this is a shitty thing to do after what she told me the Wolf did to her, but I can't think of a more effective or quicker way to prove to her she can trust me.

I peel off some tape and tear off a huge strip with my teeth. “Bring your knees up, Angel. I want you to hold your ankles,” I instruct and she does so without question. Her body trembles as I tape her left wrist to her left ankle. Her breathing gets heavier and I can see her breasts rising and falling with each deep breath she takes. Tearing off some more tape, I do the same to her right side, until she is bound tight and unable to move her limbs. I get off the bed again and walk back to my bag.

“Conor,” she whispers.

“I'm right here,” I tell her as I take the large knife from the zip inside my bag and walk back toward her. Climbing onto the bed, I kneel between her spread thighs. “I forgot to take off your panties, Angel.”

“I know.”

I place the tip of the blade between her breasts and she shudders as I run it down over her stomach. As the blade gets lower, she writhes beneath it.

“Conor,” she groans my name this time, and the sound makes my cock throb.

“You look beautiful lying here spread open and bound for me,” I growl as I slide the edge of the knife beneath the band of her underwear. “Don't move, Angel,” I remind her as I take hold of her panties with my free hand and slice through the band of cotton at either side, near her hipbones, until they fall apart and expose her beautiful pink pussy to me. Dipping my finger inside her, I stifle a groan as I find her wet for me. “Dammit, Jessie. You're soaking already.”

Her thighs tremble as I pump my finger in and out of her pussy and she moans softly for me as I add a second. I put the knife on the nightstand and run my hand up the inside of her thigh, rubbing two fingers over her swollen clit while I keep finger fucking her with my other hand. She gets wetter with each passing second, soaking my fingers with her cum until the sound of her wet heat is echoing around the room and I am so fucking hard, I feel like I could come just from touching her.

“You love my fingers inside you, don’t you, Angel?” I growl.

“Yes,” she pants.

“You want more?” I add a third finger before she can even reply, stretching her wide for me, and her hips almost shoot off the bed.

“I love you, Conor,” she moans loudly, and it completely undoes me. I slide my fingers out of her pussy and lie between her thighs, pressing my cock against her slick entrance.

“I love you too, Angel,” I breathe before sealing my mouth over hers as I drive my cock deep inside her. I swallow her moans with my own as I fuck us both to the release we need. She shudders beneath me when she comes, her entire body moving because her limbs are pinned to it. I look at her, completely at my mercy and completely mine, and feel like my heart might burst out of my chest. I love this woman so much it fucking hurts.

“Conor,” she whimpers when I let her up for air. I pull her tank top from her eyes and over her head so she can see again.

“Hey, you,” I smile at her.

“Hey,” she breathes.

“You okay?”

“Yes,” she smiles back at me.

“You want me to untie you, Angel?”

“Yes, please.”

I place a soft kiss on her lips as I pull my cock out of her and grab my knife again. Then I move down the bed, planting a kiss on her pussy before I cut through the tape on her wrists and ankles.

“Ow,” she says as I gently peel off the first piece. “I knew I’d get you to punish me eventually,” she giggles.

“Jessie,” I warn her as I nip her inner thigh. “This isn’t a punishment, Angel. This is me not thinking through my plan thoroughly enough. I forgot how hard this stuff is to get off. I don’t usually have to be so considerate when I’m removing it.”

“Just pull it off quickly, Conor,” she groans. “It’s like ripping a band aid. The slower you do it, the more it hurts.”

I pull her skin taut and pull the tape quickly and she winces. Rubbing the reddened skin, I look up at her, but she is smiling at me. I do the same to her other side and she stretches her limbs when she is free.

I move back up the bed toward her and pull her into my arms.

“Why do you have duct tape in your bag, Conor? Were you planning on kidnapping me if I didn’t come with you voluntarily?” she asks with a grin.

I suck on my lip, as though I’m deep in thought and she pushes me playfully on the chest. “I was never intending to use it on you, Angel. But if you’d refused to come with me, I might have tied you up with your own panties and driven you back to New York.”

“My panties?” She raises one eyebrow at me.

“Yes.”

“So, the duct tape?”

“You’d be surprised by how often it comes in useful,” I shrug.

“And not just duct tape. Did you cut off my panties with a knife, Conor Ryan?”

“I did,” I grin at her.

“You’re a devil,” she laughs and the sound makes me so fucking happy.

“I never pretended to be anything else, Angel.”

“So, did I prove how much I trust you then?” she asks from beneath her long lashes as she looks down.

I cup her chin and tilt her face so I can look into those incredible blue eyes. “Yes,” I reply and then I press my lips against hers and kiss her and she melts into me, her fingers curling in my hair as she presses her hot body against mine. As she lifts her leg and hooks it over mine to pull me even closer to her, I slide my hand to her ass and think I might just be the happiest man in the whole fucking world.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-SIX

SHANE

After speaking to Conor last night, I lay awake until the early hours of the morning, thinking about him and Jessie out there on the road alone. Jessie believing she saw the Wolf must have terrified her, and I hate to admit it, but it's freaked me out too. There is so little we know about him, it makes me nervous. He literally just up and disappeared eight years ago. If he's still alive, he could be anyone. Jessie is the only person known to have seen his face and lived to tell the tale. If she thinks she saw him yesterday, who are we to say she was mistaken? Although Conor seems to think she was, and I suppose I'll have to trust his gut.

Rubbing my temples, I wince at the pain as it sears through my forehead. I think I fell asleep at four and was awake again by seven. I need to get some decent fucking sleep. I've always been a bit of an insomniac, but the truth is I've never slept as well as I did when Jessie was here. Even when she wasn't in my bed, just knowing she was close by helped. And when she was in my bed — well, I slept like a fucking baby. The sooner Conor gets her back home safely to us, the better for everyone.

My cell phone vibrates on the table in front of me, and I glance at the screen. It's an unknown number. I accept the call and hold the phone to my ear, but I don't speak.

“That you, boy?” I hear a voice on the other end of the line that sounds vaguely familiar. The accent is hard to place, no doubt a result of living in so many countries and never settling in one long enough to call it home, but there is a distinct Irish

lilt buried in that low, gravelly tone that is probably only detectable to someone who grew up around it.

“Paul?”

“Who else?”

“What the fuck? I haven’t seen you for almost twenty-five years. Where the hell have you been?”

“Around. You know I had to get out of there, Shane.”

“Yeah? Well, we all did,” I say with a sigh as I rub a hand over my jaw as the memories of my Uncle Paul teaching me to shoot a sniper rifle when I was ten years old come rushing to the surface of my brain. I had almost forgotten about it. He was a marksman in the army and he was never around that much, but whenever he came home from tour, he always stayed with us. They were some of the happiest memories of my childhood. But just like he ruined everything else, my father eventually drove Paul away. He left when I was fourteen and the last I heard, he was working as a mercenary for some very bad people in Italy. I assumed he was dead.

“I hear the evil old fucker is dying?” he says before he’s overcome with a fit of coughing.

“Yeah. You don’t sound very well yourself, Uncle? Everything okay?”

“Me? I’m fucking invincible, nephew. Don’t you remember?” he laughs, but it’s a cold one, because there is nothing amusing about what he just said. My father almost killed him at least half a dozen times.

“Is that why you’ve resurfaced? You think he’s left you something in his will?”

He laughs out loud at that — a genuine one this time. “I wouldn’t accept a penny of that sadistic fuck’s money. But I’ll go to his funeral, if only to make sure he’s really dead. And then I’ll piss on his grave.”

“You spoken to him at all these last few years?”

“No,” he snarls. “Have you?”

“No. I haven’t seen or spoken to him since we came to New York.”

“Ten years!” Paul lets out a low whistle. “A long time not to see your father, Shane,” he sneers.

“How did you even know we left Ireland?” I frown as I turn on my computer. He knows we left ten years ago, and that makes me nervous.

“I’ve kept tabs on my nephews. Condolences on your failed engagement, by the way,” he chuckles.

“Fuck you!”

“Still got that smart mouth, I see. So, why did you finally leave?”

“It’s a long fucking story.”

“Well, then you can tell me at the old fucker’s funeral?”

“Maybe,” I sigh. “Where the fuck have you been, Pol?”

“I told you. Around.”

“You still killing people for a living?”

“Shane,” he feigns his indignation. “We never discuss business on the phone.”

“No, of course not,” I laugh. “But, now that we are. In your line of work, you ever come across the Wolf?”

He doesn’t reply, and I listen to the sound of his labored breathing for a few seconds. “Why the fuck are you interested in the Wolf, kid?” he eventually snaps.

“Professional curiosity.”

“I hear he retired, but there’s a rumor he’s resurfaced.”

My heart seems like it stops beating, as though Paul has just thrust his hand into my chest and has it squeezed in his fist. “You have any idea where he is?” I grind out the words.

“Russia, or so I heard. Why the hell do you need to know anything about the Wolf?” he asks again.

“Nothing really. I told you, professional curiosity.”

“You don’t need the services of a hitman, Shane. Between me and your father, didn’t we teach you enough about how to deal with your enemies by yourself, kid?”

“You sure fucking did,” I snap. Pair of sadistic assholes.

“Yeah? Well, stay away from the Wolf. He’s bad news.”

“Isn’t everyone? Anyway, you said he’s in Russia. So he’s nowhere near New York, is he?”

“You hiding something from me, kid?”

“Plenty. But not about this, no,” I lie again. “So, I’ll be seeing you soon then, Uncle?”

“It seems so,” he coughs again. “Let’s hope that cunt dies soon, eh?”

“Hmm,” I agree, but my mind is elsewhere. Where the hell has Paul been all these years?

After I end the call, I open one of Jessie’s files on my computer. I make a quick scan of the document, which comprises bank details and money transfers dating back at least ten years. I have no clue what I’m looking for, but I’m hoping something might jump out at me. Because I am no closer to finding out where Alexei Ivanov is, and I know he holds me and my brothers responsible for losing his daughter — again. It’s only a matter of time before he comes looking for vengeance. And when he does, he will most definitely find it, because I have made it my mission in life to kill that psychopathic motherfucker for everything he has put Jessie and my brothers through.

Once he gets a sniff that she is back with us, he will act quickly to get her back. So, we need to strike first. But it’s hard to do that when we have no idea where the slippery Russian prick is, whereas we’re right where he knows to find us. However, I’ll be fucked if I’ll run and hide from him or anyone else. The Ryan brothers hide from no one.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, I turn off my computer again. My conversation with my uncle is playing on my mind. Something is niggling in the back of my mind like an itch that I can’t quite reach to scratch. So, the Wolf is back? Why now? Has

Alexei's discovery of Jessie's survival reached him too somehow? Nobody knows who the Wolf is. He could be one of Alexei's own men, for all we know.

I close my eyes and rub my head again. This whole fucked up situation is making my headache even worse. And the best way I know to soothe any tension is currently a half day's drive away. But tonight she's going to be standing right here. And fuck, I might just tie her to my bed and bury myself so far inside her that we both forget about everything that's happened these past three months. Except that as much as I wish I could, I can't forget. I may even be able to forgive her one day, but I will never be able to trust her again.

"Hey, Erin is here." The sound of my younger brother Mikey's voice snaps me from my thoughts.

"What? Why?" I frown at him. I'm not expecting her.

Mikey shrugs. "I don't know, bro. But she's on her way up now."

"Fine," I sigh as I lean back in my chair.

"I can tell her you're in a meeting if you like?" he offers.

"No. It's fine," I say with a shake of my head. "She's been working on some contracts for me. She might have some news at last. Just tell her to come through."

"Will do," Mikey says with a nod of his head before he disappears out of the doorway again. Of all the days Erin decides to show up here, it has to be the day Jessie is coming home. I already have a ball of dread in my stomach at the thought of facing her after everything that's happened. Perhaps I'm fooling myself that Jessie coming back here has anything to do with me. I sent Conor after her, because I see the love she has for him. The connection they have runs deep. He never doubted her, even when I was sure she had betrayed us.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-SEVEN

JESSIE

Wiping my hands on my napkin, I look across the table at Conor as he finishes his last mouthful of steak. I smile at him and he winks back at me.

“I have loved these past few days with you,” I say.

He swallows his food and puts his knife and fork on his plate. “I’ve loved them too, Angel. I’m almost sad we’re nearly home.”

“Almost?” I arch an eyebrow at him.

“Being on the road with you and having you all to myself has been incredible, but I’ve been gone for two months. I’ve never been apart from my brothers for that long before.”

“I’m sorry,” I say as a wave of guilt washes over me.

“Don’t be,” he frowns as he places his large hand over mine. “I would do it all again in a heartbeat, and I would spend my entire life searching for you, Jessie.”

“I’m glad you found me, Conor,” I say before I begin to chew on my lip absent-mindedly.

“You nervous about going home, Angel?” he asks softly.

“I’m nervous about seeing him.”

Conor nods, knowing that I’m talking about Shane. Of all of them, it took him the longest to let me in. I know it cost him. And despite the promises I made to him, I left as soon as

I had a single doubt. “I’m sure he’s feeling the same,” Conor says with a smile. “You two have a lot to talk about.”

I take a deep breath. “Yeah.”

“That’s if Liam and Mikey don’t steal you away as soon as you set foot back in the apartment,” he laughs, and his brown eyes twinkle. The closer we have got to New York, the happier and more relaxed Conor has become. That I have kept him away from them all for so long weighs heavily on me, no matter what he says.

A FEW HOURS LATER, Conor presses me against the wall in the elevator in his New York apartment building and kisses me softly. “These last few days have been incredible, Jessie,” he breathes when he breaks our kiss.

“I know.”

“As soon as we get into the apartment, my brothers are going to want you all to themselves, and I need to get back to work in the club. But know that I will be thinking about you every second. I love you so fucking much, Angel.”

“I love you too, Conor,” I groan as he dips his head low and peppers soft kisses along my throat.

“Promise me we can take a road trip every once in a while. Just you and me.”

“I promise.”

The elevator stops and the doors slide open. I look up at him. “Thank you for coming to rescue me and bringing me home.”

“Any time, Angel,” he growls as he takes my hand and leads me out into the hallway. I see someone in my peripheral vision and I turn toward Shane’s office to see him standing about twenty feet away from me. My heart races. I swallow hard as our eyes lock. I have been both dreading and looking forward to this moment. For what seems like an eternity, we just stand there staring at each other, neither of us speaking or making any movement. I’m aware of Conor standing beside me still, but my eyes remain locked on Shane. My pulse thrums against my wrists and my throat.

It seems as though he is about to speak, but he turns instead, distracted by the sound of a voice from behind him. Someone is coming from the direction of his office. My stomach drops to the floor when I see who it is.

Erin. His ex-fiancée. What the hell is she doing here? And on today of all days. He knew I was coming back today. Has he done this to deliberately hurt me? Or have I even featured in his plans at all?

He told me I would never be one of them. Perhaps, instead of fantasizing about him and me together, I should listen to what he actually said to me, and make my peace with the fact that Shane and I can never be what we once were.

Erin places a manicured hand on his shoulder and whispers something in his ear. His eyes flicker from mine and I take the opportunity to look away. The sound of the twins running down the hallway from the opposite direction makes me turn to them instead.

Mikey reaches me first. “Red,” he shouts as he picks me up and spins me around, kissing me all over my face just as Liam reaches us. As soon as Mikey sets me on my feet, Liam pulls me into his huge arms. “I’ve missed you, baby,” he growls in my ear.

“I’ve missed you both too,” I reply as I take a step back.

Conor coughs as if to remind us all he is standing there, and Mikey wraps an arm around his neck. “We’ve missed you too, bro,” he laughs.

“Yeah, and everyone in the club has missed you too. You need to get your ass down there and sort some shit out,” Liam adds as he wraps one arm around me and slaps Conor on the back with his free hand.

Conor raises his eyebrows at me. “I’d better be going, Angel. I’ll see you tomorrow. Don’t wear these boys out now.”

“I won’t,” I smile at him. “Have a good night down there.”

He laughs. “I’m sure it will be all kinds of fun,” then he leans forward and kisses me softly on the cheek before he goes

back to the elevator. I glance back down the hallway and notice that Shane and Erin are no longer there.

“You need food or something to drink?” Liam asks, and I drag my eyes back to his handsome face.

“No. Conor and I ate a few hours ago. I’m good.”

“You want to watch a movie?” Mikey asks, his eyes narrowed as they roam over my body.

“Actually, I’m kind of tired,” I say.

“Your bedroom is all ready for you, baby. Just how you left it,” Liam whispers in my ear.

“Thank you,” I say and a flush creeps over my chest and neck and suddenly I feel awkward and nervous.

Mikey steps toward me and presses his lips against my ear. “You mind if Liam and I join you, Red? Because ever since we watched Conor fucking you in that motel room, we’ve done nothing but think about tasting you again.”

Liam’s hand slides to my ass and he kisses the other side of my neck, making me drag in a deep breath as the heat rushes between my thighs and I experience the familiar fluttering in my abdomen. “Of course I don’t mind. In fact, I was counting on it. I’ve missed you both too.”

“Then let’s get to bed and get you naked,” Liam growls as he slaps my ass.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, the three of us are standing in my bedroom and I am sandwiched between their two hard bodies, with Mikey at my back and Liam at my front. Liam kisses me softly, his tongue swirling against mine as Mikey reaches in front of me and unzips my mini skirt before pushing it over my hips and down my legs. He runs his warm strong hands from my ankles, up the entire length of my legs as he stands upright again, until he reaches the edge of my tank top and he pulls that up and off over my head, forcing Liam and me to break our kiss for a second. When we do, Liam stares into my eyes and smiles at me while Mikey makes quick work of removing my bra and panties.

“I’m so fucking hard for you, Red,” Mikey growls in my ear before he starts trailing kisses along the back of my neck.

Liam seals his mouth over mine again, one hand snaking around my hips and onto my ass and one slipping between my thighs until he reaches my slick folds. “She’s dripping wet, bro,” he says as he pulls back from me and I moan as he circles my clit with two fingers.

At the same time, Mikey’s hand rubs over my ass from behind and then between my thighs. “Spread your legs wider, Red,” he murmurs against my skin. “I want inside you.”

I do as he says, and he slips two thick fingers into my pussy while Liam keeps on circling my clit and I groan out loud, making them both chuckle softly. They spend the next ten minutes kissing my lips, neck, back and breasts while they take turns finger fucking me, until my legs are trembling with my impending release.

“You want to come, baby?” Liam growls.

“Yes. Please,” I pant as they double their efforts and their bodies press closer against me until they are the only things holding me up as my orgasm tears through me like black powder. When they have rubbed the last of my climax from me, Liam lifts me and carries me over to the bed while Mikey undresses. Pressing my thighs flat to the bed, he leans down and licks the length of my pussy. “Fuck, you taste even better than I remember, Jessie,” he groans before he sucks my clit into his warm mouth and my hips almost jolt off the bed in pleasure.

As soon as Mikey is undressed, he climbs onto the bed too, crawling up toward my face and pressing his lips over mine. His tongue pushes inside my mouth at the same time Liam’s pushes into my opening and he begins toying with my pebbled nipples. I whimper as the two of them bring me to the edge again. They work my body together so expertly, as though they always know what the other one is thinking.

Suddenly, I no longer feel Liam’s mouth between my thighs. “You need to taste this sweet pussy, Mikey,” he says with a chuckle.

“I thought you’d never ask,” Mikey grins as he plants a final kiss on my lips and disappears, to be replaced by his twin. Liam kisses me, swirling his tongue against mine so that I can taste myself on him and the wet heat floods my pussy. Mikey growls in appreciation as he laps at my opening. A few moments later, the two of them bring me to another earth-shattering climax. I try to scream their names but Liam swallows the sounds as he keeps his mouth sealed over mine.

When the last of my orgasm has rolled through my body, Liam lets me up for air. “Turn on your side, baby,” he growls as Mikey moves back up the bed. “Facing me.”

I shuffle onto my side and Mikey slides in behind me. “Neither of us can wait a minute longer to fuck you, Red,” he whispers against my ear. “So we’re both going to. You okay with that?”

“You know I am,” I breathe as Liam rolls over and pulls a tube of lube from the nightstand before tossing it to his brother. He cups my chin in his hand as Mikey snaps the cap and I can feel him coating his cock directly behind me.

“You are so fucking beautiful, Jessie,” Liam whispers. “I can’t wait to feel you come on my cock, baby. I’ve missed you so fucking much.”

I reach out and stroke his cheek with my hand as I blink back tears. “I’ve missed you too,” I whisper.

Mikey rolls back into me, his slick cock nudging at the seam of my ass as he lifts my thigh into the air. “But, if you ever run away from us again, Red, we won’t be so forgiving. You belong here with us. So don’t even think about abandoning us for a third time,” he warns and a thrill of pleasure shoots through me at his possessiveness.

“Hmm. You got that, baby?” Liam adds as he slides his cock deep inside me until the waves of pleasure roll over my body.

“Uh-huh,” I groan.

“You ready for me too now?” Mikey asks as he plants a soft kiss on my shoulder blade.

“Yes,” I breathe and he edges the tip of his cock inside me too.

“Did Conor fuck this beautiful ass the other night? Is that what he didn’t want us to watch?”

“Yes,” I groan as he pushes in deeper while Liam’s cock twitches inside me.

“I think Mikey better hurry,” Liam chuckles as my walls squeeze around him. “Because I feel you on the edge already, baby. Hold on a little longer.”

“I’m trying,” I pant. “But you’re not making it easy.”

“Then you’d better help me out, bro,” Mikey laughs softly as he lifts my leg higher into the air while Liam slides his hand to my ass and spreads me open to allow his brother easier access.

“Relax, Red, you know you can take me,” Mikey soothes in my ear as he pushes in deeper until he is all the way inside. I groan loudly at the sensation of being so completely full of them while I’m pressed between their hard, hot bodies. “Fuck, Jessie. You’re going to make me come in about two minutes, because this ass is so fucking hot and tight,” he growls.

I groan loudly as they both fuck me in a perfect rhythm. Each of them seeming to be aware of exactly what the other is doing and knowing precisely where to touch and kiss me to keep me teetering on the edge of oblivion. I am sandwiched tightly between them as they kiss and touch and fuck every part of me with such desire and tenderness that I start to see stars flickering behind my eyelids.

I have missed these two so much and I wonder how I was ever crazy enough to leave any of them. This is exactly where I belong. This is home, and I will never leave again.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-EIGHT

LIAM (BONUS CONTENT)

Jessie's lying with her head on my chest, snuggled into the crook of my shoulder as I keep an arm wrapped around her waist. Mikey lies beside me, facing her but with a possessive hand gripping her ass. Like he's afraid if he lets go she might disappear again. I completely understand too. When she was away... I swallow a thick knot of emotion that lodges in my throat. Nothing around this place was the same without her.

"You okay there, Red?" Mikey asks with a dark chuckle, pushing her hair back from her face.

"Hmm," she murmurs contentedly, draping her leg over my hip until I feel her wet pussy against my skin. Despite the fact that we have done nothing but fuck her since she got back here a few hours ago, my cock twitches and I could happily sink inside her perfect pussy right now. Her ass or her mouth would do just fine too.

Mikey's stomach growls loudly, making Jessie giggle.

I arch an eyebrow at him. "You need some food, bro?"

He nods his agreement. "I think I need to replenish my energy levels."

Rubbing a hand over Jessie's back, I pull her closer. "I think this one needs to top up her fluids too."

"Yeah, she came pretty hard, didn't you, Red?" He squeezes her ass and she smiles. "You soaked the sheets."

"You two made me," she says with a soft sigh.

“We sure fucking did.” Mikey kisses Jessie on the forehead and then jumps off the bed before pulling on his sweatpants. “I’m gonna make some PB and jelly sandwiches. Want some?”

“Yeah. And some Gatorade,” I tell him.

He runs a hand through his hair. “What about you, Red?”

She licks her lips. “Sounds good to me. You need any help?”

He crawls back onto the bed, running his nose over the curve of her hip, along her ribs and all the way to her throat. “Like you could even fucking walk right now after what we just did to you. Stay here with Liam and I’ll be right back.”

Mikey walks out of the room leaving me alone with her. I cup her chin in my hand, tilting her head so I can look at her beautiful face. “I missed you so fucking much, baby.”

Tears well in her eyes. “I know. I missed you too.”

“Come here.” I tug her closer, until her lips are so close to mine her breath dusts over my skin. I brush my lips over hers, taunting her with the promise of a kiss that I’m desperate to give her, but I love to hear her needy whimpers, and my girl loves being kissed.

She edges forward, trying to seal her lips over mine but I pull back, holding her head still so she can’t follow me.

“Liam,” she whimpers my name and the sound travels straight to my cock.

My lips twitch in a smirk. “Yeah, baby?”

“Kiss me,” she pleads and the way those words tumble from her mouth does something unholy to me.

A deep growl rumbles in my chest as I flip her onto her back. Taking her hands in one of mine, I pin them above her head as I press her into the mattress with the weight of my body.

“I’ve been dreaming about kissing these beautiful lips every hour of every day for the past two months, baby. You

never get to leave me again.” The last words come out harsher than I intended but she doesn’t seem to mind.

“I never will. I promise.”

I press my lips against hers and slide my tongue into her mouth, exploring and claiming her. Pouring out every bit of hurt and pain and anguish I’ve felt at the loss of her with a bruising kiss. And she takes it all, wrapping her thighs around my waist as she moans softly into my mouth. My tongue swirls against hers, tasting and devouring her like I’m starving for breath and she’s my only chance of air. Her hard nipples graze over my chest as I rock against her, my stiff cock rubbing against her clit and making her mewl. I won’t fuck her again because I know she’s sore from having Mikey and me inside her so many times already tonight, but I can still make her come this way. The friction of my cock against her wet folds makes my balls sear with heat. I run my free hand over the side of her body, reminding myself of her sinful curves before I reach her ass, cupping her cheek and sinking my fingers into her soft flesh.

“Oh,” she moans but I swallow the sound, grinding my cock against her as I tip her over the edge once more. Her entire body trembles beneath mine as she comes for me. She tries to wrench her hands free from my grip but I keep them pinned above her head as I continue my assault on her mouth and go on rubbing my cock over her sensitive flesh. As the last of her orgasm rolls through her body, she goes lax against the mattress but she crosses her ankles behind my back, pulling me closer to her.

I wrench my lips from hers, groaning her name as white hot pleasure coils in my thighs and my spine, igniting my balls with fiery heat as my cock pulses and I shoot ribbons of warm sticky cum over her abdomen.

“Your kisses are fire, Liam Ryan,” she pants.

I rest my head against her neck. “Never forget it, baby.”

The sound of the door opening makes us both look up to see Mikey walking into the room with a tray of sandwiches and Gatorade.

“Did you two fuck again?” he asks incredulously.

“No,” I protest, rolling off her. “Did make her come though.”

Jessie pops an eyebrow. “Not just me.” She looks down at her stomach and then mine, both sticky with cum.

“Clean up, I got us some refreshments,” my twins says with an eye roll.



JESSIE SITS between Mikey’s spread thighs, leaning back against his chest as we all eat our food in bed. One of the Fast and Furious movies plays on the TV in the background.

“PB and jelly never tasted so good,” Mikey groans before shoving the last of his sandwich into his mouth.

“Mmm.” Jessie licks her lips. “They were my favorite when I was a kid.”

“Doesn’t surprise me with your sweet tooth, baby,” I say with a grin. “We never ate them until we moved to New York though.”

“You didn’t?”

“No, they’re not a thing in Ireland.”

“So what was your guys favorite then?”

“Sausages and chips,” Mikey and I say in unison.

She giggles at that before raising an eyebrow. “Sausages and chips?”

“Not potato chips, baby. They’re like fries—but better. And sausages are better in Ireland too.”

“Do you ever think about going back there?” she asks softly.

I shake my head. “No.”

“Fuck no,” Mikey agrees.

We share a glance, neither of us wanting to think about our last night in Ireland and the thing that finally made Shane

move us all to New York.

“Besides, you’re here, Red,” Mikey says, changing the subject before he pulls back her hair and starts to trail soft kisses over her neck. Then his fingers dust over her ribs, making her squirm and giggle.

“I’ll just be wherever you are though.”

Suddenly, he stops playing, grabbing her jaw, he turns her head so she’s looking up at him. “Always?”

“Always, Mikey.”

“That’s my good girl,” he growls deep in his throat, possessive and menacing. He might joke around half the time but my brother is far from anybody’s fool. He felt her loss as deeply as the rest of us and he would lay entire countries to waste to find her if she ever left us again, willingly or otherwise.

“I know you’re tired, but you think you can go one more round, Red?” he asks softly, brushing his fingertips over her cheek, his tone much softer now.

Our girl is sore as well as tired, but she smiles and nods at him anyway, because she craves us as much as we crave her. It breaks my fucking heart to think that she believed for even a second that we wanted her to leave. But I guess we have the rest of our lives to prove to her that we love her more than life, and we need her more than we need air.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-NINE

SHANE

The whiskey burns my throat as I swallow two shots' worth in one large gulp before I slam the glass down on my desk. Jessie is back. I thought that I could handle seeing her and not want to punish her, or fuck her, but as soon as I saw her I wanted to do both.

Fortunately, I didn't get the chance to do either because as soon as she saw them she fell into the arms of my younger brothers instead.

I don't begrudge them their happiness with her. They have missed her like crazy, and learning of our father's impending demise has dredged up all kinds of shit from their pasts for them. So, why is there a ball of anger searing a hole in my chest? It burns white hot as I recall the way she looked at me. I have so much that I want to say to her, but she's made it clear that she hasn't come back for me. And how can I blame her after what I did the last time she was here? I suppose that's only a good thing because I can't go back there with her. It would kill me to lose her again.

"You want another?" Erin's voice purrs from beside me.

"Yeah," I snap and she pours me another large measure of Jameson's and a small one for herself. She suggested a drink to celebrate the deal we closed today, and after my brief encounter with Jessie, it seemed like a good idea. But, it's not.

As I look up at Erin, her cheeks flushed pink from the alcohol and her eyelashes fluttering, I realize it's a very bad idea. Erin has repeatedly made her feelings for me more than

clear. She would jump at the chance for us to get back together, even though I've never given her any indication that I'm interested in reconciling. Apart from that one time, shortly after we'd called off the wedding, when we were both lonely and she'd turned up here in tears. But I swore to her and myself we would never do that again.

"Here you go." She hands me the glass and her fingers brush mine as I take it from her. She smiles at me, looking up through her long dark lashes and I'm suddenly reminded of the night we first met back in Ireland almost fifteen years ago.

We were at an event for the law firm she was working for. I remember thinking she was the most beautiful woman in the room. She'd been there with her fiancé that night, but she had left with me, and we had stayed together for the next ten years. Coming to New York had always been a dream of hers, and when all that shit went down with my father and the twins, it had seemed like the perfect time to move.

We'd had our whole future mapped out — or at least I'd thought we had. But Erin had an entirely different future in mind. One that included babies and a house in the suburbs, and that just isn't the life for me.

"For someone who just made a few million dollars this afternoon, you seem pretty miserable, Shane," Erin says, snapping me from my thoughts.

I shake my head. "Sorry," I mumble before I down the second glass of whiskey.

"Will you slow down? I'm struggling to keep up with you," she laughs softly as she downs her own drink.

"You don't have to keep up with me. In fact, you shouldn't." I arch an eyebrow at her. "You never could handle your liquor."

"Well, that was the old me. The new me is much tougher," she purrs as she perches on the edge of my desk and leans toward me.

"Is that so?"

“Yes,” she replies as she holds out her glass until I grab hold of the bottle and pour us each another.

CHAPTER

FORTY

CONOR

As soon as the last of my bouncers leaves the club after closing time, I make my way through the basement of our building toward the elevator leading to our apartment. I would love nothing more than to crawl into bed with Jessie and press myself against her soft, warm body, but I know she'll be with the twins or Shane. I suppose I could do with some sleep anyway.

Just before I reach the elevator, I see Shane stepping out of the shadows and making his way toward me. "You up early, bro, or you not been to bed yet?" I smile as he reaches me. We caught up over a few shots of whiskey in my office just before midnight last night, but it wasn't enough. I have missed all of my brothers so fucking much.

"Both." he grins at me. "I have a present for you," he says, indicating his head toward the other end of the basement.

"A present? For me?" I arch an eyebrow. "You shouldn't have."

"You won't be saying that when you see what it is," he chuckles softly as he starts walking away from me and toward the rooms we sometimes use down here for various purposes. Mostly to get information from our enemies. I experience a wave of guilt as I recall how we used one of these rooms to keep Jessie prisoner for a few days two months earlier.

I follow Shane until he stops at the door to my favorite room, containing all of my favorite toys and instruments, and I wonder what just what this present is he's referring to. He

pulls out a huge key and unlocks the door before stepping inside with me close behind. There are two men, naked and strung up by their ankles, like two pig carcasses in a slaughterhouse.

At the sound of us coming into the room, they start to sputter and shake on their hooks. I can see they don't have tape on their mouths, although I see blood pouring down their faces and dripping onto the floor.

I look over at Shane as I close the door behind us. "Why do they sound funny?"

"I cut out their tongues," he says with a shrug.

I nod at him and then look back to the two men, wondering what they've done to incur my brother's wrath. It's not often he indulges in such depravity these days.

"You recognize them, Con?"

I step closer to them. Crouching down on my heels, I grab hold of one of them by his hair and lift his head slightly. It's hard to see his features fully in the dim room and through all of the blood and snot, but I smile when I realize who these two assholes are, and cutting out their tongues is going to be the least of their problems by the time I'm through with them.

The one I'm holding onto squirms in my grip. A strangled gurgle comes out of his mouth and his eyes widen with fear as he recognizes me too.

"You remember what I said I'd do to you?" I say to him and he flinches. "You're going to wish I'd killed you in that parking lot while my girl watched, because she would have made me end it quickly. She's good like that. But now there's just me and my brother. And I am going to make you feel pain like you cannot even imagine," I snarl, and the second man wriggles and screams too, but the noise is drowned out by the sound of him choking on his own blood as it runs down his throat.

I stand tall and start to take off my jacket and shirt. I don't want them soaked in the blood of this pair of assholes.

“You certainly found these two and got them back here fast, Shane,” I say as I unbutton my shirt. “I’m impressed.”

“Impressed? Really? You underestimate me, bro,” he grins at me as he unbuttons his shirt too.

“You joining me?”

“They put their hands on Jessie, didn’t they?” he frowns.

“Yeah.”

“You said they were going to kidnap and rape her?”

“Yup,” I nod. “And this one,” I kick one in the head and he howls in pain. “Said he was going to tear her apart.”

“Then of course I’m fucking joining you,” he says as he pulls his shirt off.

“Good,” I smile at him. “It’s been a while since we did this. I hope you remember what to do?”

“Don’t forget who taught you everything you know, son,” he frowns at me and I laugh out loud. I hated not being able to deal with these two fuckers back in Oklahoma, but now I’m fucking glad Jessie made me leave. Because making them pay for what they did to our girl is going to be so much more fun with Shane by my side.

It only takes two hours for us to torture John and Jeff to death. We could have made it last longer, but I need some sleep before I have to go back to work in a few hours. We walk through the basement, still shirtless and covered in blood.

“Is Jessie up yet?” I ask. “Because if she sees us like this... well, I don’t have the energy to explain what we just did, bro.”

“I have no idea,” he shrugs.

“You haven’t spoken to her yet?” I frown at him.

“No,” he shakes his head. “She went off with the twins as soon as she got home.”

“But you could have gone and spoken to her,” I remind him. “It’s not like you’ve never seen them all fucking before.”

“Drop it, Con,” he snaps.

“Drop it?” I snap back. “You’ve been waiting to speak to her for two months and now you’re avoiding her?”

“I’m not avoiding her. It’s complicated.” He looks away from me. “My relationship with Jessie isn’t as easy as yours.”

“Well, you didn’t exactly help matters having Erin here the day Jessie got back,” I remind him.

“I couldn’t help that. She finalized the Ireland deal for us and she needed me to sign some papers.” He shakes his head. “Anyway, you should be fucking thanking me for what I just did, not giving me shit.”

I wrap my arm around his neck. “I don’t mean to, but you and Jessie need to sort your shit out, bro. The whole fucking equilibrium is off when you two aren’t right.”

He nods his head, but I’m not sure he’s convinced. He can’t forgive Jessie for leaving us. He can’t forgive himself for the way he treated her the last time she was here, so he assumes that she won’t forgive him either. I know that she already has, but I wish he would wake up and see how much she loves him, and how much he needs her.

CHAPTER

FORTY-ONE

JESSIE

I sit at the breakfast table and smile across at Mikey sitting opposite me as we each eat a bowl of Lucky Charms.

“I’ve missed you, Red,” he says as he swallows a mouthful of cereal.

“I’ve missed you too.”

We both look up as Liam strolls into the room. He sidles up behind me, wrapping his arms around me and planting a kiss on my neck. He’s just taken a shower and his hair is damp. I giggle like a teenage girl as he rubs it against my cheek. “Last night was incredible, baby,” he says against my ear.

“Sure was,” Mikey mumbles his agreement with a mouth full of cereal.

“It was.” I agree as I turn in Liam’s arms and kiss him softly.

“It’s a shame we have to go upstate tonight,” Mikey groans. “You’re only back one day and we have to work.”

“Tonight? You’ll be gone all night?” I pout.

“Yes, tonight,” Liam sighs as he takes a seat beside me.

“Shane thinks we don’t know it’s because he wants you all to himself,” Mikey adds with a soft chuckle as he picks up his bowl and drains the milk from the bottom.

“What?” I blink at them. “I’m not sure Shane is that bothered by my coming back.”

Mikey almost chokes on his milk as he starts laughing, and Liam places a hand on my shoulder. “You couldn’t be any more wrong about that, baby.”

I open my mouth to reply, but I’m distracted by Mikey as he looks up at the open doorway with his mouth hanging open. I spin around to see what, or who, he’s looking at and I almost fall off my stool when I see Erin walking into the room, wearing the same clothes she had on yesterday evening. Bile burns the back of my throat and I force myself to swallow it down as a wave of nausea and jealousy washes over me. She spent the night. With Shane?

“Close your mouth, Michael,” she says coolly as she walks to the refrigerator and opens it, taking out a bottle of mineral water. She holds it to her forehead briefly, before opening it and taking a long gulp, while the twins and I stare at her.

“What are you doing here, Erin?” Liam eventually asks the question we are all desperate to know the answer to.

She rolls her eyes, taking another gulp of water before she answers. “I stayed over.”

“Where the hell did you sleep?” Mikey asks with a frown.

“In Shane’s bed. Where else?” she says with a smug grin as her eyes flicker to me and she looks me up and down.

I force myself to smile back at her. “Well, I’m sure you had a comfortable sleep,” I say, when I really want to vomit on the table in front of me. I knew that Shane wasn’t my biggest fan, but this just seems unnecessarily cruel. To sleep with her on the same night that I came home. I choke down tears and have to look down at my bowl so she won’t see me, because I feel like I’m about to cry and that is so damn ridiculous. Clearly, she’s the woman that Shane wants. She’s the kind of woman he belongs with.

“Well, I have a meeting to get to. Bye boys. And Jessie,” she says before she wafts out of the room.

“Ice queen,” Mikey says with a shudder as soon as she’s left the room.

Liam puts an arm around me and kisses me softly on the top of my head. “There’s no way Shane would go back there, Jessie.”

I blink away the tears and turn to him with a smile. “It’s none of my business what, or who, Shane does,” I say with a shrug.

“Don’t say that, Red,” Mikey narrows his eyes at me. “I don’t know what’s going on between you two, but you need to talk to him. Preferably, you could fuck some sense into him. Especially if he did screw Erin last night.”

“Mikey,” Liam snaps.

“What?” He frowns.

“So, tell us about Arizona,” Liam says, changing the subject.

“It was hot and sticky,” I say with a smile.

“Pretty much just like you then,” Mikey chuckles as he walks around the table and wraps his arms around my waist.

“I’m not sticky,” I arch an eyebrow at him.

“You were last night, Red,” he laughs.

“Well, so were you.”

“Hmm. And I can’t wait to get hot and sticky with you again as soon as we can,” he growls in my ear. “But I need to take a shower. Be good while we’re gone today, won’t you?”

“Always,” I whisper before he gives me a long, sweet kiss and walks out of the kitchen.

“Why Arizona?” Liam asks when there is just the two of us remaining.

“I wanted to try somewhere hot. And it was far away. As different to New York as I could think of,” I reply with a shrug.

“Why did it need to be so different from New York?”

I look up into his deep brown eyes. “I didn’t want to be reminded of you and your brothers. Or the time I spent here.”

“Damn, Jessie.” He winces.

“Not because I didn’t miss you, Liam. Because it hurt too much to think about you all.”

“Why did you run so far, baby?” he reaches for me and brushes my hair from my face. “Conor almost lost his mind trying to find you.”

“I thought you didn’t want me here,” I whisper.

“Jessie,” he sighs as he takes my hands, pulling me from my stool until I’m standing between his strong thighs. “You’re one of us. That means from now on, you don’t get to run away when things get hard. Okay?”

“Okay,” I nod.

“Good,” he says as his hands slide over my hips and onto my ass. “Because this place wasn’t the same without you. None of us are the same without you.”

I press my face against his bare chest, inhaling his clean fresh scent. “I’m not the same without you either,” I whisper.

CHAPTER

FORTY-TWO

JESSIE

Walking into the kitchen later that afternoon, I almost want to turn around and walk back out when I see Shane standing there leaning against the breakfast bar with his back to me. But, I suppose I can't avoid him forever and something needs to happen to break this tension between us.

"Afternoon," I say as I walk to the counter and pour myself a coffee.

"Afternoon," he says gruffly as he eyes me over the rim of his coffee mug.

The air crackles with tension and energy and I take a deep breath. "So, how are you?" I ask and then I groan inwardly for asking such a ridiculous question.

He clearly doesn't appreciate it. "Really? Two fucking months and that's what we're talking about?" he frowns.

I roll my eyes, more at my own stupidity, but there is no need for his moodiness. "Okay. Something more meaningful then? So, you and Erin are back together, I see?" I ask with a flash of my eyebrows as the pang of jealousy gnaws at my center.

"Why did you come back here, Jessie?" he snaps, ignoring my question.

Jessie? I think I prefer him calling me Hacker. That was always our thing.

"Conor asked me to."

He shakes his head. “That’s not a reason.”

I stare at him, but I don’t answer.

“So, why did you come back here?” he frowns.

“I just told you.”

“That’s what made you come back, not why.”

“I don’t understand what you want from me, Shane.”

“How about the truth?” he snarls. “I appreciate it’s not always your first instinct, but you should try it some time.”

I slam my mug onto the counter and walk over to him. “I came back here because Conor asked me to. Because I missed him, and your brothers.”

“Because you still love them?” he narrows his eyes at me as though he’s trying to see inside my soul and it makes me feel too open and vulnerable around him.

“Yes,” I snap. I don’t admit that I still love him too, because I can’t bear to give him the satisfaction of knowing. He has made it perfectly clear how he feels about me.

His dark green eyes burn into mine and I fidget under the heat of his gaze. As much as I try not to, I can’t help but picture him lifting me onto the kitchen island and fucking me senseless, and the images in my brain have the heat flushing over my chest and cheeks and between my thighs.

“That’s the whole truth?” he growls.

“All of it,” I lie and then I walk away before I make a complete fool of myself and beg him to take me to his bed and hate fuck me like he did the last time we were together.

LATER THAT NIGHT, I’m struggling to sleep. Despite the warmth of my room, I am cold. Conor is working at the club and the twins are out of town and my huge king-size bed seems empty without one of them in it. I get out of bed and make my way to the kitchen to make some chamomile tea, hoping it might warm me up. Passing the den, I notice Shane inside. He is sitting in the darkness, staring out of the window at the full moon. I should leave him in peace but something

about seeing him sitting there all alone makes my heart ache for him.

I walk over to where he is and sit on the other end of the sofa. “Beautiful, isn’t it?” I say, reminded of the night he took me to his spot on the lake and quite literally promised me the moon. And I promised him I would never leave him. I swallow the sob that catches in my throat at the thought of how I let him down so badly.

He sighs deeply, and I realize I’ve probably made a mistake sitting here with him. No doubt he was enjoying some time alone. But I’m here now so I may as well say my piece. “Look, Shane. You’ve made it perfectly clear how you feel about me. And I totally understand that. I know we’re never going to be what we were...” I trail off because it hurts to say those words out loud.

He turns to me, the moonlight highlighting his handsome features and his muscular shoulders in the darkness. His eyes search mine, waiting for me to finish my sentence.

I take a deep breath. “But, can we at least try and fix whatever the hell is going on between us? Even if it’s only so that we are able to sit in the same room together.”

“Why? What would be the point, Jessie? We’ll never be what we were to each other.”

I close my eyes as I remember all the memories he and I have made together in this place. How his touch sets my skin on fire. How he makes me step up time and time again and be a better version of myself. “Because nothing is right here when things aren’t right between you and me. All I’m asking is for us to try to forgive each other, even if we can’t forget. I made a mistake, Shane. A huge one, I know. But I’m only human. I know how much it cost you to let me in, and how much it must have hurt when I left.” I brush a tear from my cheek as he sits there, unflinching. “If I could change it, I would. I hate myself for betraying you all like that.” *Especially you.*

He doesn’t answer me. Instead, he turns back to the window. I stand up and wipe away the tears that are running

down my cheeks. At least I tried. I don't know what else I can say or do to prove to him that he can trust me.

I walk past the back of the sofa and as I pass him, I instinctively reach out my hand and run my fingers through his thick hair. It sends a raft of emotions whirling through my mind. I love his hair. I love running my fingers through it. I love everything about him. Perhaps I owe him the truth, even if he doesn't want to hear it. "I suppose if I'm asking you to give us a chance to be more than enemies, I should be completely honest and tell you that I didn't just come back here for your brothers. I missed you too," I whisper before leaning down and kissing the top of his head. I walk out of the room and head back to bed, hoping that one day he might be able to forgive me for leaving.

ILIE IN BED, staring at the ceiling and wondering what time Conor might be home, when my bedroom door opens. Immediately, I smell the distinctive cologne and my stomach somersaults. "Shane?" I whisper.

"Can I come in?" he asks.

"Of course," I sit up slightly as I see his silhouette approaching the bed. My breath sticks in my throat and I swallow. He lies down beside me and places his hand on my stomach. I'm wearing a t-shirt and I'm beneath the covers, but despite the layers between us, I still feel the heat from him searing my skin.

"I missed you too, Hacker," he says softly.

Hacker! I smile in the darkness. "You did?"

"Yes," he replies, his voice thick with emotion. "So fucking much." He reaches for my hand and lifts it to his lips, kissing my fingertips softly and making every nerve ending in my body come alive with energy. "But it doesn't change anything, Jessie," he says with a sigh as he lets go of my hand again.

The pain of his words almost chokes me and I stifle a sob. "Are you and Erin a thing again now?"

"No. I never slept with her."

“But, she said...” I draw in a breath as I recall the hurt I experienced when she walked into the kitchen with that huge smile on her face.

“She said what?” he frowns at me.

“That she spent the night in your bed.”

“Well, she didn’t lie. She did spend the night in my bed, but I wasn’t with her. We had a few drinks to celebrate a deal she’d help me close. She could never handle her liquor. She was wasted, so I let her have my bed. I slept in my office.”

“Did you undress her?”

“No. I took off her shoes and then I covered her with a blanket.”

“Oh?” I whisper and then we lie here in silence, our breathing matching breath for breath and the air filled with tension and unspoken truths. I shift my position slightly and nudge his body and I swear I hear him groan softly.

“I wish things could be different, Jessie,” he whispers. “I wish that I could be like my brothers and let you back in. I want nothing more than to kiss you right now and tell you that everything between us is okay. But I can’t, because it’s not and I’m not sure it ever can be. And I can’t pretend that it is, because I can’t kiss you and not fall in love with you all over again. It took so much faith for me to trust you. I don’t have any left. I let down all of my walls with you...”

“I know,” I say as tears roll down my cheeks and I don’t bother to stop them. “You’re breaking my heart, Shane, but I understand, and I’m so sorry that I destroyed your trust in me. I’m sorry I destroyed us.”

“Hey,” he brushes the tears from my cheeks. “It’s not all on you, sweetheart. I promised we’d be just sex. I should have made sure it stayed that way.”

“No, you shouldn’t.” I shake my head. “I’m glad we were so much more than that.”

“But why? When it hurts so fucking much?”

“I know that it hurts now. But I would feel this every day for the rest of my life for one more moment like that with you. It was worth it, wasn't it?” I turn to look at him and can see the pain in his eyes even in the faint light of the room.

He brushes the hair back from my face. “Yeah,” he smiles at me before leaning forward and pressing a soft, chaste kiss on my forehead. “Night, Hacker,” he whispers before climbing off the bed and walking out of the room.

CHAPTER

FORTY-THREE

SHANE

As I walk down the hallway to the kitchen the following morning, the sound of her laughter drifts out into the hallway. I contemplate turning around and going back to bed, because as happy as I am for my brothers to have her back, it hurts too damn much to see her.

“Morning, bro,” Conor walks up behind me and throws an arm around my neck. “You joining us for breakfast? Mikey’s made pancakes.”

I groan inwardly. But, fuck! This is my house and if Jessie is sticking around then I’d better get used to it, and quickly. Besides, I could use her help finding Alexei. “Yeah,” I say, and we walk to the kitchen together.

“Did you and Jessie get a chance to talk?” he asks.

“Yeah. We spoke last night.”

“Oh?” he frowns at me.

“What?”

“She was alone this morning when I got home is all.”

“I said we talked Conor. We didn’t fuck.”

His frown deepens and I roll my eyes. “We straightened things out. We’re good. But we’ll never be what we were,” I tell him and admitting that out loud to him is like a knife slicing through my heart.

He shakes his head almost imperceptibly and continues walking.

I stop in my tracks. “What?” I snap.

“I didn’t say anything,” he holds his hands up in mock surrender.

“You don’t have to speak for me to know exactly what you’re thinking.”

“Well, if you already know what I’m thinking, you already know that I think you’re being a stubborn ass about this.”

“You think I’m being too hard on her?” I scowl at him.

“No, Shane. I think you’re being too hard on yourself,” he says before he heads into the kitchen.

I walk into the room a few seconds after Conor, right on time to see him pulling her up from Liam’s lap before lifting her onto the breakfast island and tongue fucking her mouth while she wraps her legs around him. Fuck. Me.

“Morning, bro,” Liam shouts with a smile on his face that I haven’t seen in weeks. Mikey tosses blueberries into his mouth while he waits for the pancakes to cook on the stove. I feel like I’ve walked into a fucked up porno version of Little House on the Prairie.

“Morning,” I reply, and the sound of my voice makes her pull back from Conor. Her cheeks flush pink and she whispers something to him that makes him set her down on her feet.

“Morning, Shane,” she says quietly as she walks back to the table and sits down again, on a chair this time.

“Jessie,” I say with a nod as I take a seat myself. I look at my cell phone but my eyes keep being drawn to her thighs as she sits there in Liam’s t-shirt and probably fuck all else. My cock hardens at the memory of her naked body and all of the things I did to it. And the thought of all the things I’d still like to do to it.

“What are your plans for today, Angel?” Conor asks as he kisses her head and sits down beside her.

“I was hoping to do some digging on Alexei.”

Thank Christ. Something to distract me. “Do you have any leads yet?”

“Nothing concrete. But I’ve found some financial records today linked to the house in Connecticut where he took me. The funds have been funneled through at least four different companies, but I think I’ve found a common denominator that will identify some other properties Alexei might own. It will only take a little more digging and then I’ll have a list of possible places where Alexei could be hiding, and then we can go from there,” she says.

Fuck. I forgot how good she was. She got more in two days than I have in two months.

“Well, the sooner you get me those addresses, the better. Because we need to act fast. It won’t be long before he finds out you’re back here.”

“About that,” she says as she looks between me and Conor. “I can handle Alexei. I don’t want any of you getting-”

“He came to our club and shot three of our men, Jessie,” I say to her. “We’re all in this together.”

“Yeah, Red,” Mikey says as he walks over and places a gigantic stack of pancakes in the center of the table. “There’s no way we’re letting you deal with him on your own.”

“Besides,” Liam adds as he sits on the other side of her and takes hold of her hand. “He stole you from us, and we owe him for that.”

A flush creeps over her cheeks and she rewards him with a smile that makes me want to bend her over this table and fuck her brains out. I swallow as I try to maintain some level of self-control. Everything I said last night was true. I can never trust her again, so I can never go back there. But I guess my cock didn’t get the memo. Asshole.

“We want Alexei almost as much as you do, Jessie,” I say.

She smiles at me too and I have to look away before all of my blood rushes straight to my cock.

“Why not get the word out that I’m back, and then we can bring the fight here?” she offers as she helps herself to a pancake and places it on her plate.

“No,” Conor and I reply at the same time.

“Why not?”

“Because we’re not using you as bait,” Conor snaps.

“And because we’d prefer the element of surprise,” I add. “If we sit back and wait for him to come to us, we lose that.”

“Okay. It was just a thought,” she shrugs.

“If you can find out which of those properties belong to him then we’ve got something to go on,” I say as I take some of the remaining pancakes.

“Okay,” she nods. “I’ll get on it today. Any chance I could use your computer? It’s got more juice than my laptop and it will probably take me the whole day?”

“Sure. After breakfast?” I offer.

“Great. Thank you,” she whispers.

JESSIE AND LIAM cleared the dishes after breakfast while Mikey, Conor and I discussed club business. She disappeared to her room about five minutes ago and I pray that it was to put on some clothes before she spends the day alone in my office with me.

I sit at my desk and sure enough, a few moments later, Jessie appears in the doorway wearing jeans and a hooded sweatshirt. The relief that I’m not going to have to stop myself from staring at her all day is equal to the disappointment that she has completely understood and respected what I told her last night. We have spent so many hours in this office together, during which she rarely wore any clothes. As a rule, she prefers to wander around this apartment in nothing but one of our t-shirts and a pair of panties. The fact that she is fully dressed today should make me happy, so why does it piss me off so much?

“You ready now?” she asks softly as she pulls her hair up into a pony tail.

“Yeah. Come on in.”

IT'S early evening by the time Jessie and I stop working. She's had her head bent over the computer for seven hours, only stopping for a quick sandwich when Mikey insisted she eat something. I've made calls and chased leads and generally been impressed by how quickly and efficiently she works. It has been a relief that we've both been so busy because it has stopped me thinking about all of the times I've fucked her in this room.

Conor walks through the door, making Jessie look up from the screen. “How are you two getting on?” he asks as he flops down onto the sofa.

“Good,” she says with a smile.

“Our hacker did good,” I say and I don't miss the look of pride on her face. “Jessie found the name of the company that owns Alexei's house in Connecticut, as well as another property in the area. I've sent some of our men to do some recon on the other property and they haven't reported back yet. But I suspect we might have found Alexei.”

“Fuck. You two work fast,” Conor says with a grin.

“It was all Jessie. I've been looking into this fucker for two months and had nothing.”

“You helped,” she says.

“Yeah, as your gofer.”

She opens her mouth as though to reply and I wink at her, making her smile and blush.

“So, what's our next move?” Conor asks.

“We need to strike soon, before he finds out Jessie is here.”

“How soon?” she asks.

“Like tomorrow night soon? Are you both okay with that?”

“Yes. The sooner he takes his last breath on this earth, the better as far as I'm concerned,” Jessie replies.

“Fine by me,” Conor adds with a nod before he stands up. “You done for the day?” he asks her.

“Yep.” She switches off the computer and stands too. “You didn’t need me to do anything else, did you?” She turns to me.

“Nope. We’re all done,” I say and wince at my choice of words, because she and I really are all done.

“Good. I need you to help me shower before I go to work.” Conor winks at her and then he slides his hand on to her ass as she reaches him, and squeezes before leaning down and kissing her. She stands on her tiptoes and kisses him back before the two of them say goodnight to me and walk out the door.

CHAPTER

FORTY-FOUR

SHANE

It's after midnight when I finally head to bed. Conor and the twins are working in the club and Jessie must be in bed because I didn't see her when I passed the den. As I near her room, I stop outside for a few seconds. How easy it would be to walk in there and crawl into bed next to her, running my hands over her soft, warm skin and tasting every inch of her before I bury my cock in her sweet cunt. I groan out loud. Why the hell did I go and fuck everything up? Just sex. That was what we were supposed to be. And if I had kept it that way, I wouldn't have been so fucking cut up about her leaving. We could have gone back to just sex.

But there is no just sex with Jessie. She is under my skin, and my heart sinks as I realize she probably always will be. I want to hate her but I just can't. I love her but I don't trust her. And I don't know how I'm going to be able to live under the same roof as her and deal with these feelings, because it damn near killed me to see her walking out of my office with Conor earlier today, knowing they were probably on their way to fuck and being acutely aware of the fact that she and I will never get to do that again.

"No. Volk!" the high pitched shriek comes from Jessie's room and I don't even think before I burst into the room and run to the bed. I heave a sigh of relief that she's just having a nightmare, having half expected to come face to face with the elusive Wolf from the terror in her voice.

I turn on the lamp on her nightstand and sit on the bed beside her as she whimpers and thrashes beneath the covers.

“Jessie,” I say softly and she shouts something unintelligible, but the terror on her face is real as beads of perspiration run down her forehead.

I place my hand on her arm and note the heat from her skin. “Jessie,” I say, louder this time, and her eyes snap open.

“Shane,” she gasps as her eyes dart around the room.

“Yeah, it’s just me. You were having a nightmare.”

She swallows hard and wipes her forehead with her hand. “He was here,” she stammers.

“The Wolf?”

She nods furiously.

“There’s no one here but you and me, sweetheart. Promise,” I say as I brush her damp hair from her forehead.

A single tear runs down her cheek and it breaks my heart to see her crying.

“Jessie,” I breathe, desperate to touch her.

“Are you sure there’s no one here?” she looks up at me through her long, dark lashes.

“One hundred percent. I’ve been watching the security monitors all night. You’re safe.”

“Well, except from you,” she laughs softly and I smile at her. “You’re the most dangerous of them all, Shane Ryan.” She reaches up and brushes her fingertips over my cheek.

I swallow hard as I use every ounce of restraint not to pin her down and fuck her until I forget why I shouldn’t.

“Will you stay with me for a little while? Just until I fall back asleep?” she breathes and I wonder if she’s purposely trying to make me hard or whether my body is just hardwired to react to hers this way.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Just to lay here with me. I promise I won’t try to take advantage of you.” She smiles faintly but I see right through

her because she is trembling in fear. Whatever the Wolf did to her has left scars that I suspect will never heal.

“Well, now you’re just taking all the fun out of it,” I say as I lie on the bed beside her. I resist the urge to wrap my arms around her because I know where that will lead. She will rest her head on my chest and I will smell her hair and feel the warmth and the softness of her body against mine, and then I will be completely fucking undone.

She shifts onto her side until we lie face to face. “I enjoyed working with you today,” she whispers. “You’re a very good underling.”

“Well, don’t get used to it, Hacker. I give the orders around here, remember?”

“How could I forget?” She smiles and the tension starts to slip from her body and her eyelids flutter. “Thank you for staying with me.”

“Any time. Now get some sleep.”

“Yes, Sir,” she purrs and the sound makes a direct line to my cock. I bite my lip as I watch her eyes closing and she drifts back off to sleep. I could leave now because I’ve done what she asked of me. So, why am I still lying here staring at her.

CHAPTER

FORTY-FIVE

CONOR

Music thumps in my ears as I make my way through the crowded club toward my office at the back. A blonde wearing the tiniest yellow dress I have ever seen pushes her tits up against me as I squeeze past. I shake my head at her and walk on by. She's not my type, but perhaps twelve months ago, I might have taken her to my office for a quick fuck. However, I have no interest in any woman other than Jessie, who I hope is being fucked by my older brother right now, because I need the two of them to work their shit out.

I've missed her these past two days. It was nice having her all to myself for a while, but I love the way she is with my brothers. She makes all of us happier and easier to be around. She makes our home a much better place, adding something that none of us even realized was missing. I realize I've got a goofy grin on my face from thinking about her, when one of my bouncers approaches me and asks me what I'm so happy about.

"What?" I shake my head and remember that I'm supposed to be a tough guy down here.

"I said what are you so happy about?" Chester asks.

"Nothing that you need to concern yourself with. What's up?"

Chester signals that we should go into my office and we walk the few yards to it and step inside, where we can hear each other better.

“So?” I frown.

“We got some girl out front demanding to get in here to see you, is all.”

“You recognize her?”

“No. But she’s tall. Brunette. Your usual type,” he says with a shrug. “At least, she used to be.”

My frown turns to a scowl now. “Why didn’t you just let her in anyway?” I ask. I don’t know who she is and I don’t particularly want to see her, but if she’s my previous usual type, then she would have no problem getting into this club.

Chester looks down at his feet for a split second before he answers me. “Well, here’s the thing. We couldn’t let her in ‘cause she’s got a kid with her.”

“A kid?”

“In a stroller,” he nods.

I have no idea what’s going on and I don’t like being blindsided like this. “Did she give a name?” I ask him.

“No, Boss,” he shakes his head. “She just said that you’d recognize her, and...” He doesn’t finish his sentence, instead he just looks at me with a strange expression on his face.

“And what, Chester? For fuck’s sake! Stop talking in riddles.”

“She kinda nodded her head to the kid, you know? Like you’d recognize him?”

“What the fuck?” I snarl, wracking my brains to think of any woman I’ve slept with in the past few years who I could have knocked up. But I can’t. I always use protection, at least until Jessie. But Chester is right. Brunettes used to be my type, and while I didn’t ever take many up to the apartment in recent years, I certainly indulged in my fair share of brief encounters in my office. But I was always super careful. I always used a condom. And I always disposed of it myself. “How old was he? The kid?”

“I dunno. A baby still. Maybe one?”

“Fuck, Chester. This is all I need.”

“She’s probably just trying it on, Boss. After some greenback to make her disappear quietly. I told her to take a hike, but she’s starting to make a scene.”

“Take her around the back and tell her I’ll meet her there,” I say with a sigh.

“Want me to come with her?”

“No. I’ll handle it myself,” I snap.

Chester nods and walks out of my office and I pour myself a whiskey and knock it back, enjoying the liquid warming my throat on its way down. Whoever the hell this woman is, I’m convinced that it’s not my kid she has with her.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, I step into the alleyway behind the club, pulling the collar of my jacket up against my neck in the icy wind. The mystery woman is standing waiting for me, complete with kid in a stroller. It’s after midnight and there isn’t much light back here, so I have to strain my eyes to see her. Chester was right. She has long dark hair, big tits and a pretty face and is exactly the kind of woman I used to fuck around with, but I have never seen this one before in my life. And I have never been wasted enough to fuck someone I wouldn’t remember. So who the hell is she and what the hell does she want with me?

CHAPTER

FORTY-SIX

MIKEY

As I look around the packed club, I strain my eyes to spot Liam and Conor, but I can't see either of them. The last time I saw my twin he was throwing a few underage college kids out, while trying to fight off a particularly handsy one who seemed to have taken quite a shine to him. He asked me to help him out but I was too busy laughing at the panic stricken look on his face.

Six months ago, being felt up by a twenty year old with hardly any clothes on would have been a good night out for him, and me. But that was before Jessie. Two more hours in this place for me and then I'll be joining her.

Liam and I have been pulling double shifts almost every night in this place while Conor was away, so tonight is my turn for an early finish. And that means I get Jessie all to myself. I cannot wait to crawl into bed beside her and fuck her senseless. My cock throbs at the thought of being inside her hot, wet pussy and the sound of my name on her lips when she comes.

I rearrange my cock in my suit pants to relieve the growing pressure and one of the barmaids notices me and gives me a huge smile. Damn. The pussy in this place is fine, and it's wall to wall every single night. But I have no interest in any of these women anymore and that is as much a surprise to me as anyone. I had never been in love. I used to think it was a crock of shit. But fuck me, I would die for that feisty little red-head upstairs.

I scan around for Liam and Conor again as I feel a hand on my shoulder. I spin around and come face to face with a guy about my age with a bright green Mohawk.

I frown at him.

“You’re Mikey, right?” he shouts over the music.

“Depends who’s asking.”

“Jessie,” he replies and the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.

“Jessie?” I snarl at him, because as far as I know she is safely tucked up in bed about eight floors above us.

“She’s looking for you. She asked me to find you for her.”

I grab him by his shirt collar and he flinches. “What?” I push my face closer to his.

“A girl called Jessie asked me to tell you that she needs to speak to you. She’s downstairs in the VIP area.”

“What did she look like?” I ask.

“I don’t know. Hot. Red hair,” he stammers and I release my grip on him.

“Was she alone?”

He straightens his shirt. “Yeah, man. She looked like she’d been crying.”

“Fuck.” I push past him and make my way to the VIP bar as my pulse starts to race. What the hell is Jessie doing down here and why is she crying?

It’s only as I push my way through the crowds of people that I think about the woman waiting upstairs in bed for me, who no longer has red hair because she dyed it brown when she was in Arizona. So, what the fuck is going on? I look around for my brothers again and grab one of our bouncers as he passes. “You seen Liam or Conor?” I ask.

“Conor went out the back a few minutes ago. Last time I saw Liam he was throwing those two kids out.”

“Anything weird happened here tonight?” I frown at him.

“Nothing weirder than usual, Boss. Why?”

“Find my brothers and tell them to meet me in the VIP bar.”

CHAPTER

FORTY-SEVEN

JESSIE

Despite promising myself I would stay awake so I could spend some time talking with Shane, I must have drifted off to sleep because the sound of the door bursting open wakes me. My eyes snap open and my heart starts to hammer against my ribcage. Shane is still here with me and he jolts awake too.

“Shane,” Mikey shouts as he runs into the room. “They came to the club. The Russians. They’ve taken him.”

Shane and I both sit up at the same time. “What? Taken who, Mikey?” he shouts.

It seems like my heart stops beating now as I look at Mikey’s face, and then I see Conor running into the room behind him. I feel anger vibrating through Shane’s body as bile surges up from my stomach and I fight the urge to be sick.

“Liam!”

FIND out what happens next for Jessie and The Ryan Brothers in [Ryan Retribution](#)

RYAN RETRIBUTION

CHAPTER

ONE

JESSIE

Shane jumps off the bed as Mikey and Conor rush into the room.

“They took Liam?” he snarls. “What the fuck happened?”

Mikey shakes his head, looking too distraught to speak. Conor places his hand on Mikey’s shoulder and answers Shane’s question. “Liam was obviously the target. They distracted Mikey and me with some phony bullshit, and they took him, Shane. He was throwing a couple of underage college kids out and they pulled up in a van and grabbed him.”

I sit up and stare at Conor, my mouth hanging open and my stomach twisted in a knot of anxiety as I think about Liam and what they’re doing to him right now.

“Did anyone see who took him. Did they get the plates?” Shane growls.

Conor shakes his head. “By the time the bouncers saw what was happening, it was too late to get the plates. All they saw was a black van. Couldn’t even be sure of the model.”

“They’ll probably be stolen anyway. But it will be on CCTV, right?” I ask as I climb out of bed, the adrenaline kicking in and jumpstarting my brain.

“Yeah,” Conor says with a nod.

“Good. I can access the traffic cameras and track the van’s movements,” I say, pulling on a pair of sweatpants.

“You said the Russians took him? How do you know that if nobody saw anything?” Shane asks as he rubs a hand across his jaw and steps closer to Mikey, who is so pale, he looks like he’s about to pass out.

“Who the fuck else would it be?” Mikey stares blankly at him.

I swallow the surge of guilt that pulses through my chest. If I hadn’t come back, Liam would still be here.

“This isn’t on you, Jessie,” Conor says softly, as though he’s reading my mind.

“He’s right. But we don’t have time to think about anything right now except for finding Liam,” Shane barks as he gives Mikey a brief hug before whispering something in his ear that seems to snap him from his daze. “Were the college kids in on it?” he asks, turning back to Conor.

“Maybe. But they’re long gone. There was another woman with a kid who was asking for me. She must have been in on it, but we didn’t realize that and she’s in the wind now too.”

“Fuck!” Shane hisses.

“We still got the guy with the Mohawk though,” Mikey adds.

“The Mohawk?” Shane and I say in unison.

“Some kid with green hair told me that Jessie wanted to see me in the VIP area. That was how they distracted me,” Mikey replies.

Shane nods before looking at Conor. “Let’s go make this kid talk then,” he says and Conor nods his understanding. Then Shane turns to me. “Jessie, do your thing, sweetheart, and find out where they’ve taken our boy.”

“Of course. I’m on it.”

“You think you can help Jessie out, kid?” Shane says to Mikey.

“Yeah. We’ll get him back, won’t we, Shane?” he asks, sounding like a scared little boy, and my heart breaks for him.

“Course we will, kid,” Shane replies as he pulls him into a brief hug. “But we need to move. Now.”

“Yeah,” Mikey nods as he struggles to compose himself.

Shane gives me a final glance, his face full of emotion, before he heads out the door with Conor hot on his heels. When they’re gone, I turn to look at their younger brother. He stares at me, his face blank and his deep brown eyes vacant. “Come on,” I hold out my hand to him. “We’ve got work to do.”

He takes my hand and I wrap my fingers around his tightly. The Ryan brothers have never needed me quite so much as they do right now, and I am determined not to let them down. Not to let Liam down. The thought of anything happening to him — of him not coming back here, it is unthinkable. So, I don’t think about it. I push it to the back of my mind and focus on what I need to do to find him.

I FIRE up the computer in Shane’s office while Mikey hovers nervously behind me. Anxiety and fear radiate from him in waves. “Hey,” I turn to him. “I might need to run a few programs at the same time here. So, can you bring me every laptop and every tablet in this apartment while I make a start?”

He stares blankly at me for a second, but then he nods his head. “Yeah. Sure. All of them?”

“Every single device you can find.”

He straightens his shoulders and sucks in a deep breath. “Of course, Red.”

“Before you go. Can you remember what time it was when you last saw Liam?”

He swallows hard, and I have no doubt that he is wondering if it will have been the last time he ever saw his twin alive, because I can’t help thinking it too. “Yeah. It was a quarter after one.” Then he marches out of the room full of purpose and I turn back to the screen and enter the password before it flickers to life.

I bring up the club security footage first and switch to the camera on the street outside where Liam was taken. I go back

over an hour to just before 1am and scan the screen for signs of a black van. At 1:20am, Liam appears on the screen with two scantily dressed females. The sight of him makes my heart start to pound in my chest and I sit up straight and take a deep breath. I cannot let my emotions get the better of me right now. I work best when I can be detached and have a clear head, and Liam needs me at my best. He deserves me at my best. Both of the women appear drunk as they stumble onto the pavement. Liam holds his arm out to catch one before she face-plants the concrete and the other clings onto his arm. They all have their backs to the camera so I can't see their faces, but I can pull footage from inside the club if we need to trace them.

I watch as Liam guides them to a cab parked out front, before he opens the door and they stumble through it and onto the back seat. Liam watches the cab drive away and then he turns around, and for a brief couple of seconds I see his face on the screen and have to remind myself not to think about what he might be going through right now. It seems like he is about to walk back into the club, but then he disappears and the street is empty.

I blink at the screen in confusion before rewinding it back. But the same thing happens. One second Liam is there, and the next he's gone. I rewind it again and check the time stamp, and it's only then that I realize that two minutes have been completely erased.

Damn! Someone has hacked into the security system. My heart sinks. If they were good enough to do that and erase just the specific time that he was taken, then no doubt they have messed with the footage from the other cameras too. I rewind again and notice that the cut is almost seamless. If someone wasn't looking closely, then it would appear that Liam came back into the club. So, we are definitely dealing with someone who knows what they're doing, and that makes my stomach twist into a knot, because it means it's going to take me much longer to track him than I thought.

Mikey comes back into the office carrying five laptops, and places them on the desk. "We got some tablets too

somewhere. Should I go find them?" he asks.

I shake my head. We do need the extra computers, but the task of finding every device was also a distraction technique to give Mikey something useful to do. Now I need him. "No. I want you to turn all of them on so I can run some different software. I also need you to use one to check the security footage in the alleyway where Conor was, and also inside the club from 1am to about 1:30. Look for anything suspicious, or anything that will give us a clue who took Liam. And could you also check if there are any time lapses or footage missing?"

Mikey frowns at me. "They fucked with our security feed?"

"Yes. But I have plenty of other feeds to tap into along this street. Don't worry."

Mikey nods and picks up a laptop before sitting on the chair opposite me, and we both get to work.

CHAPTER

TWO

SHANE

Conor and I stand in the elevator in silence as it takes us down to the basement, where some of our bouncers are holding the guy with the green Mohawk. I feel the worry and the anger in my brother and it echoes mine. Of all of us, why choose Liam? He's probably the strongest of us physically, but emotionally, he's the most vulnerable. He's so much like our mother — quiet and thoughtful. Mikey has always had a big mouth and used his sense of humor as a distraction. But Liam was always quiet. As a kid, he would sit there and take whatever our father doled out. My heart breaks inside as I think about what he endured as a child and the man he has become in spite of it.

My fists are clenched at my sides as the elevator comes to a stop and Conor and I step out.

“Have you spoken to this guy at all?”

“Yeah,” Conor says as we make our way toward the small room near the back. “But it was real quick. He said he didn't know anything and was only doing what this girl asked him to.”

I nod as we reach the steel door and our bouncer opens it so we can walk inside. Sitting in the middle of the room, strapped to a chair, is a kid in his early twenties, with a neon green Mohawk. He has duct tape over his mouth, a busted nose, a huge gash above his eye that's causing blood to run down his face, and a piss stain on the crotch of his stonewash jeans.

Chester, one of our bouncers, is standing beside him silently. Chester won't have touched him, because he would've been told not to by Conor or Mikey, so I wonder which of my brothers is responsible for his face. I could rip this guy's head off his neck right now, given the mood I'm in, but I need to know what he knows.

"Take off the tape," I say to Chester, who complies immediately, making the kid wince in pain. "Out," I indicate the door and Chester nods his understanding before leaving Conor and me alone.

The kid in the chair stares up at us, his lip trembling and his body shivering. At least he has the good sense to stay quiet.

"What were you doing in our club?" I ask.

He blinks at me, his mouth opening and closing like a fish in a tank.

Conor raises his foot and kicks the kid in the kneecap, making him surge forward as he howls in pain, but he is restrained with chains and he falls back against the chair, his head hanging limply against his chest. "My brother just asked you a question, asshole!" Conor hisses.

The kid lifts his head and looks at us. "I was there with my girlfriend."

"Where's your girlfriend now?" I ask him.

"We had a fight. She went home hours ago." He is crying now. "I don't know anything. I swear."

"I think we'll be the judge of that," I snarl.

I nod to Conor and he walks behind the chair and holds the kid's head up by his hair. "What's your name?" I ask.

"Henry Campbell," he sniffs.

"Well, Henry. I am going to ask you some questions, and every time you lie to me, my brother here is going to take a body part. Okay?"

Henry's eyes widen in terror and Conor pulls his head back further to emphasize that he is ready and waiting for my command. "Yes," he finally says.

"Why did you tell my brother that someone was looking for him?"

"Because this girl named Jessie asked me to, man. She seemed like she'd been crying and everything. She looked really upset," he babbles as he looks frantically around the room.

"If you're looking for help, there is none," I tell him. "The only way out of here is to help me find the people responsible for taking my brother."

"Okay, man. I'll help you. I'll do anything," he cries.

"How did you know who Mikey was?"

"She described him. Told me he was a big, good looking guy in a really expensive suit and with a beard. She said she really needed him and she was in trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"I don't know. I didn't ask. She was shaking, and she looked really scared and upset, man. Said she needed me to tell this Mikey guy that Jessie needed him and to come get her. That is all I know. I swear."

I sigh deeply before I nod to Conor and he grabs hold of one of Henry's earrings and rips it from his ear, making him cry out in pain.

"Next it will be your whole ear," I snarl as I step toward him, pushing my face closer to his. "Do you think we're playing here, kid?"

"No," he cries as he shakes his head. "But I don't know anything. I was just standing by the dance floor. My girl got us these VIP tickets, and I didn't want to waste them even after she went home. Then this chick just came up to me. She looked upset, like she'd been crying. She said she needed help and asked if I could go find Mikey for her. I swear that's all I know. I have no fucking clue who she was, man."

I glare at him. He is fucking trembling. His eyes are wide, his pupils dilated. He's sweating through his clothes. He blinks away a trickle of blood from his eye.

"He doesn't fucking know anything," I say with a sigh as I stand upright.

"I agree," Conor sighs too and lets Henry's head drop. "What now? Because we need to get rid of him."

"Hmm," I rub my jaw.

"What?" Henry shrieks. "I haven't done anything. I won't tell anyone anything. I swear."

"What is there to tell, Henry? You came to our club. You acted like a complete jackass and got thrown out by our bouncers and got that nasty cut on your eye in the process, right?"

He stares at me for a few seconds until the penny drops, and then he looks at me like I have just handed him a winning lottery ticket. "Yeah. Of course that's what happened," he nods furiously.

"I know where you live, Henry," I warn him. "I will find out where your girlfriend lives too."

He nods again. "I was a jackass. I got thrown out."

"You sure about this?" Conor arches an eyebrow at me and I signal to him that we should leave the room. "Drive the kid home and make sure you escort him inside. I want his address," I say to Chester once we're outside before I turn back to Conor. "We don't have time for this. The last thing I need to be doing tonight is disposing of a fucking body. And he's just a kid, Con."

"Yeah, but it would have felt good, Shane." He sucks in a breath and I wrap an arm around his shoulder.

"Yeah, it would. But we'll find him. Promise."

"Yeah. Of course we will."

"Let's go have a quick word with the rest of the bouncers and see if we get any more information that might be useful

before we go see what Jessie and Mikey have come up with.”

Conor nods his agreement and together we walk through the basement to the club.

CHAPTER

THREE

LIAM

My shoulder throbs like it's been speared by a red hot poker as I lie on the dusty floor of the van. I've got some kind of hood over my head, and my ankles and wrists are bound, but I listen to everything. I'm sure we've left the city and are on the freeway, but I have no idea where these pricks are taking me. They have been talking non fucking stop in Russian, making me regret not asking Jessie to teach me some when I had the chance so I could understand a single fucking word of what they're saying.

I shift my position to a more comfortable one, and someone kicks my ankles and mumbles something unintelligible.

"Fucking asshole," I shout as I kick both of my legs back at whoever it was, but all I hit is air and the sound of laughter fills the van, followed by more Russian voices. There are at least four of them in here with me. I feel so fucking stupid getting ambushed like that.

What the fuck! I should have been more vigilant. We knew they were going to attack sooner or later, and I let my guard down. I was so fucking relieved to have those two drunken college girls off my hands that I took my eye off the ball. And now I'm in the back of some disgusting van that, for some reason, stinks of fucking sausages and bacon grease and it makes me want to vomit into the bag on my head.

Fuck! I hope someone saw something, and my brothers are already on their way. But what if nobody saw anything? What if these fuckers are going to shoot me in the head, dump me in

some ditch somewhere before anyone even notices that I'm missing? What if I never see my brothers or Jessie again?

My heart races in my chest so fast that I feel like it's going to burst through my ribcage. I try to take deep breaths, but the heavy cloth bag over my head doesn't exactly make that easy and I start to hyperventilate as I struggle to get enough air into my lungs.

Fuck! I can't breathe. I'm going to suffocate on the floor of this stinking, shit-box van. I can't die like this. Not here.

Think, Liam! Stop fucking freaking out like a scared little kid and think! What did Dr. Lisa used to tell Conor to do when he was having a panic attack or a nightmare?

The window. Yeah, that was it. Draw a window in your mind and follow the lines.

Breathe in for two.

Hold.

Out for two.

Hold.

And repeat.

As my breathing rate slows, I get more air into my lungs and my heart starts to calm down too. They will notice I've gone. They'll be looking for me right now. And they will come get me and take me home. And if they don't, I will haunt them for the rest of their goddamn lives.

CHAPTER

FOUR

JESSIE

“Coffee, Red?” Mikey asks as he looks up at me from the laptop screen.

“Yes, please, I would love one,” I say as I rub my eyes. We have been staring at these damn screens for a solid two hours. As I suspected, whoever tampered with the security feed has wiped some of the other cameras too. Specifically, the camera in the alleyway, where Conor met his mystery lady, has ten minutes missing so there is no evidence of her. And when we checked the camera for the main entrance, the footage of her talking to one of the bouncers from earlier had been wiped too, making it much harder to track her.

Sure enough, when Mikey checked the VIP area, there was no footage to be found of the woman claiming to be me approaching the guy with the green hair either, and a full ten minutes had been wiped. It doesn’t mean that we can’t find and track these people, it just makes it a hell of a lot harder.

But what is worrying me most is that I am systematically working my way through every security camera along this street and every single one has been hacked, and each of them has had a crucial portion of time wiped so that I have been unable to get eyes on the van that Liam was taken in. Which not only means that we are dealing with someone who really knows their shit, but it could take me days to find him, and we don’t have that long.

“I’ll be back in five then,” Mikey says as he stands up and I smile at him because I can’t let him see how worried I am.

I'm still bent over the screen when I hear someone walking into the room a moment later. "That was quick," I say without looking up.

"He didn't know anything useful," Conor replies and I look up to see him and Shane walking toward me.

"Really? Nothing at all?" I frown.

"No. You come up with anything yet?" Shane asks as he perches on the desk beside me.

I shake my head. "Nothing except that we are dealing with someone who knows their stuff."

I briefly explain the problems I've been encountering and watch as the worry and concern settle over Shane and Conor's faces.

"You can find him, though, Jessie?" Conor asks when I'm done.

"Yes. Of course I will." I glance at the computer screen. Liam has now been gone for almost three hours and who the hell knows what they are doing to him. "But I had hoped I'd have something by now. At the very least, I'd have wanted to identify the van that they took him in."

Conor sits on the sofa with his head in his hands while Shane nods solemnly. "What can we do to help?"

"Nothing right now," I admit. "All of these screens have something going on. I've got alerts set up for different traffic cameras. I have two programs trying to trace the IP address of whoever hacked the security footage, but none of those things are quick fixes."

Shane nods. "Maybe we need to find these college kids and this mystery woman who claimed she had Conor's baby?" he says.

"Conor's baby?" I stare at him open-mouthed.

"It wasn't. We'll explain later," Shane says with a sigh just as Mikey walks back into the office with a tray and a coffee for each of us.

“I heard you two coming back up,” he says to Shane and Conor as he sets the tray down and hands each of us a drink. “You get anything from the kid with green hair?”

“No,” Shane shakes his head. “Seems like he was just some random that they chose to deliver a message.”

I lean back in my chair and blow on my hot coffee. “Not entirely random, though?” I arch an eyebrow at them as Mikey sits next to Conor.

“What do you mean?” Shane frowns.

“He had a green Mohawk, right?”

“Yeah,” Mikey replies.

“How many guys do you see walking around your club, or even New York, with a hairstyle like that?”

“Not many,” Mikey agrees.

“Are you suggesting we’re not capable of getting information from people, Jessie?” Shane scowls at me.

“No,” I shake my head. “Not at all. I’m sure he had none to offer and really was just a messenger. But why choose a guy with a green Mohawk? Why not pick someone who looks... well, average? Someone who doesn’t stand out in a crowd?”

“You think they wanted us to be able to find him easily once we realized what had happened?” Shane asks.

“Yes. Exactly that.” I nod as I take a sip of my coffee. “So, that your efforts are wasted interrogating some kid who genuinely has no clue what has gone on instead of focusing on the people who do.”

“Fuck!” Conor says as he runs a hand over his face.

“So, who did have a clue what was going on?” Shane asks.

“No idea.” I glance over at Conor and Mikey. “All three of you were distracted by young, attractive women, right?”

“Not me, Red,” Mikey winks, unable to resist using humor to mask his emotions now that he is able to function again. “Mine was a guy with green hair.”

Conor nudges him in the ribs and rolls his eyes. “Yeah. So?”

“But the guy with the green hair was approached by a young woman too. One he described as hot, right? That’s no coincidence either, is it? I suppose those women could have been in on it, or could have been selected at random and paid off? I mean, there is no shortage of hot young women at your club, is there?”

“That’s not really much help, sweetheart.” Shane arches an eyebrow at me.

“It is though. Because it’s a pattern, isn’t it? Patterns are important because they are formulaic. The devil is in the detail, Shane Ryan. Has no one ever told you that?”

He stares at me as though I’m talking Spanish. “That particular pattern might be important and it might not, but identifying things like that helps me process. You have your methods of information gathering and I have mine,” I shrug.

“I feel kind of helpless sitting here doing nothing and just watching you work though,” Shane says and Conor and Mikey nod their agreement.

“You are helping,” I say as I go back to my screen and continue my search. “Mikey, can you go through the footage in the club and track the two drunk college girls? Take screenshots of people they have more than a minute of conversation with, and then we can look into each of them.”

“Okay. But that could take ages, Red.”

“I understand that. But how else are we going to find out who these people were working for?”

He nods and sits at the laptop.

“And what about us?” Conor asks.

“Help Mikey if you can, but I need those other laptops to keep doing their thing, so you’ll have to look over his shoulder or find another one.”

“There’s one in the club downstairs,” Conor says before walking out of the office.

“And me?” Shane asks.

“Keep talking. Tell me everything the guy with the green hair said.”

Shane relays the information they got from the guy downstairs while I continue my painstaking search of all the traffic cameras in the New York district, starting with the ones closest to us and working outwards. I try to hide my frustration as each one has been tampered with in the same way. I have no idea how long this will go on for because the person tampering with them is constantly two steps ahead of me, and they are incredibly thorough. I will catch up with them eventually, but it could take vital time that we don't have. So, until my software tracks their IP address, I am screwed.

“Anything?” Conor asks when he comes back into the room fifteen minutes later, as I sit frowning at the computer screen.

“Not yet,” I shake my head. Nothing from their conversation with the Mohawk guy has given me anything else to work with, so I go on with my search while the brothers check the CCTV from the club.

ANOTHER HOUR HAS PASSED and we are still no closer to finding Liam. The tension in the room is ratcheting up with each passing minute as the boys' frustration grows that they are unable to do something more to find their brother. My methods are definitely not what they are used to, but right now we have little else to go on.

“Any luck?” I pop my head over the computer and ask Mikey.

“No,” he says with a sigh. “Nobody except Liam and one of the bouncers spoke to them for more than a few seconds.”

“They could have been approached before they even got to the club?” Conor suggests.

“Yeah, or they were in on it from the outset,” Mikey adds.

I nod absent-mindedly. “Or they were spoken to in a place where there are no cameras?”

“The ladies’ room?” Shane frowns.

“Maybe.” I shrug.

“Mikey, concentrate on the cameras outside the ladies’ room. Look for the college girls and a hot redhead,” Shane barks.

“On it,” Mikey grins, no doubt believing that we are finally getting somewhere, although I’m not so sure. I can’t shake the feeling that the young women were pawns, just like the green-haired guy, and are more dead end leads to keep us from following the right ones.

“Are we sure it was the Russians who took him?” Shane frowns as he rubs a hand over his jaw and looks at Conor. “Perhaps you and I should go and shake up a few of our associates and see what they know?”

“It had to be the Russians,” Conor frowns at him. “No one else would pull shit like this. No one else has anything to gain from taking Liam.”

“But why Liam? What do they have to gain from taking him?” Shane frowns.

I sit back in my chair. It is the most obvious question with the most obvious answer. The one we should have asked from the outset. Because I just realized exactly where they have taken him.

“Me,” I say, and the three of them turn to stare at me. “Alexei wants me.”

“Yeah,” Conor frowns.

“So, that’s the point of it all. Throw us into a tailspin, chasing leads that go nowhere until we finally realize that it is me he wants.”

“But we already knew that, Angel,” Conor says.

“We did. But we kind of forgot that in our search for Liam,” I say as I bring up the traffic camera I am looking for. I do a quick calculation in my head to account for driving time and search a fifteen minute window either side. Thankfully, at

2:30am there is little traffic, and sure enough the black van appears on the screen in front of me.

“So, where the hell have they taken him?”

“To the house in Connecticut,” I say as I nod toward the screen. “He wanted us to find him. He knew we would come for him, and that is the surest way to get me back.”

Shane leans down and wraps his arm around me, pressing a kiss on the top of my head. “Good girl,” he says softly before he stands upright again.

“Mikey, grab every fucking explosive device you can get your hands on. Conor, get the guns. The big ones.” Shane barks his orders.

“Jessie. Go get dressed, sweetheart. Because we are about to go and bury Alexei Ivanov and his Bratva army.”

I nod and stand up from my chair, grateful that he didn't try to make me sit this out, because there is not a chance in hell I would have.

“Meet in the basement in twenty,” Shane shouts to his brothers' retreating backs as they march out of the room.

CHAPTER

FIVE

JESSIE

I shift my weight from foot to foot as we wait for Conor and Mikey. I came down to the basement five minutes ago and Shane was down here already. He has started up the giant armored SUV and has left the engine running while we wait for his brothers.

“You don’t have to come with us, Jessie. You can stay here where it’s safe. I’ll have my best men here watching you,” he offers.

“Are you kidding me, Shane?” I frown at him. “He has Liam. Because of me. Alexei is responsible for killing my whole family. He lied to me. Drugged me. Manipulated me into believing that you were the enemy. I want to look into his eyes while he takes his last breath.” I spit the final words as the venom I feel for him spills out of me.

“Okay.” Shane narrows his eyes at me.

“You think I won’t be able to do it, don’t you?”

“I never said that,” he shakes his head.

“No. You don’t have to. I can see it. You think I don’t have the guts to follow it through.”

“You have bigger balls than almost every man I’ve ever known, sweetheart. I have no doubt you could do it. But do you want to live with that?”

“I’ve lived with much worse these past ten years.”

He nods and steps closer toward me, with his hands in his trouser pockets. “Let me do this for you, Jessie.”

“Why? Do you think I’m weak?”

“Weak? No. You are titanium. But I would die if anything happened to you.”

“Shane!” I breathe.

“Or my brothers,” he adds quickly. “I should have killed our father. For everything he did to me and my brothers. For what he did to our mom. I had the perfect opportunity to. I pressed the gun against his forehead and he just stared up at me, slobbering and crying because he was steaming drunk. And I couldn’t do it. And I’ve fucking hated myself for it ever since. I don’t want you to have to live with any regrets. Let me kill him for you and you won’t have to.”

“I’m sorry that you’ve lived with that, Shane. I don’t know what happened to you all. Conor told me some of what he went through. I do know that your brothers wouldn’t have survived their childhoods without you. But I can’t let you kill Alexei for me. I still have so many questions left to ask him. I need to look him in the eyes and ask him why.”

“What if he doesn’t give you the answers you’re looking for, Jessie?”

“Then I’ll have to find the Wolf and ask him instead.”

Shane smiles at me. “Just know that I’ll be one step behind you all the way, Hacker. Okay?”

“Thank you,” I smile too. “I appreciate you having my back.”

“I’ll always have your back, sweetheart,” he says and there is a moment of connection between us that almost takes my breath away.

“We ready to go?” Mikey shouts from behind us and I turn to see him and Conor striding through the basement, looking like they are about to go to war, and I suppose that we are.

“Yes. Let’s go,” Shane nods and the four of us climb into the car. Shane and Conor in the front, and Mikey and me in the back. The shutters are open and Shane guns the engine and speeds out of the basement garage. Mikey stares out the

window in silence and Conor leans his head back against the headrest. I reach through and put my hand on Conor's shoulder and squeeze, and he places his warm, strong hand over mine. I reach for Mikey's hand with my other one and he takes it, curling his fingers around mine as Shane goes over the plan, which is basically to plow through the gates, blow everything up and find Liam as quickly as possible while killing as many Russians as we can.

“We'll have him home in a few hours,” he says confidently and we all nod our agreement. I swallow hard as I lean back and stare out the window. My hand is still wrapped in Mikey's and he holds it tightly. The atmosphere in the car is thick with tension and I know that we are all probably thinking about the same thing. What lengths will Alexei go to in order to ensure I come back to him? What is he doing to Liam right now, and will we get our boy back alive?

CHAPTER

SIX

MIKEY

As I stare out the window, my heart races faster as we get closer to Alexei's Connecticut fortress. I try to concentrate on the sensation of Jessie's warm, soft fingers holding onto mine. Images of Alexei and his men torturing my twin force themselves into my brain and I have to force them back out. I need to stay focused, because I can't let Liam down. *We* can't let him down. Because I have no idea how I'll even keep breathing if we don't get him out of there and home to us. I don't know how any of us would get over it. Even Jessie. She has only been a part of our family for a short time, but she is inextricably linked to us now, and I know she feels the pain of Alexei taking him as deeply as we do.

It was a sight to behold to see her working earlier, and in different circumstances, I would have been content to sit and watch her do her thing for hours, because she is a fucking genius. But I could hardly focus on anything except getting Liam back. I probably hindered her more than I helped her, with my constant questions and my pacing, but if I did, she never gave me any indication of that fact.

Now it's my turn to step up. Because blowing shit up, killing, and maiming is my thing, and I will go through anyone I need to in order to make sure I get my twin and the rest of us out of there safely.

"We're almost there, Mikey," Conor says as he turns in his seat. "What you got for us?" He nods to the huge black duffle bag at my feet.

"Bombs. Lots of bombs. And some tear gas," I reply.

“Tear gas?” Shane asks.

“Yep. But I got us some masks,” I reach down and unzip the bag before pulling out the four gas masks.

“Nice,” Conor says with a nod as I pass two into the front for him and Shane. Jessie stares down at hers as I pass her one too.

“You ever worn one of these, Red?” I ask her.

She shakes her head.

I tighten the strap for her. “Put it on when I tell you to, and don’t take it off until you see us do the same. Or you’re completely clear of the hallway. Okay?”

“Okay,” she nods.

“Pass me the bag from the back, bro,” Conor says and I reach behind the seat and pull out his bag of tricks before handing them to him.

“Any preferences?” he asks as opens up the zip.

“Semi-automatic and a Beretta for me,” I reply.

“Same,” Shane adds.

“And what about you, Angel?” Conor turns to her and smiles.

“I’ve never used a semi-automatic before, but I’m game if you have a spare. And I’ll take a Beretta too.”

Conor pokes his head into the bag. “Will a Glock do?”

“Sure. As long as it will take out Alexei Ivanov, I’m easy,” she shrugs.

I feel the tension in the car growing at the mention of his name. We all want Alexei.

“I won’t let you down. Promise,” she says as she looks between the three of us.

“We know.” I squeeze her hand.

Conor and Shane nod their agreement. It is only fair that Jessie is given the chance to ice her father after everything he

did to her and her family.

“But if one of us gets a clean shot...” Shane adds, not needing to finish the sentence.

“I understand,” she says quietly.

“You clear on the plan?” Shane says as we approach the mansion where Liam is being held.

“Yeah,” the rest of us reply.

The plan is simple enough. We drive through the gates and right through the front doors of the house in this car, which is basically an armored tank. Then comes the tear gas, the bombs and the shooting. Kill anything that moves that isn't one of us. Spread out and find our boy.

CHAPTER

SEVEN

JESSIE

The entire ground floor of Alexei's mansion is carnage. They were prepared for us, but I don't think they expected us so soon. It seems like Mikey has blown up half the house, and the explosions, along with the tear gas, have taken out the first wave of Alexei's men. The gas masks prevent us inhaling the smoke from the bombs too and we are able to move freely through the haze. Mikey indicates his head that he's heading toward the kitchen and Conor heads upstairs. I remember my father and Vlad referring to holding rooms in the basement when I was here.

I tap Shane on the shoulder. "I think he might be downstairs."

Before he can reply, half a dozen of Alexei's men appear out of nowhere, coming in through the hole in the wall that was the front entrance only a few minutes earlier. They run toward us and we dive for cover behind the marble staircase.

"Go. I'll meet you down there," Shane shouts as he jumps up and takes two of them out. They fire back and I contemplate staying and helping.

"Go, Hacker!" he orders. I hand him my semi-automatic so he has two and can hold off these guys more easily before I make a run for the basement stairwell, pulling the Glock from my waistband as I do.

As I reach the bottom of the stairwell, two men run toward me. I squeeze out two quick rounds and they drop to the floor. I hate guns, but I have been using them since I was eighteen

and I have a perfect aim. Pulling off my mask, I toss it onto the floor. There is no smoke or tear gas down here.

I edge along the quiet hallway, praying that Liam is down here and he is still alive. As I approach the first room, I steel myself to look inside. When I do, it's empty and my heart rate increases as I approach the second one. When I find that empty too, I glance toward the end of the hallway to the room at the back. If Liam is down here, he must be in there. As I make my way closer, the adrenaline starts to thunder around my body and I take a deep breath to calm my breathing and my racing heart. I need to stay calm and prepare myself for whatever I may, or may not, find in that room. Because if Liam and Alexei are in there, then this might be my only chance.

I draw level with the room, and unlike the others, the door is closed. My fingers grip the handle and I take a beat. *You got this, Jessie.*

As I push open the door, a man is standing directly in front of me, with his hand raised and the barrel of a gun aimed at my head. He doesn't have time to squeeze the trigger before I put a bullet in his neck. He drops to the floor and the sight behind him almost stops my heart. Alexei has Liam chained to the floor. Jumper cables and bloodied instruments lie scattered on the ground around them and the entire room is filled with the metallic smell of blood, making me wonder how much of Liam's has been spilled in here.

I watch my father holding up Liam's battered and broken body by his hair, and my throat constricts as I struggle to take in air. They've had him for a little over six hours and yet have inflicted so much damage. I resist the urge to run to him and wrench him from my father's cruel grasp. Above me, the sound of gunshots and carnage can be heard as the rest of the Ryan brothers tear this house and its occupants to pieces.

At least I hope that's what is happening. But the reality of our situation is slowly starting to sink in. Alexei's army outnumbered us by at least five to one. He could have called for reinforcements by now. I could lose one, or even all of them

here today, and that thought makes me feel like my heart has been torn from my chest.

“You came home, printsessa,” Alexei sneers. “I knew that you would.”

I raise the Glock in my hand and aim at his face. He laughs at me and shakes his head. “You won’t use that.”

“Try me, *Papa*. Now let him go.”

“You couldn’t kill me to save your own life, Jessica. You think I believe you’ll kill me to save his?” he snarls as he jerks Liam’s head and causes him to groan in pain. The sound slices a welt across my heart.

“Please let him go, *Papa!*”

He narrows his eyes at me. “Have you learned nothing from me, printsessa? What makes you think I will allow any of these Irish pigs to live even one more day after they stole you from me?”

I glance at Liam and my heart begins to break into a million pieces. The sound of an explosion above us makes me and my father look up and he starts to laugh again. “My men will be making sure your friends pay for their crimes. While you stand here pretending you have the balls to kill me.”

My pulse is thrumming against my skin as my blood thunders around my body. What if Shane and Conor and Mikey are hurt too? How the hell do I get us all out of this alive? I have one last bargaining chip at my disposal — me. “Let him go and I’ll come home, *Papa*. If it’s me you want, then I’m yours.”

“But you’re already mine, Jessica,” he frowns at me.

“You don’t understand.” I shake my head. “I’ll stay. Of my own free will. I will try and be the daughter that you want me to be, *Papa*. I will marry whoever you choose for me. I will give you grandbabies. But only if you let my friends go.”

“You’d do that for him?” he sneers as he jerks Liam’s head again.

“Yes.”

“Why?” he spits.

“Because if you kill him, you will destroy me. If you kill any of them, you will destroy everything I have left. You took one family from me, Papa. Please don’t take them too. I promise I will try to be a good daughter for you, but please give me something. Show me that there is something in you worth trying to love,” I plead with him. I see his eyes soften at the corners and the hint of a smile plays on his lips. For a second I wonder if he is considering my proposal, but his smile turns cruel and mocking.

“I murdered my own brother and the only woman I have ever loved, printsessa. Alexei Ivanov is not a man of mercy,” he sneers as he raises his arm and I see the glint of a blade as he brings it toward Liam’s neck. Before he can make contact, I squeeze the trigger of my gun and the blade clatters to the floor as Alexei clutches his throat where the bullet has just torn straight through it. He drops to the floor and I run to Liam, catching him before he hits the ground too.

“Liam.” I smooth the blood matted hair from his forehead. “I’m here, baby. I’ve got you,” I say as I wrap him in my arms. The sound of Alexei choking on his own blood next to us is of little comfort as I wonder at the easiest way to get Liam out of this place and to a hospital as quickly as possible. He can’t stand and there is no way I can lift him. But like an answer to my prayers, Shane is right beside me.

“You did good, Hacker. Now let’s get him out of here,” he says as he hoists Liam up and onto his shoulder.

“How long have you been in here?” I pant with the effort of lifting Liam’s weight.

“Long enough. Now let’s go. We need to get him to the car.”

As we’re making our way out of the room, I steal a quick glance back at Alexei. His blood pools on the floor beneath him as he lies there with lifeless eyes. But I can’t take a chance. Too many ghosts from my past haunt me. I won’t allow another one to do that. I raise my gun again and discharge my remaining bullets into his motionless body.

Shane stands with Liam and waits for me. When I'm done, I take half of Liam's weight again and we leave the room without another word. We meet up with Conor and Mikey along the hallway and I'm relieved to see they are both unharmed. They both run to us, but it is Mikey who takes his twin from me and Shane, lifting his brother into his arms.

"The car is still out front. We need to check him over and see if we need to head to the ER," Shane snaps as he indicates the door.

"Then let's get the fuck out of here," Conor snarls as we turn for the exit.

Before we reach it, my father's second in command, Vlad, steps into our path out of nowhere.

Shane points a gun at Vlad's head, and the Russian holds his hands out in surrender as his eyes lock on me. "Where are you going? This is all yours now, Jessica," he says as he looks around the huge mansion.

"What? Are you serious?"

"You're the only surviving member of the Ivanov family," he says solemnly. "You are the new head of the Bratva."

Shane and Conor stare at me while Mikey shifts Liam's weight in his arms.

"I am *not* the head of the Bratva!" I snarl.

"But, this is all yours."

"You can have it, Vlad. I don't want any of it. You were his second, so you take over." I spent more time with Vlad than I did Alexei the last time I was at this mansion, after my father lured me here under false pretenses. My instincts tell me he is a better man than his predecessor ever was.

"I don't understand," he frowns at me.

"I hate the Bratva. They've taken everything from me."

"But, you are Jessica Ivanov. You *are* the Bratva," he replies, as though he's unable to comprehend why I wouldn't want this.

“Jessica Ivanov died ten years ago. My name is Jessie Ryan.”

Conor takes hold of my hand and squeezes and moves to stand beside me.

Vlad stares at me for a few seconds, and then he nods his head in comprehension.

“I trust there will be no more bloodshed between our families?” I say to him.

“Of course not. It is done. I wish you a long and happy life, Jessie Ryan,” he says as he steps aside and allows us all to walk freely past him.

CHAPTER

EIGHT

JESSIE

Sitting on the back seat of the SUV, I cradle Liam's head on my lap as he drifts in and out of consciousness. Conor drives as fast as the car will allow, while Shane talks on the phone, making arrangements for their personal physician, Dr. Lisa Adams, and a surgeon friend of hers to be waiting at the apartment for us as soon as we get back. Shane and Conor quickly checked Liam over as soon as we got him to the car and decided we should head straight home.

Mikey sits in the back seat with Liam and me, staring anxiously at his injured twin brother.

"Are you sure we shouldn't take him straight to the hospital?" I ask when Shane ends his call to Lisa.

"No!" the three of them answer in unison.

"He will freak the fuck out if he wakes up in hospital, Red," Mikey says. "He's fucking terrified of those places. We both are."

"Lisa and Matt will have everything we need at the apartment," Shane adds. "This isn't the first time we've dealt with something like this, Jessie," Shane growls from the front seat.

"Okay," I reply as tears prick at my eyes. Liam is lying here bleeding on my lap, and if he doesn't make it, I have no idea what we will do. There is so much emotion and tension in this car, I can't wait to get out of it and into the apartment. I will feel a million times better when Liam is in the hands of Lisa and the surgeon.

“No hospitals,” Liam mumbles as his eyelids flicker open.

I look down at his beautiful face and place my hand on his cheek. “Of course not,” I smile at him.

He smiles back as his eyelids flutter closed again. “I heard what you said, Jessie.”

I suck in a deep breath. I said a lot of things in that room.

“You were going to stay with him. For me?” he mumbles the words.

“Shush now. You need to save your energy,” I tell him as I lean down and softly kiss his forehead, but an unexpected tear falls from my eyes and onto his face. I brush it away gently with the pads of my fingertips.

“Don’t cry, baby. I hate it when you cry. And I’m the happiest man in the world right now,” he smiles before he drifts back into unconsciousness.

I look up and Mikey is staring at me now with tears in his eyes.

“He’ll be okay,” I say with a confidence I don’t fully trust in.

Mikey nods. “You were going to stay with Alexei?” he frowns at me.

I swallow hard. “It was the heat of the moment. I had no idea what was happening upstairs. He had a knife to Liam’s throat.” I choke back the tears. “I told him I would stay if he would guarantee that the four of you walked out of there alive.” I wipe another tear as it rolls down my cheek.

I realize that Shane will have already heard me say some of that stuff because he was standing in the doorway of that room, and now Conor keeps glancing at me in the rearview mirror too.

“Even if it meant leaving us and living with a man you despise?” Mikey asks.

“I would do anything for you,” I whisper. “Isn’t that what being a family is? Wouldn’t you sacrifice yourself for your

brothers if you believed you had no choice?”

Mikey stares at me, and I feel Conor’s eyes on me through the mirror. “You can be pissed at me all you want, but I would do it again in a heartbeat,” I sniff.

Mikey reaches out his hand and takes mine in his, squeezing gently. “I’m not pissed at you, Red. I think you’re a fucking queen. You just turned down the Bratva empire and shot your own father for us. I’m fucking honored to call you mine.” He lifts my hand to his lips and kisses it softly. “But know there is not a chance in hell that we would have left that place without you.”

He leans back in his seat and closes his eyes with my hand still clasped in his. I can’t see Shane’s face because he is sitting directly in front of me, but I see the hint of a smile on Conor’s lips as he keeps his eyes fixed on the road ahead, driving us all back to safety.

CHAPTER

NINE

SHANE

Lisa and her surgeon boyfriend, Matt, were waiting for us as soon as we got back to the apartment, with their equipment set up in Liam and Mikey's room. Liam was still drifting in and out of consciousness, but I trust that I am placing him in the best possible hands. My baby brother is one of the toughest men I've ever known. I suspect he's concussed and lost a lot of blood, but I won't be able to breathe again until Lisa tells me that he's going to be okay. They are in the room with him now, while Jessie, my brothers and I wait anxiously in the hallway.

Jessie chews her nails. Mikey paces up and down muttering to himself. Conor leans against the wall with his eyes closed and I do a combination of all of that because the waiting is fucking killing me.

"Should we just fucking go in and see what's going on?" Mikey eventually snaps.

I glance at my watch. "They've only been in there with him for twenty minutes, Mikey. Let them do their thing. Lisa knows how worried we are. She'll come out here and tell us what's going on as soon as she can."

He takes a deep breath, his brow furrowed in frustration and worry. "Fine," he snaps and goes to stand next to Jessie, who stops chewing her nails and wraps her arms around his neck instead. He drops his head low, resting it against her shoulder while she rubs his back with one hand and runs the other one through his hair. It seems to calm him down because he stands still.

I stand still too, watching her with him. I heard everything she said to Alexei earlier today. She would never have had to go through with it because I was ready to drop him as soon as he made a move, only she had the balls to do it herself anyway. I'm still not sure if I'm pissed or impressed that she was willing to do that for us. The fact that she would give up her life and spend it with him to save the four of us, should make me proud of her. It should show me that she truly is one of us, willing to sacrifice her own happiness for ours. I would do the same for my brothers, and for her too, and I know that they would do the same for me. But she still doesn't get that there is no happiness for any of them without her. I wonder if there is any for me without her either.

IT'S BEEN forty minutes since Lisa closed that door and left us out here so she and Matt could treat Liam. It has seemed like an eternity and the tension in this hallway is so thick that I could slice through it. When I wonder how much more of this we can all stand, the door opens and Mikey runs toward it. Lisa has one of those faces that is unreadable. I'm sure it's a skill she has honed over the years having to give families and loved ones difficult news, but it means she also has that same damn expression when she is giving good news too. And for a few seconds, my whole world stops turning.

"He's going to be okay," she says and only then does she smile as Mikey picks her up and almost squeezes the life from her. My heart starts to beat again and the relief courses through me.

"Thank fuck, doc!" Conor shouts as he walks over to Lisa, pulling her into another bear hug as soon as Mikey puts her down. Jessie hovers behind them with a huge smile on her face and tears in her eyes and I instinctively reach out to her and pull her toward me. I have no doubt that she has been blaming herself for Liam being taken by Alexei, and I also know that she is just as happy as we are to find out that he is going to be okay.

I wrap my arms around her and she melts into me, pressing her face against my chest as she starts to cry quietly while the tension and the fear she's been carrying for the past twelve

hours slips away from her. I hold her there as the sobs convulse through her body, allowing her to let it all go so that she can be strong again when she sees him.

“You did good, Hacker,” I say as I press a soft kiss on the top of her head and regret it because I smell her hair and it reminds me of all of the other times I have kissed her. My pulse quickens, and the blood rushes south as though my entire body is hardwired to want her.

“You can go in and see him now,” Lisa says and Jessie stands straight, wiping the tears from her face with the sleeve of her hooded sweatshirt. “I’ve given him some strong pain relief and it will be kicking in very soon, so you only have a few minutes before he’s out.”

“Let’s get in there,” I say, and Jessie and my brothers walk into the room in front of me.

“Thanks, doc,” I say to Lisa as I reach her, wrapping an arm around her shoulders.

“You’re welcome. Go see him, and I’ll bring you up to speed on the damage and his aftercare in a few minutes.”

Walking into the room, I see Liam lying in bed, covered in dressings and bandages and dried blood, and even though he is groggy, he is awake. Jessie and my brothers crowd around him and he smiles at them all. “I told you I’d be fine. Doc says I’m invincible,” he mumbles and Mikey and Conor start to tease him about only wanting time off work, while Jessie gives him a kiss on the cheek. He reaches for her and wraps his bandaged hand around her fingers. “Come in here with me, baby,” he attempts a wink but the meds are kicking in and he doesn’t quite manage it.

“Maybe later, sunshine,” she laughs and he smiles goofily at her.

I walk around to where she is standing, and she tries to move aside to let me in, but he refuses to let go of her hand. “Come here, big bro,” Liam insists as he waves me toward him with his other hand, so I have to squeeze in behind her

until my body is pressed against her ass. Please do not let my cock get hard right now!

I reach my arm over Jessie's shoulder and put my hand on his hair, which is still matted with blood. "Get some sleep, kid."

"So fucking bossy," he slurs his words as his eyelids close and I am able to step back and away from Jessie with a sigh of relief.

AFTER LIAM FALLS into his drug induced sleep, Jessie and Mikey stay in his room while Matt does some final checks and Lisa, Conor and I walk to my office.

"So, what's the damage?" I ask when we are all seated.

"Fortunately, it is mostly superficial. He has three broken ribs, and they will hurt, but they will heal with rest. His shoulder and knee were both dislocated, but I have reset them. He has a couple of broken fingers on his left hand, which we've bandaged up. We've stitched his lacerations. Treated his burns, which shouldn't scar badly, except, perhaps, for one on his back. He had one of his molars and one of his wisdom teeth ripped out, but that shouldn't cause him any ongoing issues. He has no internal bleeding that we can detect and nothing that will require any further treatment. Except his dressings will need to be changed regularly. He was smiling when I told him that because he said that Jessie is going to be his nurse." She arches an eyebrow at us and I can't help laughing.

"I bet he was," Conor laughs too.

"Overall, he is just pretty beat up and he is going to need lots of rest to allow his body to heal. He's experienced significant trauma, and if he tries to push himself too soon, his recovery will take much longer. You need to make sure he takes it easy," she warns us both.

"We will," I say with a nod.

"And he also has a concussion," she adds. "Who knows how long that could take to heal. It could be days. It could be

months. But just keep an eye on him, and like I said, make sure he gets plenty of rest.”

“Yeah. Rest,” Conor nods. “We will.”

“I mean proper rest. Like bed rest.” She arches an eyebrow at Conor because after we rescued him from the Russians two years ago, he refused to rest for longer than an hour at a time.

“We’ll make sure he does,” I assure her.

“Yeah. And trust me, doc, I would have stayed on bed rest too if I’d had the nurse that Liam is going to have.” Conor flashes his eyebrows at us both and Lisa laughs.

“Yes. I noticed Jessie is back. For good this time?” she asks.

“Yes. For good,” Conor answers her before I even have a chance to open my mouth. But I nod my agreement when Lisa looks my way.

“Great. I’m going to get back in there and help Matt get cleaned up, and I’ll talk to Jessie and Mikey about how to change his dressings. I also noticed Jessie has a cut on her cheek which I want to have a look at. Are either of you hurt?” she glances between the two of us.

“No,” we both reply in unison.

“Okay. I’ll leave you both to it then,” she says as she stands.

“Thanks again, Lisa,” I tell her before she leaves the room.

“Anytime,” she says, but she has a serious expression on her face. “But I wish you boys would retire. Because I am terrified that one of these days I’m going to be discussing taking a body to the morgue instead of trying to enforce bed rest.”

I suck in a deep breath as I watch her walk out of the room.

“Well, that was sobering,” Conor says with a grin.

“She’ll kick your ass if she sees you grinning like that,” I warn him as I smile at him too. Lisa is right, and we both

know it, but right now we are too fucking relieved that our baby brother is okay to be anything other than thrilled.

“You want to come bring the guns up from the car while Lisa and Matt finish up?” I suggest, wanting something useful to do.

“Why not?” he agrees with a smile and we walk out of my office together.

IT DOESN'T TAKE Conor and me very long to clear the car of weapons, and we leave them in one of our safe rooms in the basement before heading back upstairs. We talked the whole time we worked, about the club, about the football, about the new bar staff our manager hired, all the while avoiding the elephant in the room that is me and Jessie.

As we stand in the elevator on our way back to the penthouse, I feel Conor's eyes burning into me.

“What is it?”

He turns his body toward me. “You know that I respect the hell out of you, right?”

“Yeah.”

“And you are the person I trust most in this whole world?”

“Yeah. So?”

“So, understand that I say this with the greatest of respect and love for you as my brother, and the man who raised me, but you are a fucking fool.”

“What?” I blink at him. After the start of that speech, I had no idea this is where it would go.

“What the hell does she have to do to prove herself to you, Shane? She gave up everything for us and that's still not enough for you?”

“It doesn't change anything, Conor,” I snap.

“Really?” he shakes his head at me.

“Really.”

“You have this incredible, strong, kind, sexy woman who fucking adores you and you’re letting her slip away from you because of some stupid rule you have about not giving people second chances. And I know that you love her too, Shane. I see the way you can’t take your fucking eyes off her. So, if you want to die on this *you only get one chance with me* hill, then be my guest. It’s one less person I have to share her with,” he says as the doors open and he walks out, leaving me to stare after him, wondering if he has a point.

CHAPTER

TEN

JESSIE

I walk out of Liam's bedroom and lean back against the wall, letting the waves of relief wash over me. Lisa and Matt have checked Liam's dressing again and all of the bleeding has stopped. His injuries are all going to heal. There will be no permanent damage. He is going to be okay. Alexei is dead. We're all safe.

The door opens again and Shane steps out of the room. He stands directly in front of me and I swallow as I stare at him.

He reaches out and brushes his hand over the cut on my cheek, his fingertips leaving trails of electricity in their wake. "Did you get that looked at?" he frowns, his face full of concern.

"Yes," I rub my own fingers over it absent-mindedly. "Lisa insisted on looking at it. It doesn't need stitches and there is no fracture."

"Good," he whispers.

"You okay?" I look him over and don't see any obvious injuries.

"Yeah. Now that we know Liam is okay," he nods and I see his Adam's apple bob. Why does he look so damn nervous? Holy fuck! Just when I thought I was going to have some time to take a breath, Shane is about to hit me with another bombshell. I can sense it. Is he going to ask me to leave now that we've dealt with Alexei?

"I should get back in there to him," I say, but he puts a hand beside my head on the wall and stops me from moving. I

stare at him, and the change in his face is almost instantaneous. There is no nervous energy there now.

“No,” he shakes his head. “He’s going to be knocked out for the rest of the day and night. I’ve asked Conor and Mikey to stay with him.”

“But I want to stay too,” I protest. Why isn’t he letting me back into the room?

“I get that. And I know he’ll need you when he wakes up, but that won’t be for at least eighteen hours. The doc has given him some heavy duty shit.”

“So? In the meantime, I do what?”

He takes a step closer to me as he places his other hand on the wall beside me until I am caged in by him. My breath catches in my throat as the heat from his body penetrates the thin fabric of my tank top, and I unconsciously bite my lip.

“Dammit, Jessie,” he groans. “Do you have any idea what you do to me?”

“Push your buttons?” I arch an eyebrow at him, trying to ease the growing tension from whatever the hell is going on here.

He edges closer, until our bodies are just a few inches apart. “Well, yeah. You drive me fucking crazy.” He narrows his eyes at me.

“You didn’t answer my question. What am I supposed to be doing if I can’t stay with Liam?” I breathe, because the answer that is becoming increasingly more obvious, can’t be the right one. He’s made it more than clear we can be nothing more than friends.

He presses his body against mine until I’m pinned against the wall by him and the wet heat rushes between my thighs. “Liam will need you tomorrow and probably every night for the next week. But I need you now, sweetheart. Stay with me?”

I draw in a deep breath as pleasure floods my body and a whole raft of emotions overwhelm my senses. “Just tonight?”

“Well, I’ve thought about tying you to my bed and keeping you there forever, but I think my brothers would kill me. Besides, like I said, Liam will want you there when he wakes up tomorrow.” He drops his head to my neck and plants soft kisses along my collarbone, and my legs tremble as the heat flushes across my chest.

“You’re not playing fair,” I pant as I writhe beneath his touch and he responds by pressing his body even closer to mine. His hard cock digs into my abdomen and I bite my lip as I try to stop myself from groaning his goddamn name. This man is a devil, and he plays my body like a finely tuned instrument.

“I never play fair, sweetheart,” he murmurs against my skin as his kisses move up my neck, and the soft scratch of his stubble on the delicate skin sends pleasure skittering along my spine. “So, what’s your answer, and I will warn you, there’s only one I’ll accept.”

I plant my hands on his chest. I need to stop his maddening teasing because I can’t think straight at all, but he grabs my wrists and pins them against the wall either side of my head and glares into my eyes, as though he is trying to peer inside my soul.

“Is that so?” I narrow my eyes at him.

“Yes.”

“Then it isn’t really a question, is it? More of a demand?”

“Semantics,” he says with a shrug.

“You’re an arrogant asshole, Shane Ryan,” I try to scowl, but somehow I can only smile. “And I believe that I asked you a question too.”

“And what was that?” he says as he starts his maddening teasing again, peppering soft kisses along my throat as he grinds his cock against my groin.

“Do you only want me for tonight? Is this a one time thing?”

He lifts my wrists above my head so he can pin them easily with one hand, while his free hand slides down to the button of my jeans. He opens it easily before he pulls down my zipper and slips his hand inside my panties and between my thighs and the rush of wet heat makes me gasp out loud. “Just say yes, Jessie?” he growls, while not answering my question at all.

“Shane,” I groan loudly and he chuckles against my skin.

“Fuck! You’re soaking wet. Are you ready to answer me yet, Hacker?” he growls.

“No,” I breathe.

He doesn’t seem fazed at all by my response. “No, you’re not ready to answer, or no, you won’t spend the night with me.”

“No, I won’t spend the night with you,” I hiss as he begins to rub my clit in slow, teasing circles.

“Wrong answer, Jessie,” he growls as his kisses become fiercer and he sucks on my neck as his hand slides further into my panties before he pushes a finger inside me.

“Shane!” I cry out as he begins to finger fuck me against the wall in the hallway. “What if Lisa or Matt come out here?” I breathe as my body shudders from the orgasm he’s already coaxing from me.

“Then let me take you to bed and I’ll fuck you properly,” he groans as he keeps on thrusting his fingers in and out of me and rubbing the knuckle of his thumb over my clit. I hear voices approaching the doorway and swear one of them is female. Shit! Dr. Lisa is going to come out here and hear me come while Shane finger bangs me, and I will die of embarrassment because I don’t think anything is going to make him stop.

“Okay!” I finally relent.

“Good girl,” he says with a deviant smile as he slides his hand from my panties. Then he looks me in the eye as he sucks his fingers clean and the wet heat floods my core. He releases my wrists and takes hold of one of my hands instead.

I stand there, looking at his face. Damn, I love him so much. My body is practically screaming for his touch. “Shane,” I say as he is about to start walking us to his room.

He stops and turns back to me. “What is it?” he frowns.

“I can’t do this with you,” I shake my head, realizing this was a huge mistake. “I’m sorry. But I can’t do that with you. Not anymore.”

His Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows hard. “Can’t do what, Jessie?”

“Just sex,” I whisper. “It would mean so much more to me than that. I can’t just turn off my emotions like that, and I can’t only have a part of you when I know what it’s like to have all of you.”

He steps back and pushes me against the wall, his hand fisting in my hair and his mouth crashing over mine. He kisses me so fiercely that my lips feel bruised and I whimper into his mouth. When I expect I might pass out from lack of oxygen and the raging endorphins racing around my body, he lets us up for air. “Just give me one night, Hacker?” he presses his forehead against mine. “I need you.”

I take a deep breath and, despite every part of my body aching for him, I push him away. “I can’t, Shane,” I shake my head. “I’m not some toy you get to use when you have an itch to scratch. Not if I can’t have all of you. I’m sorry.”

“I can’t give you all of me, Jessie,” he breathes. “Not again.”

“I understand that,” I say as the tears sting my eyes.

“Can’t this be enough?” he says, his eyes pleading with me and weakening my resolve with each passing second.

“No. And I know that it might be unfair, but I need all or nothing, Shane. Because you will always have all of me.” I plant a soft kiss on his lips and then I walk back into Liam’s room. I don’t even dare glance at him again because I might run back into his arms and tell him that one night with him is worth the pain of losing him all over again.

CHAPTER

ELEVEN

CONOR

As Lisa and Matt are preparing to leave, the bedroom door opens and Jessie walks back inside the room, and I can't help but frown as she makes her way over to the chair beside the bed and sits down on it. It's a little after midday but none of us have slept for over twenty four hours and we all need some rest.

Ten minutes earlier, Shane asked me and Mikey to stay with Liam for the rest of the day and tonight, so I had assumed that he and Jessie would be spending that time together, and the fact that they are so obviously not doing that concerns me. I hope he hasn't fucked this up again. I'm not sure what more she can do to prove herself to him, but he is the most stubborn man I've ever met.

When Matt and Lisa are gone, I walk over to her, sitting on the bed in front of her. "Mikey and I can stay with Liam if you like," I offer.

"I know. But I want to stay too if that's okay?" she looks up at me, her eyes red from crying earlier. At least I hope it's from earlier.

"Of course you can. I just wondered if..." I shrug.

"What?" she blinks at me.

"Nothing, Angel," I say as I reach out and brush my fingertips over the cut on her cheek. "You look tired and it's been a long night. Why don't you climb in here with our boy and get some sleep?" I stand up and hold my hand out to her.

“You think it’s okay for me to sleep in there with him? What if I hurt him?”

“Hurt him? You weigh like a third of what he does. And the bed is huge.” I pull her up from the chair. “Besides, he will want you there when he wakes up.” I lift the covers and indicate for her to get inside.

She nods and wipes a stray tear from her cheek and I think I’m going to strangle Shane when I get my hands on him, because she wasn’t this upset ten minutes earlier. “My clothes are dirty,” she says as she starts peeling off her jeans. I watch her slide them down her legs and have to remind my cock that this is not the time or the place.

“Here’s a clean t-shirt, Red,” Mikey says as he tosses one of his from the other side of the room.

“Thank you.” She reaches out and catches it, placing it on the bed as she strips off the rest of her clothes. I have to avert my eyes from her incredible curves because my cock is already twitching. When she’s ready, I lift the covers again, and she climbs into bed. She looks so vulnerable and fragile lying there in Mikey’s t-shirt that dwarfs her frame, her eyes red and her cheek smeared with dried blood from the cut there. But I know she is neither of those things. She is a fucking warrior princess. Rightful head of the Bratva, and she would be a fucking good one too, but she walked away from it all to be a Ryan.

“Try to get some sleep, Angel. Mikey will stay here with you both.”

“I’m just going to take a shower. But I’m right here if you need me, Red,” he replies as he saunters to the bathroom.

“And what about you?” she asks as she stares up at me with those incredible blue eyes.

“I have some things I need to take care of. I’ll be back later. Promise,” I say before leaning down to give her a kiss. She wraps her arms around my neck as she kisses me back with so much need that I have to force myself not to climb on top of her and fuck her while my little brother lies two feet

away in an opiate induced coma. I pull back from her with a groan. “Sleep. Now,” I order and she gives me one of her incredible smiles before rolling onto her side and resting her hand lightly on Liam’s.

After leaving the twins’ bedroom, I go to find Shane. It’s no surprise he’s in his office, his head bent over his computer and a scowl on his face.

“Everything okay?” I ask when I step inside.

“Yeah,” he snaps, not even bothering to look up at me.

“You sure?”

“Yeah.”

“Really?” I say as I walk into the room and sit on the edge of his desk. “Cause it kind of seems like you’re super pissed.”

“I’m just busy. And tired.” He looks up at me. “I’ve booked a plane to Chicago in the morning. I’m leaving first thing.”

“Chicago? Why?” I frown at him.

“We just took out the head of the Bratva, Con. That will have consequences. I’ll need to smooth a few things over, is all.”

“You need me to come with you?”

“No,” he shakes his head. “It’s not that kind of business. It’s our legitimate associations I’m worried about.”

“Okay,” I nod.

“Besides, I’ll be gone for at least a week. I need you to take care of things here while I’m gone.”

“A week? Fuck, Shane! Do you really need to be away that long?”

He glares at me. “You just took two months off chasing Jessie across the country, but I can’t take a week to handle some business?” he snarls.

I hold my hands up in surrender. “I didn’t mean it like that. We’ll miss you, is all. But what the fuck has crawled up your

ass?”

He turns away and puts his head in his hands, and I realize exactly what this is about.

“What happened between you two? I thought she’d be with you right now?”

“Yeah? Well, so did I.”

“What? She turned you down? Jessie?”

He looks up at me. “Is that so hard to believe? That she is the one who is pushing me away and not the other way around.”

“Yeah,” I say with a frown. “Because that girl fucking adores you, Shane. So, what did you do?”

“Just forget it, Con. Jessie and I are done. We’ll never be what you want us to be so, for the love of God, will you stop pushing me about it?” he snaps.

I resist the urge to ask him any more questions because it will only piss him off more. “You need me to do anything right now?” I ask instead.

“No. I’ve got a few phone calls to make, and then I’m going to pack and get some sleep. Tell Liam I’ll call him tomorrow night some time. Okay?”

“Okay,” I say with a sigh. I know he’s not lying about having to smooth things over with some of our business associates, but I do wonder about whether he really has to leave so soon, or whether he is running away because he is terrified of confronting this thing between him and Jessie. But I wish the two of them would sort their drama out, because I fucking hate seeing him like this.

IT’S another three hours before I go back to Mikey and Liam’s bedroom. I ended up staying in Shane’s office and keeping him company before I helped him pack. I can’t do anything about the situation between him and Jessie, but I can just be there for him. The way he always is for the rest of us.

The room is dark when I step inside and it takes a moment for my eyes to adjust. Jessie is still in bed with Liam, but

Mikey is in there too, lying right behind her with his body pressed up against hers. Each of them with a hand on Liam. I have no idea what any of us would have done if we hadn't gotten Liam back safely, but especially Mikey. I swear either one of them would die without the other. I walk over to Mikey's bed and crawl beneath the covers, not even bothering to undress because I'm so damn tired. By the time the three of them wake up, Shane will be on a plane to Chicago and things are going to get real hectic around here, especially with Liam out of action too. So I guess I'd better sleep while I still can.

I close my eyes and can't help but smile as I listen to Liam's soft snoring. It reminds me of a time when he and Mikey were about fourteen and they had been grounded by Shane for smoking weed in the house. He has always been anti-drugs, which is kind of ironic given what we do. The twins snuck out of the house and went to a party. They stole two bottles of tequila from the bar that we owned back in Ireland, and drank almost an entire bottle each. Mikey managed to call me, although he could barely speak, and I went to pick them up. Mikey was drunk and could barely walk, but Liam had completely passed out and I had to carry him to the car and then into the house. I'd been so worried about him choking on his own vomit, that I'd kicked out the girl I had staying over and put him in my bed instead. And then I had to listen to him snore all night. Neither he or Mikey have ever touched tequila since. When Shane came home the following morning, the two of them looked so ill and sorry for themselves, that he couldn't even bring himself to punish them any further.

Mikey spent most of the day with his head in the toilet, while Liam had just lay on the sofa like a slug, puking into a bucket at half-hour intervals.

I chuckle to myself at the memory. We did have some good times when we were younger. Mostly when our father wasn't around. He'd been on one of his many trips to Spain that weekend. Even when our mom was alive, he'd disappeared there with one of his lady friends every couple of weeks. I think she looked forward to them, much like we all came to, because it offered some peace from him. If only he had fucked

off to Spain permanently, all of our lives would have been a whole lot happier.

CHAPTER

TWELVE

JESSIE

It's the sensation of Liam's fingers twitching in my hand as I hold onto his gently that rouses me from my sleep.

"Jessie," he groans and I untangle myself from Mikey, who has an arm and a leg draped over me, and sit up.

"Hey, sunshine. How are you feeling?" I smile at him.

"Like I got run over by a fucking forty ton truck," he winces as he tries to sit up.

"Just lie still, and I'll get you something to drink." I glance at the clock and it's after 6am so he can have some more pain relief now. "I'll get your meds too."

He mumbles something unintelligible as I climb over Mikey so I can get out of bed, waking him too.

"This is really not appropriate while my brother is at death's door right next to us, Red," he says sleepily as he places his hands on my waist. I roll my eyes at him and try to climb off him, but he holds me in place.

"Hey!" Liam croaks from beside us. "Death sent me packing, didn't you hear?"

"Yeah, he couldn't handle you," Mikey chuckles as he sits up and lifts me off him and places me on the edge of the bed.

"He's awake," Conor says from the opposite side of the room and it's only then I notice that he has spent the night in here too.

“Yeah,” Liam groans. “Fuck!” he shouts as he tries to sit up again.

“Will you stop trying to move?” I shout at him as I walk around to his side of the bed. “Dr. Lisa said complete bed rest.”

“And I’ll stay in bed, but I need to sit up,” he moans.

“Fine! We’ll help you, but just take it easy.” I nod to Mikey and we take an arm each and carefully pull Liam into a sitting position while fixing his pillows. He winces in pain but he doesn’t complain any further as we make him comfortable.

“You need to eat with these too. What can I get you?” I say as I shake two pills from the bottle, remembering what Lisa told me.

“I’m not hungry.” He shakes his head.

“You have to eat something. Just a slice of toast?” I offer.

“No.”

“Banana?”

“No,” he pouts like a toddler.

“Well you don’t get any meds then.” I arch an eyebrow at him.

“I’m in pain!” he snaps.

“Do you want me to get Shane in here to force you to eat?” I challenge him.

At that, Liam looks around the room. “Where *is* Shane?” he frowns.

Conor clears his throat and we all look at him. “He’s gone to Chicago,” he says almost apologetically.

“Chicago?” Mikey says with a frown. “Why?”

“He needs to smooth some things over with a few of our business associates, given that we took out the head of the Bratva and all.”

“But he just took off without telling any of us?” Mikey’s frown turns to a scowl now as a knot of anxiety forms in the

pit of my stomach. Did Shane leave because of me? I feel so guilty already for turning him away. He needed me and I wasn't there for him.

Conor glances at me and the look in his eyes tells me he knows. Did he and Shane talk about what happened last night? I drop my head so he doesn't see the tears in my eyes.

"I'm going to make you a piece of toast, Liam," I say without making eye contact with any of them, and then I walk out of the bedroom and make my way to the kitchen. I've only just left the room when I hear soft footsteps behind me, and I turn around to see Conor following me.

"You okay, Angel?" he asks as he catches up with me and slides an arm around my waist.

"Yeah," I say as I wipe the tears from my eyes.

"He just had something to take care of, that's all," he says softly, reading my mind the way that he can.

"I understand," I say with a nod. I don't want to talk about what happened between us last night. "But he didn't say goodbye to any of us."

Conor reaches into the pocket of his jeans and pulls out his cell phone, unlocking it with his fingerprint. "Here. Call him."

I shake my head. "He won't want to speak to me."

"You won't know that unless you call him," he checks his watch. "You'd better hurry though. His plane takes off in ten minutes."

I take the phone from Conor's hand. "Thank you."

"No problem. I'll go make a start on Liam's toast," he says with a wink, and I watch him walk down the hallway.

My fingers tremble as I dial Shane's number and wait for him to pick up.

"Hey, Con. What's up?" he says when he answers and he sounds so sad that my heart hurts.

"It's me," I say. "Conor gave me his phone to call you."

“Oh. What is it, Jessie?” he snaps, the coldness in his tone now.

“I just wanted to...” Damn! What do I want? To tell him that I’m sorry he thought he had to leave? That I’m sorry I didn’t spend the night in his bed. But I’m not. That was the right thing for both of us, even if he doesn’t see that.

“Wanted to what?” he asks, his voice softer now, but then I hear another voice in the background. A distinctive, female Irish voice. Damn Erin! Always waiting in the wings to pounce as soon as I step a foot out of line. Damn Shane too! Running to her just because I hurt his pride. Asshole!

“I didn’t realize Erin was with you?” I say, willing him to tell me that I’m mistaken and that it’s a stewardess who sounds exactly like her.

“There are some contracts I need her help with,” he replies in that gravelly tone that usually makes my legs turn to jelly.

“Well, I hope the two of you have a pleasant trip. Looks like you’ll get that itch scratched after all?” I snap.

“Bye, Jessie,” he practically snarls the words.

I don’t reply. I end the call and shake my head. I am a complete fool for feeling even an ounce of guilt for not being there when I thought he needed me. I take a deep breath and pull my shoulders back before I go to the kitchen and have to face Conor because I don’t want him to see how much his asshole older brother has got to me. Shane Ryan can go to hell for all I care.

CHAPTER

THIRTEEN

JESSIE

It's been two and a half days since we got Liam back home and two days since Shane left for his *business* trip with Erin. I have only spoken to him once and that was only to say hi and pass the phone to Liam. Even the few words we spoke were strained and uncomfortable. Conor keeps in regular contact with him. Not that I have seen much of Conor either. He and Mikey have been doing the work of four brothers with Shane gone and Liam out of action. At least Mikey sleeps in here with us, but Conor is like a ghost, drifting through the apartment to eat and sleep. I miss him. And Shane.

I look down at Liam's handsome face and smile as his eyelids flutter and he drifts off to sleep. He is my priority right now, and his recovery is more important than me missing his brothers' company. His injuries are healing well. Dr. Lisa says there will be no permanent scarring to his face, and only a little on his chest and back. Not that anything could make this man any less attractive to me. He is a beautiful soul. Inside and out.

"Is he asleep?" Mikey asks as he walks out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist and his skin glistening, still damp from his shower. He is the mirror image of his twin, but so very different in so many ways.

"Yes," I say as I brush Liam's hair from his face. It took me ages to wash all the blood from it, using just a bowl of water with shampoo and a washcloth, but now it is back to normal. Dark and thick. It's too long, and he needs a haircut

because it keeps falling into his eyes. Although it does make him look downright adorable.

Mikey walks over to the bed and holds his hand out to me. “Let him sleep, Red.”

I nod my agreement and push myself up, taking hold of Mikey’s hand and allowing him to pull me up. Unexpectedly, he scoops me into his arms, making me giggle as he walks us to the other side of the room and places me down in the middle of his king-size bed.

I watch as he slides off his towel and dries his hair with it. When he’s finished, his hair is sticking up all over the place and it makes me smile at him, and he gives me a goofy grin in return.

“You look after him so well, Red,” he says as he smooths back his hair before lying on the bed beside me. “He’s doing better than anyone thought he would. Even the doc said she is amazed at how well he’s doing.”

“Thank you. He deserves looking after,” I say, thinking of all the trauma he has experienced in his life.

“He sure does,” Mikey says as he brushes my hair back from my face. “And so do you.”

“You guys always take care of me,” I smile.

Mikey sucks the air in through his teeth. “Actually, I don’t think you’ve been taken care of for a few days now.” He arches one eyebrow at me.

“Oh,” I whisper as the heat flushes between my thighs. “But, don’t you have to go to work?”

“Yeah. But I have always have time for you. And I can be a little late,” he grins. “I’m the boss.”

“But Liam is sleeping,” I remind him.

“Well, you had better be quiet then, Red,” he winks at me before rolling on top of me. “Besides, those meds he’s on knock him out for hours.”

“You’re a bad man, Mikey Ryan.”

“Well, you’re a fucking hot woman, Jessie Ryan, and I really need to fuck you. Like now,” he growls as he holds himself up on one powerful forearm while his free hand snakes down my body and slips into my panties.

“Mikey,” I groan softly as his hand travels lower until he brushes the pad of two fingers over my clit.

“Jessie,” he chuckles, teasing me as he moves his head lower, sucking on my hard nipple through the fabric of my top as he toys with my clit before he nudges my thighs apart with his knee. His fingers travel further south until his entire hand is fisting in my panties and I groan loudly when he pushes a finger inside me. “Oh, you’re so fucking wet already, Red,” he groans as he pulls his hand free and begins to tug my panties roughly down my legs. “Let’s get these off you so I can make you come nice and hard,” he growls before tossing them onto the floor. Then he moves further down the bed, bending his head low and licking the length of my pussy. “Fuck! You are so fucking sweet. I love eating you out.”

I run my fingers through his hair as the familiar waves of pleasure start building in my stomach and thighs. It has been too long since I have felt him there. He licks and sucks me as he pushes a second finger inside my pussy and I raise my hips up to meet him, desperate for the orgasm that he is about to deliver.

“You’re so easy,” he chuckles softly, the sound vibrating through me and adding to my pleasure.

“Mikey?” I plead.

“You want to come, Red?”

“Yes,” I moan loudly, no longer concerned about Liam across the room. It’s not like he hasn’t seen this plenty of times before anyway.

Mikey curls the tips of his fingers inside me, pressing against that sweet spot as he grazes my clit with his teeth, and I come quickly and loudly. When he pulls his fingers out of me, a rush of my cum follows, making my face flush with heat.

“You are a bad girl, Red,” he grins at me and I stare up at him, chewing on my lip as the last of my climax ebbs away. He leans down, pressing his lips over mine and kissing me fiercely, and I taste myself on him. I groan into his mouth as he pulls up my tank top up, breaking our kiss to work it off over my head.

“I am so desperate to fuck you,” he groans before pushing himself up on his knees and flipping me over and pulling me up until I’m on all fours. He slaps my ass and I squeal. “You want this?” he growls as he pushes the tip of his cock inside me.

“Yes,” I pant as I push back against him, but he edges back too, teasing me. “Please, Mikey?” I gasp.

“I love to hear you beg,” he chuckles as he grabs me by the hips and then drives his cock deep inside me. I throw my head back as the euphoria courses through me at the sensation of him filling me, and the rush of wet heat between my thighs makes my legs tremble.

“You’re so fucking tight, Red. I love pounding my cock into your pussy,” he hisses as he rails into me. I lean forward, pressing my face into the pillow to muffle my groans as he reaches around to my clit and begins to rub, bringing me to the edge again.

He leans forward, wrapping my hair around his free hand and pulling me back against him, until my back is flush with his chest. This is one of his favorite positions, and mine. It allows him to suck on my neck and also gives him easier access to the rest of my body. “Don’t hide that beautiful mouth. I want to hear every single fucking sound you make when you come for me,” he growls.

“Oh God, Mikey,” I hiss as he drives into me over and over again. Peppering kisses on my throat as he holds my head back by my hair and rubs delicious circles over my clit with his free hand. A few seconds later, I cry out as my climax crashes over me. He growls something unintelligible in my ear as he grinds out his own and fills me with his cum.

After we have caught our breath, he pulls out of me and I fall forward onto the bed, gasping for breath. Mikey lies down on top of me, supporting his weight on his forearms as he presses a soft kiss between my shoulder blades. “I wish I could stay here with you all night, Red. But I really got to get to work.”

“I know,” I sigh contentedly.

“Take care of my baby brother for me,” he says before he pushes himself up and climbs off the bed and I shiver at the loss of his warmth.

Pulling the covers over myself, I turn on my side and watch him dress. He has an incredible body, and he fills his tailored suit like he was born to wear it. My stomach flutters at the sight of him as he fixes his cufflinks and straightens his shirt. He turns to grab his jacket and catches me staring at him.

“You enjoying the show?” he asks with a grin as he walks back toward the bed.

I roll onto my back and smile up at him. “I sure am,” I say with a sigh as I lick my lips. “It is quite the show after all. You almost look better in that suit than you do out of it.”

“Don’t, Jessie,” he says with a growl and a shake of his head as he reaches me.

“Don’t what?” I flutter my eyelashes at him.

“Don’t make me later for work than I already am,” he narrows his eyes at me.

“I’m not sure what you mean. I’m just lying here watching you dress.” I give him my sweetest smile and he sits on the bed beside me, running his hand over the covers, up the outside of my thigh and over my hip before settling on my stomach. He splays his huge hand over my abdomen, and I glance down at it and think about the wonderful things he can do with those fingers.

“I know what you’re thinking, Red, and it’s not happening,” he chuckles before he leans down and gives me a soft kiss on the lips.

“I was thinking that I should take a shower and get some sleep.” I arch an eyebrow at him.

“Sure you were. Just like I was thinking I should really get to work and stop touching you,” he winks at me. “But you should get some sleep.”

“And you should get to work. Conor will be wondering where you are.”

He nods and brushes the back of his knuckles across my cheek. “I’ll see you in the morning.”

“See you then,” I reach out and take his hand, wanting to prolong this moment with him. He stares down at me as though he’s trying to read my mind. “I love you,” I whisper.

“Love you too, Jessie,” he gives me a final kiss on the cheek before standing up and walking out of the room.

CHAPTER

FOURTEEN

JESSIE

I took a long, hot shower and climbed into bed with Liam after Mikey left, and it didn't take me long to fall asleep. The warmth of a rough hand rubbing over the skin on my hip rouses me as I lie curled up next to Liam.

"I've missed you so much," Conor groans against my ear as he presses his body against mine.

"I've missed you too, bro," Liam pipes up beside us, making me giggle and Conor laugh.

"How you doing, kid?" Conor asks him as he lifts his head from my neck.

"Feel like I've been run over by a freight train, but other than that, all good," he groans as he shifts his position slightly. "And I got the hottest nurse in the world looking after me, so you know. Silver linings and all."

Conor is pressing a soft kiss against my shoulder blade. "Hmm," he murmurs against my skin. "Some of us are busting our asses while you're laying in bed all day getting sponge baths from Jessie," he teases.

"Yeah, I'm living the dream," Liam chuckles, but the effort makes him wince in pain, and he holds onto his ribs.

"Are you okay?" I ask him as Conor continues distracting me by peppering my shoulders and neck with kisses.

"Yeah," he says as he reaches for my hand and curls his fingers gingerly around my own.

“Good,” I kiss his bicep softly as I press my hips back against Conor and realize he’s naked when his cock presses against the seam of my ass through my panties.

“Fuck, you feel so good, Angel,” Conor growls as his hand slides beneath my tank and onto my stomach, causing the wet heat to surge between my thighs.

“Con,” Liam groans. “Could you please not fuck Jessie right now?”

I bite my lip and Conor tenses behind me, his hand splayed across my abdomen as he pulls me closer to him. Liam has never objected to us fooling around or fucking in front of him before. “I’m going to get a raging, painful boner listening to her moaning in my ear while you make her come, and there is fuck all I can do about it right now.”

I bite down on my lip to stifle a giggle while Conor sighs dramatically. “Fine,” he growls. “But you owe me big time. I got a raging boner here of my own right now.”

“Well, I’m not averse to Jessie giving you a hand job. Your groans I can handle, just not hers,” he says as he brushes the pad of his thumb over my fingertips.

“Do I get any say in this at all?” I ask as I snuggle between the two of them. “I’m kinda tired too, you know?”

“Then stop wiggling that fine ass against me, and go back to sleep, Angel,” Conor whispers in my ear as he wraps his arms around me. “I’m beat, anyway.”

“Then you should get some sleep too,” I breathe as I close my eyes and squeeze my thighs together to try and stop the throbbing in my pussy.

Five minutes later, I’m listening to the sound of Liam’s soft snores and Conor’s steady breathing behind me. Damn! I’m wide awake now, and sandwiched between two sleeping giants and there is not a thing I can do about the growing need that starts burning through my body. It has been days since Conor and I have been intimate, but it seems like it’s been an eternity.

I bite down on my lip and close my eyes. Just go to sleep, Jessie!

It's then that Conor moves his hand and his fingertips twitch on my stomach before he slowly slides his hand lower until they slip beneath the waistband of my panties.

I suck in a breath, and he presses his lips against my ear. "Shh!" he warns softly.

I nod my understanding and clamp my lips together as his fingers slip between my thighs and he begins to toy with my clit. His movements are slow in order to not disturb Liam, but they are precise, and it's not long before my thighs are trembling with my impending release. This man is a magician with his hands and he has me on the edge of oblivion despite him hardly even moving. I try to rock my hips up into his hand, but he holds me firmly in place with my ass pressed against his rock hard cock.

I can barely stand his maddening torment any longer when he increases the pressure and pace at the same time and I have to turn my head and bite down on the pillow as my orgasm rolls over me in wave after delicious wave while Conor continues working me with his expert fingers.

As the last of it subsides, I finally lift my face from the pillow and take in a deep breath just as Conor pulls my panties down over my ass until they're resting at the top of my thighs. I close my eyes as his cock nudges against me, because I'm pretty sure there's no way I'm going to be able to stay quiet if he fucks me. He obviously knows that too because the next thing I feel is his huge hand clamped firmly over my mouth as he begins to suck on the tender spot on my neck that he knows drives me crazy. His fingers are damp with my release and I smell myself on them, which makes this even hotter. He edges closer, pressing the tip of his cock against my opening and making me groan against his palm as my whole body trembles in anticipation.

He presses his lips against my ear. "Shh," he soothes as he pushes all the way inside me and the soft moan, a mixture of relief and pleasure, vibrates through my whole body as he

holds me in place. He moves slowly, gently thrusting in and out of me and causing the pleasure to course through my veins.

“Can you be quiet if I move my hand?” he whispers.

I shake my head. There is no way that’s going to happen. His hand is the only thing preventing me from shouting his name down Liam’s ear.

He chuckles softly. “I’ve missed this hot pussy, Angel. I wish I could spread you wide open and taste you. I want to fuck you real hard because it’s been a fucking lifetime since I’ve been inside you. I want to fuck you like you deserve, but this will have to do for now,” he growls quietly, and my insides turn to molten lava. I have missed him too. I can hardly believe that it was less than a week ago that we got back from our road trip from Arizona. Five days and four nights together and it was heaven. We got so close, but since we got back, we’ve had no time alone together. And Liam has to be my priority right now, and I know that Conor understands that too, but it still doesn’t stop us from missing this closeness. I need him, and his brothers, like I need air.

As Conor rocks his hips, fucking me with only the slightest of movements, he hits that sweet spot deep inside me that makes my eyelids flutter and my insides contract. My walls squeeze around him as I fall over the edge again and the sound of his soft groan against my neck tells me he has fallen straight over with me.

When my breathing starts to return to normal and my climax has ebbed away, Conor pulls his hand from my mouth, turning my head as he does, he presses a soft kiss on my lips as he pulls my panties back up, patting my ass when he’s done before pressing his body back up against me. He wraps his huge arm around me again and nuzzles my neck and I smile in contentment.

CHAPTER

FIFTEEN

JESSIE

When I wake up a few hours later, Conor is no longer in bed with me, and I can't help but feel a little sad. It was nice falling asleep with his arms wrapped around me. I miss spending time with him. I don't have time to dwell on why he left, because Liam shifts beside me and groans loudly.

"Morning, handsome," I say, stretching and rolling out of bed. "How are you feeling?"

"Like a truck rolled over me in the night," he winces as he rolls his shoulders and stretches before hoisting himself into a sitting position.

"I'll grab you something to eat, and then you can have some of your pain meds."

"Thanks, baby," he says with a grimace as I walk around to his side of the bed and start clearing his nightstand.

"Conor fucked you, didn't he?" he arches an eyebrow at me.

I bite on my lip. "Yes," I whisper. "Sorry."

He chuckles softly. "No need to be sorry, baby. I just didn't want to hear you coming down my ear, is all. I mean, usually it's pretty fucking hot, but not while I'm out of commission."

I sit on the bed beside him. "How did you know?" I frown at him.

He places his hand on my inner thigh, and stretches out his index finger. "Your panties are wet," he says with a devilish

grin as he runs the tip over the fabric at the apex of my thighs and the blush creeps over my cheeks. “I mean, you’re pretty much always wet, baby, but they are soaked.”

“Oh,” I breathe.

“I can’t wait to be the one to soak them with you again,” he winks at me and I laugh.

“I’ll just clean up and then I’ll go make you some breakfast,” I say as I climb off the bed and walk to the bathroom.

“No rush. I’m not that hungry,” he yawns.

LIAM HAS FALLEN BACK ASLEEP by the time I’ve taken a quick shower. He looks so peaceful and pain free when he’s sleeping, but I will have to make him some breakfast and wake him soon so he can take his pain meds. I grab my cell phone and walk out of his bedroom, taking a quick detour to my own.

I sit on my bed, and my stomach is in knots as I dial the number. I’m not even sure if he will have kept the same number, especially now that he’s had a significant promotion. The phone rings out and I swallow hard as I wait for it to be answered. I am about to hang up when I hear his distinctive Russian voice.

“Jessica?”

“Jessie,” I remind him.

“Of course,” he clears his throat. “What can I do for you?”

“I...” I take a deep breath. “I still have so many questions, Vlad. About my parents. About Alexei. About the Wolf. I’ve tried to move on from my past, but I can’t let it go.”

“I understand that,” he replies softly.

“Do you have any of the answers I need?”

There is a few seconds’ silence before he replies. “About your family? Perhaps. About the Wolf? No.”

I suck in another deep breath. “Do you think we could meet?”

“Are you sure that is wise? I’m not sure your new family would be too happy about that,” he warns, and I know that’s true. But he is my only link to my past, and I have to understand who I really am and where I came from.

“You’re right. But they’ll understand. Please, Vlad? I’m just asking for one hour of your time.”

He sighs deeply. “I will be in New York later today. Perhaps we could meet then?”

“Yes,” I reply almost before he has finished speaking. “Where?”

“Somewhere out in the open,” he says.

“Of course,” I agree. He is the head of the Bratva now, and for all he truly knows, this could be a trap. “Central Park. Near the zoo?”

“Yes. Just you?”

“Yes,” I reply. “I’ll come alone.”

“Lád-na. I will be there at noon.”

“Lád-na.” *Deal.* I smile. “And thank you, Vlad.”

“Pozhaluysta.” *You’re welcome.*

CHAPTER

SIXTEEN

JESSIE

After hanging up the call to Vlad, I tuck my cell into my jeans and walk to the kitchen to find Mikey and Conor sitting at the breakfast bar eating cereal, and I wander over to them. I reach Conor first and he pulls me between his powerful thighs, brushing my hair back from my face and holding me in place as he bends his head to kiss me. Wrapping my arms around his waist, I melt into his kiss and moan softly as the warmth floods my core, making Mikey chuckle. I swear these men turn me into a sex addict.

“You left without waking me this morning?” I breathe when he lets me up for air.

With a lick of his lips, he grins at me and drops one hand to my ass, squeezing hard. “I couldn’t lie there any longer with this juicy ass pressed up against me and not fuck you, Angel. And Liam needs his rest.”

I look up into his eyes, noticing how red they are. “So do you,” I remind him. “You’re working too hard.”

“No such thing,” he winks at me. “Anyway, I just came in here to catch up with Mikey and then I’m off to bed. Maybe you can join me later?”

“I would love to,” I purr as I run my hands down his hard chest and then I turn to Mikey. “Are you going to be around all day today?”

“Sure am, Red,” he says as he shovels in another spoonful of Lucky Charms. “You got something planned?”

“Yes, actually. I need to go out for a few hours. I can take one of the cars, right?”

Conor tightens his grip on me. “Of course you can take a car, Angel. You don’t have to ask. But where are you going?”

I bite my lip. They aren’t going to like this, but it’s something I need to do. “I’m going to see Vlad.”

I barely get the last word out of my mouth when Conor is interrupting me. “The fuck you are. Not a chance, Jessie,” he snarls with a shake of his head.

“I agree, Red. No way you’re going there,” Mikey chimes in unhelpfully.

I swallow the frustration and resist the urge to remind them that I’m a grown woman who looked after herself for ten long years before they came into my life, because we have been through so much these past few months, and I understand their concern. So, instead I take a deep breath. “I knew you’d both think it was a bad idea, but don’t you see that I have to do this? Vlad might have some answers for me, about my parents, about Alexei. Maybe even about the Wolf. I need to find out what he knows.”

“No!” Conor snaps.

“He might not even want to talk to you,” Mikey adds.

“He will. I spoke to him just now,” I reply.

“What the fuck?” Conor shouts, releasing me from his grip and standing up so he is towering over me. “You’ve been talking to Vlad?”

“Yes. I called him. I understand what Alexei did, and I get that you don’t trust the Russians, but I believe that Vlad is a man of his word. We’re meeting in Central Park, for Christ’s sake. We’re just going to talk. I swear.”

“No fucking way, Jessie,” Conor growls as he runs a hand through his hair. “I’m not discussing this any further.”

“Conor!” I shout, glaring at him. “How can you deny me learning the truth about my family? Please try and see this from my point of view?”

He moves so fast that I gasp in surprise. He wraps one of his large hands around my throat, pushing me against the counter, the weight of his body holding me in place as he leans his face close to mine. “Why don’t you see it from mine?” he hisses. “I will not fucking lose you again.”

I swallow, and he loosens his grip slightly. “You won’t. I promise,” I whisper.

“How about I go with her?” Mikey offers.

“And have to worry about the two of you all day? No!” he shakes his head.

“Conor! Please?” I beg. I had planned on going alone, and I told Vlad that I would, but it seems there is no way Conor will let me and maybe having Mikey as a chaperone might persuade him, because I wouldn’t put it past him to lock me in my room. I had known they wouldn’t be pleased with my decision, but I hadn’t expected this level of anger from him. “I trust Vlad. We’re meeting in a public place and if you insist I have a bodyguard, then Mikey will come with me. I need to know about my past. Everything I believed about my parents was a lie. Don’t you think I deserve the truth?”

Conor’s eyes momentarily flick to his brother before he releases my throat from his grip and slides his hand to the back of my neck instead. “I don’t trust him,” he says as he presses his forehead against mine. “Why do you have to do this right now?”

“Because I have been searching for answers for ten years, and I’m done waiting,” I breathe.

The sigh comes from deep inside his chest, and I shiver as his breath skitters over my cheek. “I want you both back here within two hours. You understand me?”

I glance sideways at Mikey, who winks at me and I smile. “Yes, of course. Thank you.”

TWO HOURS LATER, Mikey and I make our way through Central Park to the place I’ve agreed to meet Vlad. I see his distinctive figure ahead and scan the crowd for signs of his bodyguards. Mikey spots him too and does the same.

“You recognize any of his goons, Red?” he asks as he looks around.

“Not really. But there’s a guy leaning against that tree and another one near the hotdog stand that scream Bratva to me. What do you think?”

Mikey narrows his eyes as he checks out the two men I just mentioned, and then he nods. “I agree, Red. Let’s hope they’re only here to keep an eye on their boss and not to start any trouble, because Conor will have my ass if anything goes down here this afternoon.”

I take hold of his hand, entwining my fingers through his. “Relax. The head of the Bratva doesn’t go anywhere without bodyguards. You know that.”

He lifts my hand to his lips and kisses my knuckles. “Let’s do this then, Red,” he says with a grin as we make our way over to Vlad.

Vlad smiles at me as I approach him before giving Mikey a once over. Mikey releases my hand. “I’ll give you some space, Red. But I’ll be two steps behind you.”

“Thank you,” I whisper before turning and making my way over to Vlad.

“Good afternoon, Jessie,” he says in his thick Russian accent.

“Afternoon, Vlad. I had to bring Mikey with me, but he’s good. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me.”

He nods and draws in a deep breath. “Of course. Shall we walk?” he holds out his arm and I take it by the elbow. Although he towers over me and is almost twice my size, there is something about him that makes me feel at ease and I imagine he is a much easier man to work for than my father ever was. We start to walk and Mikey falls into step a few yards behind us. Vlad puts his free hand over mine and I notice his wedding ring for the first time. I’m sure he never wore it when I was at Alexei’s house.

“You’re married, Vlad?”

He pats my hand gently and smiles. “Yes. Twenty-seven years.”

Something about that endears him to me even more.

“Children?” I press.

“Two sons,” he says with a nod toward the hot dog stand as we pass. “Grown men. They accompany me everywhere now.”

“And your wife?”

“Well, she doesn’t handle a Beretta in quite the same way,” he laughs softly.

“I meant what does she do?” I laugh too.

“Time is precious, Jessie. I suspect you didn’t persuade me to meet you here in New York to discuss my family. So, tell me what it is you want to know?”

I nod my head. He’s right. This isn’t a catch up with an old friend. This is an information gathering exercise, and I need to get this done because Conor will lose his shit if Mikey and I aren’t back by the time we promised. “I want to learn about my parents, Vlad. My real parents. What the hell happened to make them change their names and flee to the States?”

He clears his throat before he speaks. “You know, I knew your father when he was just a boy. Him and Alexei. His name was Boris then, and not Peter, of course, but my father worked for theirs and we grew up like cousins.”

“So, you knew him well?” My heart lurches in my chest that I might finally get some answers.

“Hmm. A very long time ago. And your mother too.”

“Tell me what happened? Please?”

“I can tell you all I know, but to tell you about your parents, I must also tell you about Alexei. Their story is his too.”

I nod and close my eyes. “I want to know everything.”

“Your father was always the smart one while Alexei was much more outgoing and confident — arrogant some would say. Boris was your grandmother’s favorite, and she protected him from the darker side of living with the Bratva, but Alexei thrived at his father’s side, and all of the darker personality traits that he possessed were encouraged and nurtured by the life he was forced to live. He was the perfect choice to take over when your grandfather died.”

“So, he and my father didn’t get along as children then?”

Vlad shakes his head and sucks in the air through his teeth. “On the contrary, Jessie, despite their differences, they were as close as two brothers have ever been. By the time Alexei was a man, he was uncontrollable, but your father was always the one man who could reach him. He was the only man who could keep Alexei in line, and the only person whose counsel he would heed. They shared an unbreakable bond. At least it appeared that way, until Alexei met your mother.”

My mom! A wave of sadness and nostalgia washes over me. I miss her so much. “So Alexei met her first?”

Vlad nods as we continue walking through the park.

“How did they meet?”

He smiles and the corners of his eyes crinkle softly. “At the opera.”

“The opera?”

“Yes. Your father was supposed to go with your grandmother, but he was ill with the flu, so Alexei accompanied her instead. Your mother was there with her father.” He turns to me at this point and studies my face. “She was a true beauty,” he says, reaching out and brushing his fingertips over my cheek. “As soon as Alexei saw her, he decided he wanted her, and that was that. The fact that she was the daughter of one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Russia meant nothing once the head of the Ivanov empire set his sights on her.”

“So, what happened?”

Vlad sucks in a long breath and glances behind us. Mikey still follows closely behind, as well as his sons who keep a more discreet distance than my own bodyguard. “It is a very long story for some other time, but Alexei wanted her to be his wife, so she became his wife. She had no family other than her father, and he died a few months after their union. Alexei was always a cruel man, and I don’t expect that he was able to hide his true nature from her.”

I blink back the tears as I think about my mother being ripped from her life and forced to marry the head of the Bratva. How terrified and alone she must have felt with no family around her. “But her and my father?”

Vlad nods solemnly. “I don’t know when that started, but your mother and father must have fallen in love. I didn’t often see them spend any time in each other’s company, but I recall one dinner when I caught the two of them sharing a look that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.” He shudders slightly at the memory.

“Why?”

“It was the look of two people so deeply in love that they would risk everything to be together, Jessie. I knew that it would bring trouble, and it did. But at the time, I tried to pretend it was all in my imagination. I convinced myself that Boris would never do that to his brother. Then she fell pregnant and Alexei was the happiest I’ve ever seen him. He threw a massive ball in Nataliya’s honor. He commissioned portraits of him and his pregnant wife. He boasted to everyone he met that he was about to become a father. But a few weeks later, your mother and Boris disappeared.”

I swallow. “How did Alexei react?”

“As you’d expect,” he shrugs. “Like a crazed madman would. He tortured anyone with any allegiance, be it perceived or genuine, to your parents. He tore the country apart trying to find them. He searched for sixteen years before he found you all.”

“And then he had the Wolf slaughter his own brother and his family?” I snap as the bile burns the back of my throat.

“Any flicker of humanity that Alexei held in his heart was snuffed out by the betrayal of the people he loved most in the world.”

“You think it was their fault he was such a monster?” I challenge him.

He shrugs. “No judgment. I am simply stating the truth, Jessie.”

He picks up his pace slightly and squeezes my arm tighter, and I sense the tension in Mikey, even though he’s a few yards behind me.

“I don’t have much more time. We must walk and talk faster,” he adds with a reassuring smile.

“Sure,” I nod. “Did Alexei ever meet the Wolf?”

“No,” Vlad shakes his head. “Nobody has ever seen the Wolf and lived. Nobody except you, Jessie.”

“So, he was supposed to deliver me to Alexei?”

“Yes, and when he didn’t, Alexei almost lost his mind. All of those years searching for you, only to have you stolen from him by the very man he paid to bring you back.”

“So, he searched for the Wolf too?”

“Vigorously.” Vlad nods. “But there was never a trace of either of you. I tried to persuade Alexei that you were both dead. There seemed to be no other plausible explanation. But, well, now I realize that the Wolf is as good as the myths surrounding him suggest.”

“You think he’s still alive?” I ask.

“Yes,” Vlad states and my heart sinks through my chest. I believe he is too, but hearing someone like Vlad say that too is like confirmation that I’m not crazy.

“I do too,” I say quietly.

Vlad places his hand over mine and squeezes tightly. “I must go now.”

“One more question?” I ask.

“Of course,” he nods.

“Why didn’t Alexei have me killed too? Why was he so sure I was his daughter if my parents were having an affair?”

“Oh, you were his daughter.” Vlad narrows his eyes at me.

“But how could he know that? Even a DNA test couldn’t determine the truth if he and my father were identical twins.”

“True. But you were conceived while Boris was in prison.”

“My dad? In prison? For what?”

Vlad shakes his head. “Some charge relating to espionage that nobody ever quite got to the bottom of. At the time, Alexei made noises about how unjust it was and how nobody put an Ivanov behind bars. He made everyone believe that it was he who got your father out. But, now I think that it was he who put your father in prison.”

“He could do that?”

Vlad laughs softly. “In Russia, the head of the Bratva can do as he pleases.”

“How did he get out then?”

“I believe Alexei did get him out. He loved your father very much. He was not the same man when Boris wasn’t around. I suspect he believed that once your mother was pregnant with his child, that would put an end to any feelings between his wife and his brother.”

“But it obviously didn’t. And my father always treated me the same as my younger brothers. I had no inkling at all that I wasn’t his biological child,” I say as another rush of emotion almost floors me and I wipe a stray tear from my cheek.

“I appreciate that Alexei did terrible things, and hurt you badly, Jessie. But understand that in his own way, he loved you above all others.”

I stare at him, searching his face. I am convinced that my instincts are right and I can trust this man. “Is that why you helped him take me from the Ryan brothers?”

His eyes narrow and darken. “Yes,” he says solemnly. “I thought it was for the best. I didn’t realize he was going to drug you.”

“Why did he?”

“He was terrified that you would discover he wasn’t the father you knew. He wanted you to discover his side of the story, I suppose, and he needed time to make you dependent on him. To force you to need him. For him, need equaled love.”

“So, how did he find me?”

“This is more than one question, Jessie,” he says as he checks his watch.

“Last one. Promise.”

He stops in his tracks and turns to me, brushing a strand of hair from my face. “You are so very like her,” he whispers. “In so many ways.”

I smile at him, although I’m not sure if he means that as a compliment, but I will take it as one anyway, because my mom was the most amazing woman I ever knew.

“One of Dmitry’s men, Viktor, recognized your mother in you. I was contacted by a nurse at the hospital, who told me that he was desperate to speak to Alexei because he’d found his daughter. I visited him there, and he told me what happened at that bar before I ended his suffering. It didn’t take long to figure out who you were with. Future tip, Jessie. If you’re trying to lie low, don’t run around with the Irish Mafia.” He cocks an eyebrow at me.

“Well, I kinda think that ship has sailed, don’t you?”

He laughs softly. “You take good care of yourself, Jessie Ryan.”

“I will. Thank you, Vlad.”

He lifts my hand to his lips and kisses it softly before placing his free hand over his heart. “It has been my pleasure.”

Before I can reply, his two sons are by his side talking to him in Russian. Vlad releases my hand and the three of them slip into the crowd as Mikey steps up beside me.

“You okay, Red?” he asks as he slides an arm around my waist.

I turn to him and smile. “Yes.” I lean against his shoulder as we start to head back through the park. “I think I got most of the answers I needed. Thank you for coming with me, Mikey,” I say, relieved now that he offered to be my chaperone, because I feel so emotional and vulnerable that it is comforting to have his huge arm wrapped around me.

“Any time, Red,” he replies before planting a kiss on the top of my head.

“I love you,” I breathe. “You know that?”

“Yeah,” he says with a shrug, making me laugh.

“Did you hear any of that?”

“Most of it.”

“It’s so much to take in.”

“I bet it is, Red. You want to go somewhere? Just the two of us?” he asks as he squeezes me tighter.

“I would love to. But Liam needs his lunch and his meds. Conor will probably be pacing the hallway, and even if he’s not, you’re well aware he won’t sleep until we’re back. Even if we call him and tell him we’re okay.”

“Okay,” he says with an overly dramatic sigh, and I laugh again.

“How about we do something later? Just me and you?”

“Hmm,” he says as he chews on his lip as if deep in thought. “How about strip poker?”

“Is your mind always in the gutter, Mikey Ryan?”

“Pretty much, Red,” he laughs.

“Good. That’s exactly where I like it,” I laugh too.

“So, we’re on for strip poker then?” he turns to me and smiles widely.

“Yes,” I nod.

“Nice,” he nods too before leaning down to give me a soft kiss on the lips. Mikey is my happy place. He has a unique ability to lighten any mood and uses humor to diffuse almost every situation, even when it’s completely inappropriate. But that’s one of the things I love about him. I know that beneath it all, he has a heart as big as anyone I’ve ever known. And as we walk toward the car, he leans down and whispers softly, “I love you too, Red.”

CHAPTER

SEVENTEEN

CONOR

I'm half asleep when I feel the covers lifting slightly and the bed dipping beside me. I am fucking exhausted, but I'm conscious Liam might need something so my body won't let me fall into a deep sleep. And I've been worrying about Jessie and Mikey and won't be okay until they are back here where they belong. I trust Jessie's judgment, but I will never trust the Bratva. Not ever.

Her warm hand skims my lower abdomen and I smile because they are back — and safe.

“Hey, Angel.”

“Hey you,” she replies as she snuggles against me and I lift my arm so I can wrap it around her and she nestles into the crook of my shoulder. “I'm sorry I woke you but I've missed you these past few days.”

“You didn't wake me. I was waiting for you to come home.” I yawn. “And I've missed you too. Did everything go okay?”

“Yes. But I'll tell you about it later. Go back to sleep.”

“Hmm.” I pull her closer to me and she drapes her thigh over my legs. “You sure you don't want anything else from me?” I ask, even though I'm not sure where I'll find the energy from, but I will find some for her if that's what she needs.

“No,” she breathes against my skin. “I just want to lie here with you. Is that okay?”

“Yes.” I kiss the top of her head. “Sounds perfect. But if you could get naked, that would be even better.”

“Behave yourself and go to sleep,” she says, but I feel her smile against my chest.

“Yes, ma’am,” I mumble. I close my eyes and she strokes the back of my neck with her index finger and I smile too because she knows my body as well as I know hers. I’m fast asleep a few seconds later.

JESSIE IS GONE by the time I wake up. Glancing at the clock, I see I’ve been asleep for five hours, so no doubt she will have needed to tend to Liam during that time. I roll out of bed and make my way to the kitchen, where I find her and Mikey making sandwiches.

She smiles when I walk into the room. “You want something to eat?” she asks.

I resist the temptation to tell her than I’d like to eat her. “Yes, please,” I say instead as I sit at the island and watch them work. “What are we having?”

“Chicken, bacon and avocado,” she replies.

“How many do you want, bro?” Mikey asks.

“As many as there are available. I’m starving,” I reply as my stomach growls in agreement. Jessie brings a plate over to me with one sandwich and I look at it and frown. “Just to get you started,” she laughs. “Did you have a good sleep?”

“Yep,” I say as I stretch my arms and roll my neck. “Would have been better if I’d woken up with you still wrapped around me like a blanket though,” I say quietly and she blushes.

“Sorry. But I had to give Liam his meds and some food. He needs to eat little and often with them,” she whispers.

I reach out and pull her around the island until she’s standing between my thighs. “I know, Angel. Liam needs to be your focus right now. But that doesn’t mean I don’t miss waking up next to you.”

“I miss waking up next to you too,” she breathes.

“As soon as I get a night off from the club, I am taking you to bed and locking the door behind us.” I wink at her and she blushes again, but I imagine for an altogether different reason.

“Sounds good to me.”

“Here you go, Red,” Mikey walks over to us and hands her a tray.

“I have to take Liam his dinner,” she says with a sweet smile.

“I’ll catch you later, Angel,” I say before I wrap my arms around her. I press my lips against hers and coax them open so I can push my tongue inside. She tastes so sweet. Of strawberries and Gatorade. Pressing her face closer to mine, I deepen our kiss until she is moaning into my mouth and my cock stiffens. I am desperate to fuck her properly. This morning wasn’t enough, and it has already been too long since I’ve been inside her, but she needs to take care of Liam and I need to speak to Mikey.

AS SOON AS Jessie has walked out of the kitchen, Mikey sits on the stool opposite me.

“So, how did it go?” I ask before taking a bite out of my sandwich.

“As well as can be expected, I think. Vlad had his two sons with him, but there was nothing untoward going on as far as I could tell. He gave her some of the answers she was looking for, and I think she thinks it was worthwhile. So, I suppose it was a success?”

“Good. He told her about her parents then?”

“Yep. Her father’s real name was Boris. He fell in love with her mother, even though she was married to Alexei...”

“Oh? So they had an affair?” I had assumed that Alexei was the one who betrayed them and not the other way around.

“Well, yeah. But it kind of seemed like Jessie’s mom didn’t have much choice in marrying Alexei, if you know what I mean?”

“Hmm,” I mumble with a mouthful of food.

“It was strange hearing about Alexei and Boris, though.”
Mikey shakes his head.

“Why?”

“Well, with them being twins? I assumed they must have always been rivals or had a difficult relationship, but according to Vlad, they were real close. Until Jessie’s mom anyway.”

“Why is that strange?” I frown at him.

“Well, it’s not. It was just weird thinking about me and Liam, you know? There would never be anything he could ever do that would make me turn on him like that. And Vlad said that Alexei loved Jessie’s mom too, but he still had her and Boris slaughtered?” he shakes his head again.

“Well, Alexei and you are very different people, Mikey,” I remind him.

“I guess so,” he says, but he seems distracted.

“What is it?”

“I was just thinking, is all,” he replies with a shrug.

“Thinking what?”

“What if Jessie chose one of us? Like decided she fell in love with one of us more than the others? What would we do?”

I blink at him because that thought has never crossed my mind, but it is a terrifying one. “I don’t have a clue, bro,” I answer honestly. “You think she would?”

He stares at me for a few seconds as though he’s deep in thought. “Nah,” he eventually says with a grin. “She can’t get enough of us Ryans, can she?”

“Well, let’s hope it stays that way.” I force a smile because now he’s got me thinking the same thing.

“You sure you can manage without me tonight, bro?”
Mikey asks as he slips off his stool and goes back to the counter to make more sandwiches.

“Yeah. You deserve a night off.”

“So do you.” He turns and frowns at me. “Let the manager and the bouncers handle things tonight. Play strip poker with me and Jessie?”

“Strip poker?” I laugh.

“Yep.” He grins and flashes his eyebrows. “Winner gets to choose their reward.”

“As fun as that sounds, we have too much going on right now. I can’t afford to take my eye off the ball, Mikey.”

He shakes his head and sighs before turning his back on me again.

“I’ll take some time off as soon as Shane is home and things calm down a little.”

“Things are never calm around here, Con,” he says, and I know he’s right. But I can’t slack off right now when Shane asked me to keep everything running smoothly. As much as I truly would prefer to spend my evening with a naked Jessie.

CHAPTER

EIGHTEEN

JESSIE

I step out of the elevator and make my way through the basement to the club. It's not open yet, but Conor is down here working, and Mikey asked me to bring him something to eat. He's made Conor's favorite soup and I have a thermos full of it under my arm.

The club is empty as I walk to Conor's office. The door is closed and I knock softly and wait to be invited in. A few seconds later, the door opens and I see the room is full of people. There are around twelve men in suits standing and sitting in the room, while Conor sits at his desk. All of them have serious looks on their faces and I realize I've just interrupted an important meeting for clam chowder.

My cheeks flush pink, and I hold up the thermos. "Sorry," I mouth to Conor, who has a fire in his eyes as he glares at me.

"Out! Now!" he barks and I open my mouth in surprise, considering whether to throw this thermos at his head, but then all of the men stand up and start to walk toward the door and I realize he was talking to them and not me. They all nod politely to me as they pass and I watch them with a sudden nervous sensation in the pit of my stomach. The last one to leave closes the door behind himself and I stand there chewing on my lip.

"Come here," Conor orders, but my legs are like jelly and I stand on the spot staring at him instead.

"I'm sorry I interrupted your important meeting," I whisper.

“I said come here!” he barks and I comply like an obedient puppy because bossy Conor makes my insides melt like liquid chocolate.

I walk toward him and place the thermos on his desk, and as soon as I’m within touching distance, he reaches for me and pulls me onto his lap, so I’m straddling him on his office chair.

“Don’t ever apologize for coming down here,” he growls as he brushes the hair back from my face. “And don’t ever knock on my office door again and stand in the doorway like you don’t belong here.”

My whole body is trembling now, and the heat starts to build in my core. It seems like he’s really pissed about something, or is he just really horny? Or both?

“I don’t understand. Why can’t I knock?” I ask as I stare into his dark eyes.

“Do my brothers knock?” he scowls at me.

“No,” I breathe.

“So, why would you have to?” He wraps my hair around his fist and tilts my head back, rubbing his nose up from the base of my throat and along my jawline. He inhales deeply and I moan softly as I experience a rush of slick heat. “You can walk into this office any time you want to, Angel. You never apologize for being anywhere that I am. You got that?” he says as his free hand drops to my hip and he pulls me down further onto him so that his semi hard cock is pressing against my pussy.

“Yes. Conor!” I pant as the heat starts to spread to my thighs and I rock my hips against him.

“Now that you’re here, did you just come to bring me a thermos?” he growls before he dips his head again, and this time he runs his tongue from my collarbone, all the way up my throat and onto my face until he reaches my lips, making my entire body shudders with anticipation.

“It’s clam chowder,” I whisper as his lips hover over mine, taunting me with the promise of a kiss.

“Clam chowder?” He edges his lips closer and the hand on my hip slides between my thighs as he rubs against my clit through my jeans, using the seam of the denim for friction.

“Yes. I brought you dinner. I don’t have time for anything else, I’m afraid,” I purr, teasing him right back.

He narrows his eyes at me, but there is a wicked glint in them. “You don’t have time for me to fuck you, Angel?” he growls as he presses more firmly against my clit and I grind my hips against his hand.

“No. I’m super busy,” I groan, brushing my lips over his jaw.

“You’re such a bad liar, Jessie.” He keeps rubbing. “You interrupted my important meeting so I could make you come, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” I groan, unable to take his maddening teasing any longer.

He chuckles softly before he peels my tank top off over my head and tosses it over his shoulder. His warm hands snake around to my back and I shiver as he unhooks my bra easily with one hand, and it slides down my arms, allowing my breasts to fall free. He tugs it off impatiently before he bends his head and sucks one of my nipples into his hot mouth and I moan as the rush of wet heat floods my core. He sucks and nibbles on my hard nipples as he reaches down and unzips my jeans. I run my fingers through his hair and moan softly, making him smile against my skin.

Suddenly, he spins his chair around so we are facing his desk and lifts me from his lap, positioning me on his desk directly in front of him. I swallow hard as I stare at him and he has such a wicked look in his eyes that a shiver of nervous excitement skitters up my spine.

“I want you naked. Right now,” he growls as he starts to pull off my jeans and I lift my ass so he can wriggle them over my hips. He grabs hold of my panties too and quickly works them down my legs, before removing them with my socks and sneakers.

A few seconds later, I am completely devoid of clothes on his desk and he pushes his chair back slightly and stares at me, making the flush creep over my chest and neck.

“You are so fucking beautiful,” he says, rubbing a hand over his jaw. “I should keep you down here with me all night like this. Dripping your cream onto my desk while you wait for me to fuck you.”

I chew on my lip as every nerve ending in my body responds to his words and my pussy walls throb in anticipation. “Conor, please?” I pant as I will him to touch me.

“Fuck! I’ve got so much work to do tonight, Angel,” he says with a sigh. The disappointment must show on my face because he winks at me. “I’m going to fuck you real hard first, though.”

“Good,” I breathe.

“After I eat your delicious pussy,” he grins as he pulls my hips toward him and places one hand on my stomach. “Lie back, Angel.”

I do as he tells me as he slides his hands down the inside of my thighs until he reaches my ankles and lifts them, planting a foot on each shoulder.

“Conor,” I gasp.

His breath dances across on my skin as his face dips between my thighs. “What, Jessie?” he growls.

“What if someone comes in?”

“Nobody except my brothers would dare walk in here without knocking. And if one of them walks in, well they can join me if they like,” he chuckles before he peppers soft kisses along the inside of my thighs and I writhe on the desk as I run my fingers through his hair.

“I can smell how wet you are for me,” he growls before he buries his face against my pussy, his tongue pressing into my opening as he rubs his nose over my clit.

“Oh, God,” I pant as the surge of wet heat rushes between my thighs, making him groan against me.

“You taste so fucking good,” he hisses before he licks my pussy from my entrance to my clit before sucking the bud of flesh into his mouth and flicking it with his tongue.

“Conor,” I shout as he makes me come quickly, but he doesn’t stop even when I pull at his hair. Instead, he adds two fingers and I lift my hips to meet them and his tongue as he works me expertly, and I am completely lost to him.

“For fuck’s sake,” he snarls, and I look up, wondering what has caused the sudden change in him.

“I’m fucking busy,” he shouts toward the door and I realize someone must have knocked, but I was too busy being on the verge of an orgasm to hear.

“The new contractor is here, Boss.”

“Tell him to wait, Chester. And if you disturb me again, I’ll fire your ass.”

“Okay, Boss,” Chester replies and Conor looks down at me again as I blush to the roots of my hair.

“Why are you blushing, Angel?” he grins at me. “You think they didn’t already know what we’d be doing in here? I couldn’t have sent them out of here any quicker if someone set the club on fire.”

“I thought you were just pissed at them, or me.”

He frowns at me before, wiping his mouth before pulling me from the desk and back onto his lap.

“Your suit will get dirty.” I whisper.

“I’ll wipe it. Or I’ll go change,” he says as he brushes my hair with his damp fingers. “Now, why the hell would I be pissed at you, Angel?”

“I don’t know,” I shrug. “For a second, I thought it was me you were telling to get out.”

“Jessie,” he says with a soft sigh. “You know I would never...”

“Yes, I do. You just looked so mad when I opened the door.”

“Yeah, well. That was business, Angel. Nothing to do with you.”

“Is there anything I can help you with?” I run my hands down the lapels of his jacket.

“You already help me more than you realize.”

“You’re working too hard.”

“I’m fine.” He shakes his head, his brow furrowed.

“Is there something on your mind?”

He dusts the back of his knuckles across my cheek as he looks into my eyes. “Do you ever wish there was only one of us to have to deal with?”

“One of you?” It’s my turn to frown now. “I don’t understand what you mean,” I stammer.

“Yes, you do. There are four of us. Do you ever wonder what it would be like to just be with one brother?”

I swallow hard. Where the hell is this coming from? “Is this about Shane?”

“It has nothing to do with Shane. It’s a simple question, Jessie.”

And there it is again, that anger I saw in him earlier. “Of course I don’t,” I tell him honestly. “Do you wonder about it?”

“About what it would be like to have you to myself? Yes,” he admits.

“Oh? Does that mean you’re not happy with this arrangement then?” I shift on his lap and he wraps his arms around my waist, holding me tighter to him.

“No!” he says as he stands again and plants me back on the desk. “I love sharing you with my brothers, and I never want that to stop. But of course I think about what it would be like to have you in my bed every single night, Angel, and I’m sure my brothers do too,” he growls as he unbuckles his belt before unzipping his suit pants and taking out his cock. It glistens with precum and I lick my lips at the memory of the taste of

him. Grabbing onto my hips, he prepares to rail into me, but there is something I want to ask him first.

“How many women have you fucked in this office?”

He tilts his head and frowns at me. “Too many, Angel,” he hisses before he drives his cock into me and I moan so loudly, I am sure that all of his employees outside heard me. He leans over me, his face so close to mine that I smell my arousal on him. “But I promise you are going to be the only woman I ever fuck in here ever again. Okay?”

“Okay,” I breathe as he drives into me again and nails me to his desk, fucking us both to the release that we so desperately need.

CHAPTER

NINETEEN

JESSIE

I showered as soon as I got back up to the apartment, and dressed suitably for my evening of strip poker with Mikey. As I'm walking to the den to meet him, he saunters up behind me and slaps my ass. "You ready to get your ass whooped, Red?" he chuckles in my ear.

He's dressed in gray sweatpants, and judging by the outline of his huge cock in them, absolutely nothing else. "You're very sure of yourself," I laugh at him. "I'm not that bad at poker, you know?"

He looks me up and down. "Then why are you wearing more clothes than I've ever seen you in before," he says as he pulls the neck of hooded sweatshirt and peers inside, confirming I'm wearing a tank top too.

"I'm cold," I shrug.

"Hmm." He leans close and plants a soft kiss on my neck. "This apartment is boiling, though. I turned up the heat."

"Cheat!" I laugh.

"Says the woman wearing socks!" he laughs. "You have never worn socks in this apartment without your sneakers. Not once."

"Well, I still think your strategy is overly confident," I glance down at his sweatpants.

"Ah, but I got me a secret weapon, Red," he winks at me as he slips his arm around my waist and we walk to the den. "We have ourselves a third player."

“Conor?” I arch an eyebrow at him. “I thought he was working?”

Mikey chuckles as we walk into the den. “Conor is good at poker, but I got the man who taught him everything he knows.”

That’s when I notice the laptop on the table. “Shane?”

“The one and only,” Mikey grins at me.

There is no one on the screen yet, simply an empty hotel room. I strain my eyes to see the bed and whether there is any evidence of Erin being there, but all I see is a perfectly made bed and Shane’s cell phone on the nightstand.

“Shane!” Mikey shouts, and a few seconds later Shane fills the screen as he sits on a chair directly in front of his laptop. He’s wearing a white shirt and suit pants and he looks so good it makes my pussy contract.

“Evening. We ready to play some poker?” he smiles.

“How exactly are we going to play like this? How do we deal you in?” I ask.

He holds up a pack of playing cards. “I’ll deal three hands, just like you’re both in the room with me.”

“Hmm.” I raise an eyebrow at him. “That’s very convenient for you.”

He places a hand over his heart and winces. “Of all the things you have ever said to me, Jessie, accusing me of cheating at cards has to be the most hurtful,” he says with a wicked grin that makes my insides melt and causes Mikey to chuckle.

“Jessie’s wearing socks, Shane,” Mikey adds.

“Socks?” Shane arches an eyebrow. “Really? And I’m the cheat?”

“I’m cold,” I shrug.

“Hmm. Judging by Mikey’s attire, it looks freezing there.”

“Well, I think Mikey is overconfident, and I am simply prepared,” I add as I settle back in my chair.

“Well, we’ll see how your strategy plays out, won’t we, Hacker? Just so I understand where we’re at, how many things you wearing, Mikey?” Shane asks.

“One.”

Shane laughs. “You are confident. I’m wearing three.”

I do the math in my head. Shirt. Pants. Boxers.

“How about you, Jessie?” Shane growls.

More math. “Seven.”

“Cheat!” Mikey grins.

“Mikey!” Shane gently chides him. “If Jessie chooses to wear more clothes tonight, than she usually wears in a week, then that’s her choice. I have every confidence she’s going to be naked very soon anyway.”

“We’ll see,” I say with a sense of confidence I don’t feel because Shane Ryan plays poker like he does everything else in life — to win.

TO MY COMPLETE SURPRISE, I win the first hand. I consider which of them needs to remove some clothes, and there is only one logical choice. I really don’t want to be distracted by Mikey’s nakedness for the whole evening, and besides that, Shane looks much finer out of his shirt than in it. He removes his shirt with a grumble, but it’s only when he sits back down and he and Mikey share a look that I realize I’ve just been completely played. He wanted to be shirtless. Now he’s more comfortable, and I’m even more distracted.

A little over two hours later, I am predictably completely naked while Shane and Mikey are still in their pants. I didn’t win a single hand after the first one.

“For someone with your skills, Hacker, I’m surprised you’re not much better at poker?” Mikey grins at me.

“I am good at poker,” I protest. “But your brother is a shark! I’m sure he’s counting cards there.”

“Again with the cheating insults,” Shane shakes his head as though he is deeply wounded.

“You had three aces in one of those hands, Shane!” I try to glare at him but I’m too happy to. The truth is, the three of us have had a great time and I haven’t seen either Shane or Mikey this relaxed for a long time. Shane has been gone for four days and I haven’t spoken to him since the day he left. I was worried things were going to be frosty between us again, but he seems to have forgiven me for turning him down the night we got Liam back from the Russians.

“Luck of the Irish,” Shane says with a shrug.

Mikey laughs as he collects up our cards and chips from the table and I pick up my panties from the floor.

“Mikey!” Shane says in that low, gravelly tone that makes me melt, and the atmosphere in the room changes in an instant.

“Yeah?” Mikey looks between Shane and me.

“Can you give us half an hour?” he growls.

“Sure,” Mikey says before standing up. He cups my chin in his hand and tilts my head before sealing my mouth with a kiss. “I’ll be waiting for you, Red. Don’t put any of those damn clothes back on,” he growls too.

“I won’t,” I whisper.

When Mikey has left the room, I focus on the laptop screen, biting my lip in anticipation.

“Go sit on the sofa, Jessie, and put the laptop on the coffee table in front of you.”

I could ask why. I could remind him that we don’t do this kind of stuff anymore. But, I am hot, and wet, and I miss him so much. Besides, he can’t actually touch me, can he? So, no matter what we do now, we’re not breaking any of our rules.

Picking up the computer, I do as Shane asks and sit down on the sofa, placing the laptop directly in front of me.

“Now, lean back and put your feet on the table. One on either side of the screen,” he commands.

I blush at the thought of his view from the other side of the camera if I do that. “Shane!”

“It’s nothing I haven’t seen before, sweetheart.”

“I get that. But...”

“I won, right? And this is the prize I choose. Feet up, Jessie. Now! I want to see that beautiful pink pussy.”

The heat floods my body as I do as he orders and place my feet on the table, so I am completely spread open for him.

“Fuck! Your cunt is beautiful.”

The wet heat rushes between my thighs at his words. “What now?” I breathe.

“Now, I want to watch you while you make yourself come.”

I suck in a breath and he groans softly. “Do you ever think about me when you touch yourself, Jessie?”

“Yes,” I admit.

“Good. Because I’ve already jerked off twice today thinking about you. Now show me how you touch yourself when you’re thinking about me, Hacker.”

He thinks about me! “I can’t.” I bite my lip and shake my head. I’m too self-conscious.

“Jessie!” he growls loudly as he unzips his fly and pulls his cock out of his suit pants. Even from here, I can see it is rock hard and glistening with precum, and my body trembles at the memory of him inside me. “If I was there with you, I’d be burying my cock in your cunt right now.”

“Shane,” I groan loudly because I love his filthy mouth.

“I can see already you’re soaking, Hacker. You know that you want this as much as I do. Now slide your hand down to that beautiful, wet cunt and touch yourself for me.”

I slide my hand down my body, between my thighs, until I find my already swollen clit. My fingers glide easily over the

slick bud and I bite my lip to stifle a groan before I close my eyes and tilt my head back.

“Eyes on me, Hacker. You don’t get to come for me if you’re not looking at me.”

I lift my head and open my eyes, watching as he strokes his cock while he glares at my pussy and my fingers working.

“And stop biting your damn lip. I want to hear every sound you make,” he growls as the pace of his own stroking increases.

“You’re so damn bossy,” I groan as the tremors of pleasure build in my abdomen and thighs.

“You’d better believe it, Hacker. Fuck! I wish I was there right now. I’d slip two fingers inside you and make you squeeze me tight. You remember how it feels when I fuck you with my fingers?”

“Yes,” I pant, as a rush of wet heat almost makes me lose control.

“Slip two fingers inside yourself then, sweetheart. And pretend they’re mine. Tell me how good your cunt feels.”

“Shane,” I pant as I watch him gripping his cock while he talks filthy to me. But I glide my other hand between my thighs and push two fingers inside and arch my back in pleasure.

“How does that feel, Jessie?” he groans.

“So good,” I breathe. “But I wish it was you,” I say, entirely lost in the moment and forgetting that we told each other we couldn’t do this anymore. But this isn’t real, is it? He’s not actually touching me.

“I wish it was me too, sweetheart. Being inside your cunt is my fucking nirvana. Now, tell me how wet you are,” he hisses, and I can tell he is on the edge.

“I’m soaking for you, Shane,” I moan as I grind down onto my fingers while I increase the pressure on my clit. “You make me come so hard.”

“Fuck! Jessie!” he roars and watching him spurt his seed onto his own hand as he loses control is so damn hot that it tips me over the edge too and my climax washes over me in long rolling waves as I continue rubbing out the last tremors of pleasure from my body. I straighten up when I’m done, my cheeks flushed pink and panting for breath. I smile at him.

“Dammit, Jessie. I’m gonna have to get these pants dry cleaned,” he laughs softly.

“I think we might need to steam clean the sofa too,” I glance between my thighs before I arch an eyebrow at him.

“Have you got cum on the sofa, sweetheart?” he growls, and the heat floods through me again.

“A little,” I breathe.

“Fuck. You make me so fucking hard, Jessie. I miss you.”

“I miss you too, Shane,” I whisper and then we just stare at each other through the screen, neither of us saying any of the things we do desperately need to. “When will you be home?” I finally ask when I can bear the tension no longer.

“A few days,” he says and the change in his tone is evident. He looks away from the screen and zips up his fly. “I have to go,” he snaps.

I swallow the emotion down at the sudden coolness in him. He is annoyed at himself because he has let his guard down with me. But he instigated this. Not me. “Okay,” I stand up and pick up the laptop to switch it off. “I guess I’ll see you in a few days.”

“Jessie!” he says as I’m about to disconnect.

“What, Shane?”

He licks his lip and stares at me for a few seconds before he speaks. “When you’re being fucked by my brother in a few minutes, remember that it was me who made you soaking wet for him.”

“You’re an arrogant asshole, you know that?” I shake my head, but I can’t help but smile at him.

“I do, but you love it, right?”

“Goodnight, Shane,” I reply before I close the lid and end the call.

CHAPTER

TWENTY

MIKEY

As I sit on the edge of Liam's bed, I smile as I watch my sleeping twin. I woke him to see if he needed anything and he rolled over and told me to go to hell, so that is a sure sign he's getting better. The meds he's on are some heavy duty shit and they make him sleep sixteen hours a day. I fucking miss him. I miss him being at my side when we're doing anything, but especially when we're working, and with Shane away, me and Conor are working even harder than ever. But I know that this is what he needs and I would let him sleep for a whole fucking year if it means getting him back to the way he was before.

I've grown up with all three of my brothers always looking out for me. Apart from the occasional disagreement and the general busting each other's balls that comes with being a sibling, we rarely fight or argue. I would die for any one of them and I believe without a doubt that they would do the same for me.

Listening to Vlad talking to Jessie today about her father and uncle made me appreciate that I sometimes take their unwavering loyalty and love for granted. There is nothing any of them could do that would make me betray them, or Jessie. She has fit into our tight family unit so seamlessly and perfectly that I wonder how we lived without her. I fucking adore her, and my brothers do too. The fact that we are able to share her without any egos or jealousy getting in the way is a testament to our bond. Each of us ultimately wants what is best for the others, and that's why we operate as such an efficient unit. So when Shane asked for some time alone with

her, there was no question that I would step back and give him that. He's out there alone on the road, and he needed her more than me. And she needed him too. Although she does her best to hide it, I see the pain in her eyes whenever his name is mentioned, and I hope they sort their shit out because they are so much better together.

The sound of Liam groaning in his sleep breaks my train of thought. "Jessie," he says in a way that I've heard him say plenty of times before, usually when the two of us are deep inside her. I can't help but laugh, pleased that he is having such pleasant dreams, but I think that's my cue to leave. Besides, it's been a while since I left Jessie and Shane alone, and I hope to be inside her for real very soon. That thought makes my cock twitch to life. I have never enjoyed fucking any woman quite so much as my Red.

I LIE in her bed waiting for her and smile when I hear her soft footsteps outside the open door. She pops her head inside. "Did you check on Liam?"

"Yeah. He's sleeping like a baby. So get your ass in here."

She laughs softly before she steps into the room, not bothering to close the door in case Liam shouts for one of us, and also because both he and Conor have watched us fuck plenty of times so neither she, or I, care if they were to wander in. My eyes roam over her sexy little body. "Why the hell are you wearing panties, Red?" I growl when I see them.

"I just put them on in case I had to go check on Liam is all," she bites her lip and blushes.

I sit up in bed. "Get over here. Now!"

She walks over to me, still chewing her lip and trying to look all innocent when she has a body that must have been hand carved by the devil himself, because every single part of it screams *sin*. As soon as she's within touching distance, I reach up and pull her down onto the bed, making her squeal as I roll on top of her. "I told you not to put any of those clothes back on," I growl before I brush my lips over her breasts.

“I just...” She doesn’t finish the sentence, instead she moans loudly as I suck a nipple into my mouth and bite. “Mikey!” she gasps and every drop of blood in my body feels like it rushes straight to my cock.

“Would you disobey Shane or Conor like that?” I growl before kissing a trail to her other breast.

“Maybe. Depending on what mood I’m in,” she giggles before I bite on her other nipple and she arches her back in pleasure until she’s grinding herself onto my cock.

“What am I going to do with you, Red?” I chuckle softly as I trail kisses down her stomach until I reach the waistband of her panties. I kiss her mound through them and she moans softly. “Please, Mikey?”

“If only these panties weren’t in my way, I could eat your sweet pussy right now,” I growl as I move lower, kissing her folds through the damp black fabric. She smells fucking delicious and I am desperate to taste her, but I love to make her beg.

“Take them off,” she groans as her hands fumble at the waistband, but she can’t remove them because my face is pressed up against her pussy. “Please?”

“But if you wanted them off, why did you put them back on when I specifically told you not to, Jessie?” I keep kissing her and her hands move to my head instead, running her fingers through my hair. “Don’t you want to be fucked tonight?”

“You know I do,” she groans. “I’m sorry, Mikey. I need you. Please?”

I can’t resist the sound of her pleading for me, and I tug her panties to one side and slide a finger through her wet folds. “Damn, Jessie. What did Shane just do to you? You’re fucking soaking,” I smile as I push a finger inside her hot wet pussy and she groans so loudly I think she might have woken Liam at the other end of the hall. “Is that what you need, Red?”

“Yes,” she hisses as I push deeper inside her and she grinds herself on my finger. I add two more at once, stretching her

wider and making her gasp out loud. Her walls squeeze me tight, drawing me in deeper as her sweet fucking juices run down my fingers and onto my wrist as I work her. “Oh, Red, you’re desperate for it, aren’t you?” I groan. “You’re such a bad girl spreading your legs for my brother and then coming in here looking to be fucked.”

“Mikey. Please?” she moans again, and the sound makes my cock feel like it’s about to burst. The smell of her wet heat is driving me fucking crazy and as much as I enjoy teasing her and making her beg, I can’t hold out much longer. I bend my head low and suck her sweet little bud into my mouth and damn if she isn’t the sweetest thing I have ever tasted in my life.

As I nudge her clit with my tongue, I push my fingers deeper and she rewards me with an orgasm that vibrates through her entire body. Her fingers in my hair, her juices in my mouth and all over my hand, make my balls draw up into my stomach. I push myself up while she’s still shuddering and pull my fingers out of her, pushing my sweatpants off quickly to allow my poor weeping cock free. Reaching down, I rip the damn panties off her, tearing the fabric down the middle because I am fucking frantic to be inside her.

“The next time I tell you not to put your panties back on,” I growl as I take her hands and pin them down onto the bed on either side of her head and line my cock up against her slick entrance. “You will do as you are fucking told.”

“Okay,” she pants as she looks up at me and then I watch those beautiful blue eyes almost roll out of the back of her head as I drive my cock deep inside her. I want to be the only man inside her right now — her pussy and her head.

“Who just made you come, Jessie?”

“You did,” she groans as she wraps her legs around my waist and raises her hips up to meet mine, pulling me deeper inside her.

I fuck her hard and the room is filled with her moaning and the slick, wet sound of my cock filling her dripping pussy.

Fuck, my girl loves being dominated in bed. “You love being fucked, don’t you, Red?” I whisper in her ear before grazing my teeth over the soft, sweet smelling skin on her neck. I am about to lose my fucking mind buried inside this woman. She drives me fucking crazy.

“Yes,” she moans softly and her pussy squeezes me tighter. “Mikey,” she half shouts, half moans, and I swear there is no better sound than my name on her lips when she comes. I bury my face in her neck, nailing her to the bed as I grind out the last of her orgasm while her body shudders beneath me before finally finding my own.

When we’re both done, I lie there, my cock still inside her and my forehead pressed against hers.

“I like your bossy side,” she purrs like a kitten.

“Yeah, I kinda got that, Red,” I chuckle.

“I’m sorry for wearing panties.”

“If I had my way, you’d never wear panties again.”

“Well, that could be a little inconvenient, and very distracting,” she giggles. “Especially around you and your brothers. I’m not sure any of us would ever get any work done.”

“Hmm. You’re probably right, Red. Which is why it’s also probably a good thing that I don’t get to make the rules around here.”

“Probably,” she agrees as I pull out of her and roll off her, pulling her with me until she is curled up against my chest with her thigh resting on mine and our cum dripping onto my leg, but I don’t give a damn about that right now. All I want is to lie here with her, holding her close.

“You think we should get cleaned up?” she suggests.

“No point,” I say, stifling an unexpected yawn. “I’m not done with you yet. I plan on getting you dirty again very soon.”

“Really? It seems like you should get some sleep. You’ve been working so hard. I’ll still be here in the morning.”

“I’ll sleep when I’m dead, Red. It has been so fucking long since I spent the night with you. And that’s fine because Liam has needed you, but know that tonight, you are going to be fucked repeatedly. Your mouth. Your pussy, and your juicy ass.” I squeeze it and she shivers. “So much that you’re going to be hobbling around this apartment all day tomorrow.”

“Sounds attractive,” she giggles as she snuggles closer to me. “I’ll just spend the day in bed watching movies with Liam.”

“I wish I could join you,” I groan.

She lifts her head and looks down at me with concern on her face. “Is there something I can do to help? You and Conor are working so hard, and I’m just in the apartment doing nothing most of the time.”

Fuck me this woman is beautiful inside and out. “No. You make our food. You do our laundry. You keep us company when we need it. You let us fuck you whenever we feel like.” That last part is kind of a joke even though it’s true, and she opens her mouth to respond but I brush my fingers over her cheek. “And most importantly, you take care of Liam. He needs you, Red. And I know without a doubt, that he wouldn’t be doing as well as he is if you weren’t by his side every day. So, no, there is absolutely nothing more you can do.”

“Okay,” she sighs softly and rests her head on my chest again.

“Besides, Shane will be back soon, and things can get back to normal round here.”

“Yeah,” she says, but there is a sadness in her at the mention of his name.

“You two will be okay, you know?” I was worried that he wouldn’t let her in again, but I don’t see how that’s possible. I see the way he looks at her. He loves her as much as he always has, and she is pretty impossible not to like, or forgive. And after whatever just happened in the den, he must be coming around because he wouldn’t play with her heart like that.

“I hope so,” she whispers.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-ONE

SHANE

I slip on my Ray Bans as I walk down the airplane steps and into the glaring LA sunshine. A car waits for me at the bottom and a driver opens the door as I approach.

“Good afternoon, Mr Ryan.” He bows his head slightly.

“Afternoon,” I reply with a nod before he opens the door wider and I bend my head and climb inside, surprised to see a figure sitting waiting for me.

“Hola, amigo,” Alejandro Montoya smiles widely at me.

“What the hell?” I grin back at him as I sit on opposite end of the back seat. “When you said you were sending a car for me, I didn’t realize you’d be in it.”

“Well, there’s been a change of plans,” he says with a shake of his head. “Jax has had to go out of town and I have some business I need to deal with this afternoon. Then I have to go to some charity thing with Alana later. It’s a last minute deal, but it’s important to my wife, so I’m sorry, amigo, our planned night of drunken debauchery will have to wait. But I have booked you into the best suite at my hotel and everything you indulge in there is on the house.”

“Thank you. And I’m not sure you calling off our night out is a bad thing,” I laugh. “I have a meeting at 8am.”

He laughs too. “Well, my ideas of debauchery these days are much tamer anyway. I am a one-woman man. You’d probably think I’m boring now.”

“I’m not sure you could ever be considered boring, Alejandro,” I grin at him. “Besides, I see the appeal.”

“You do, huh?” He flashes an eyebrow at me. “Is this the computer hacker?”

“It’s complicated,” I shake my head. “Far too complicated to explain during a drive to the city anyway.” Thinking about Jessie gives me a pain in my chest. Last night was supposed to just be a game of poker. Strip poker, granted, but just a friendly game. Mikey had asked me to help get Jessie naked, and that was all I intended to do. But I obviously forgot what seeing her naked body does to me. And then when I watched her on that computer making herself come for me, I was tempted to catch the next flight home and fuck her for real. The memory of her smell and the taste of her, of how her cunt squeezes my cock, overwhelm me whenever I think of her. But, I can deal with those. It’s the memory of how it feels to be loved by her that I can’t handle.

Alejandro stares at me intently and I realize I’m completely lost in thoughts of her once more. “Women, my friend. Our reason for living and the reason our hair turns gray,” he winks at me before holding up a bottle of Jameson and I nod before he pours us each a glass.

“So, you were asking about this Wolf guy?” Alejandro says as he hands me my drink and settles back against his seat, and I’m thankful for the distraction.

“Yeah. You ever had any dealings with him at all?”

“No.” Alejandro shakes his head. “But he was Russian, right? I don’t exactly get on with the Bratva, Shane.”

“You never used to get on with the Irish either,” I remind him. Before my brothers and I took over, a man named Seamus Finnan ran operations, and Alejandro almost sawed off his head with a steak knife during one particular showdown in a New York restaurant.

“Well, that was in my younger and more reckless days,” he says with a chuckle. “Besides, Seamus was a prick. And you’re not. I trust you.”

“Well, you helped my brothers and me out a lot when we first came to the States. We’ve always got your back.”

“And I yours, amigo,” he says before knocking back his whiskey.

“So, you know nothing about him then?” I ask again. If I didn’t know that he existed, I would think the Wolf was a figment of someone’s imagination, he is that fucking elusive.

“Only what everyone else knows. The Bratva’s top assassin. Disappeared ten years ago after he slaughtered that family and kidnapped your girl.”

My girl. Dammit Jessie!

“I even had Jax do a little digging for you but he came up with nothing.”

I shake my head in frustration. Jax is the human equivalent of a bloodhound. The fact that neither he nor Jessie can find the Wolf gives me little hope that we will ever find him unless he wants to be found. And I can’t help that worry her being with me and my brothers makes her more visible to him.

“You worried he’s still out there and he might come after her again?” Alejandro asks, as if reading my thoughts.

“Yep. And if I don’t know who he is, then how the fuck do I protect her from him? I worry about her every time she leaves the apartment. I worry that he’s so fucking invisible he might walk right past me one day and take her from under my nose.”

“You do what you can, Shane. That’s all any of us can do. I used to worry about Alana too. Fuck, I still do. And I had reason to after what happened to her. But, trying to second-guess everything and everyone, trying to keep her in a cage, well it drove both of us crazy.”

“So, how do you deal with it?”

He sucks in a deep breath. “I choose not to let it overwhelm me. Now that we have the kids too, I could worry about all of them all day long, so I have to consciously make an effort not to. She and the boys never leave the house

without a bodyguard, and I trust that she does everything she can to keep herself and our children safe.”

“And Lucia?” I ask, referring to his adopted adult daughter.

“Don’t even,” he says with a shake of his head. “That girl can take care of herself and I swear she is even more stubborn than both me and Alana combined, so I let her do her own thing. I have given up trying to give myself an aneurysm arguing with the kid.”

I smile at the image that conjures in my head. Alejandro Montoya is one of the fiercest and most ruthless men I’ve ever met, but he is completely besotted with his wife and children, and there is a distinct change in him when he talks about them. I finish my whiskey and lean back in my seat.

“We chose this life, Shane. We don’t get to make the people who love us suffer for it too. So, we do what we can to keep them safe and then we let them do what makes them happy.”

“I suppose so.”

“Damn. I’ve never seen you like this over a woman,” he laughs.

“Like what?”

He doesn’t reply, simply shakes his head before he pours us each another drink.

“I hate it,” I admit. “I wish I could stop thinking about her.”

“She doesn’t feel the same?” he frowns at me.

“She does. At least I think she does.”

“Ah, love,” he says with a sigh. “It’s an incredible thing — even when it hurts like hell.”

“So, what’s this business you have to deal with?” I ask him, desperate to change the subject.

He flashes his eyebrows at me. “Why? You in that much need for a distraction? You want in?”

“Does it involve breaking bones?”

“It can,” he answers with a grin.

“Then I’m in.”

“Great. Maybe with your help I won’t have to get blood on my best suit,” he says before pouring us each another drink.

THE WHISKEY BURNS my throat as I swallow a huge mouthful. Staring out at the LA skyline as I roll the glass in my hand, I wonder what my brothers and Jessie are doing back home. Mostly I wonder about her. What she is wearing. Whether she is happy or sad. Whether she is thinking about me. With a shake of my head, I put the glass onto the table and sit on the sofa. I’ve drunk too much tonight and it’s making me far too reflective and melancholy for my own good. Even breaking some faces with Alejandro today wasn’t enough of a distraction. Sitting here alone in my hotel room night after night isn’t helping either. I should be down in the bar. I haven’t had sex for three long months and I have never gone this long without fucking before. The last time was with Jessie when we kept her a prisoner in our basement. The memory of that day makes my cock stiffen in my pants. Damn, that woman gets under my skin like no one I have ever known.

The women in LA are hot, and the women who stay in Alejandro’s hotels are rich and hot, which means they take good care of themselves. I shake my head, pissed at myself for even thinking about it. So, clearly I’m not that wasted because I know that is a line I can’t even think about crossing. Not until I’ve figured out what the hell is going on with Jessie and me.

As I glance at the table, I see my cell phone sitting there, daring me to call her and tell her that I can’t stop thinking about her. I pick it up and dial Conor instead. It rings and rings, but he doesn’t answer. It’s after midnight in New York so he’s probably working in the club, so it’s not that unusual that he doesn’t pick up, but it still sets my nerves on edge not to be able to speak to him. I end the call without leaving a message and dial Mikey instead, who picks up on the fourth ring.

“Hey, bro? How are things in sunny LA?” he asks.

“Boring as fuck.”

“Oh,” he laughs softly.

“Where is Conor? I can’t get a hold of him?”

“Well, he caught one of the new bar staff skimming money from the cash register so he’s enjoying firing his ass in true Conor style as we speak.”

“Ouch,” I wince at the thought of what the bartender is currently being subjected to. Not that the piece of shit doesn’t deserve it. You have to be a special kind of stupid to steal money from our club right under our noses. “How is Liam doing?”

“Great. He’s sleeping loads still, but the doc says that’s a good thing to let his body heal. He should be back on his feet in a day or so. He can hobble to the bathroom on his own now, so that’s good. And when he’s awake, he’s good. Jessie spends most of the day with him, playing cards and watching TV. So the lazy fucker is living his best life really,” Mikey jokes, but I know that no one is more relieved than he is that Liam is okay.

“Glad to hear it. And you?”

“Tired. But all good, bro. Looking forward to you coming home though. It’s not the same without you.”

“I’m looking forward to coming home too,” I tell him, and then we’re silent for a few moments until I’m forced to speak again, if only to break the tension that has edged into what was supposed to be a lighthearted catch up with the brother who is the least likely of all of us to talk about feelings with me. “How is she?” I swallow the ball of emotion that is lodged in my throat.

“Ask her yourself, bro,” he sighs.

“But I’m asking you, Mikey,” I snap, and then I feel bad for taking my frustration out on him. “I mean after yesterday. Is she okay?”

“Why? What did you two do? Because she was pretty happy, and dripping wet, by the time she came to bed.”

“You’re welcome,” I smile and can’t help experiencing a sense of perverted satisfaction and pride at what he just told me. “But I meant after what happened with Vlad.”

“Ask her yourself,” he repeats. “I told you what went down yesterday at the park. And I’m not getting any more involved than that.”

“You’re an asshole.”

“And it sounds like you’ve had too much to drink. So, get some sleep and I’ll talk to you tomorrow.”

“Are you really trying to be the responsible one here?”

“Well, one of us has to be, Shane. Because you are losing your edge,” he replies, and I can’t tell if he is joking or being truthful, or maybe a little of both. I end the call without saying anything else and let him go back to whatever he was doing before I disturbed him. Scrolling through my contacts, I pause at her name, my finger hovering over the call button. She is probably asleep. But what the hell? I dial her number anyway.

After a few rings, she answers. “Hi. What’s up?” she asks quietly and sleepily.

“Did I wake you?”

“Yes. But it’s okay. Is something wrong?” she whispers.

“Why are you whispering?”

“Because Liam is sleeping. Hold on, let me go into the den,” she says and I hear her soft breathing as she climbs out of bed and walks to the other room. “There. I can talk now,” she says louder now. “Are you okay?”

“No,” I admit in a drunken moment of weakness.

I hear the breath catch in her throat. “Why? Has something happened? Shane?” her voice goes up a few octaves too and the concern in it gives me a perverse sense of satisfaction. Not that I needed proof that she cares for me. Despite everything that has happened between us, I do believe that.

“I’m fine,” I lie now, not wanting to cause her any distress when she is thousands of miles away.

“Have you been drinking?”

“Yes!” *Fuck! Do I really sound that drunk?*

“Do you need something?” she asks, and I can’t tell whether it is frustration or something else creeping into her voice.

“Yes.” *You.*

“What is it, Shane?” she says, softer now.

I love you, Jessie Ryan. “I’m think I’m homesick, is all.”

“Homesick?” she laughs softly. “Then come home.”

“I have a meeting tomorrow. And then...” I trail off. “I’ll be home in a few days.”

“I wish I could do something to make you feel better.”

“You already have.” I say that out loud, even though I only meant to think it. “Night, Jessie.”

“Night, Shane.”

I throw my phone onto the sofa beside me, and I lean back before closing my eyes. Was Mikey right about me losing my edge? Maybe I need to cancel my meeting in Vegas the day after tomorrow? Maybe I need to get my ass back on a plane to New York.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-TWO

JESSIE

Liam has an arm wrapped around my shoulder as he shuffles back to bed from the bathroom. He's much more mobile now and insists on doing everything himself as much as possible. But this morning, he attempted a shower for the first time on his own and I found him sitting on the plastic chair Mikey put in the stall for him with the water shut off and him struggling to get back up.

"You should have waited for me," I admonish him. "You could have really hurt yourself."

"It was only a shower, Jessie. I wasn't trying to run a marathon," he snaps at me, his frustration at his body not being able to do everything he wants it to clearly evident, and I am reminded how difficult this must be for him. I understand how frustrating it is to need to push your body to do more than it is physically capable of. When I was first kidnapped by the Wolf, I was a weak little girl. By the time I escaped almost two years later, I was a strong woman capable of so much more than he ever gave me credit for.

"Sorry," he sighs as we reach the bed and he sits down on it. "I thought I'd be able to do it on my own."

"And you will be soon. But you've only been back on your feet for two days, Liam. You're doing incredible, but if you push too hard, you'll set yourself back."

He rolls his eyes and lies back on the bed.

"Now stop making me nag you. I feel like I'm your mother," I say as I jump on the bed beside him, leaning on my

elbow as I look at his bruised face.

“Trust me, Jessie, there is nothing at all that is motherly about you,” he chuckles softly.

I open my mouth in shock, about to reprimand him after the way I have looked after him.

“At least not to me,” he adds quickly as he holds a hand up in surrender. “But you are the hottest damn nurse I’ve ever seen.”

“Good save.” I narrow my eyes at him as I place my hand lightly on his chest.

“Come here,” he whispers, holding up his index finger and beckoning me closer.

I lean my face closer to his. “Here?”

He shakes his head and traces his fingertip over his lips. “Here.”

I edge closer, pressing my lips softly against his and kissing him. He slides his tongue into my mouth and our kiss becomes something much more. The familiar heat builds in my core and I pull back from him, sucking in a breath as I stare into his dark eyes.

“Jessie,” he groans.

“You need to take it easy, sunshine.”

He reaches up, his injured fingers curling gently in my hair. “I’ve had enough taking it easy. I need you.”

I shake my head. “We can’t. You’re still recovering.”

“This is part of my recovery. We need to check all my parts are still working right,” he glances down, and I look too, to see his thick cock standing to attention.

“He looks like he’s working just fine to me.” I arch an eyebrow at him. “So why don’t I go make you something to eat and you can let him calm down?”

“The only thing I want to eat is your pussy,” he growls, pulling me back to him and pressing my lips to his as he kisses

me, full of fire and need and longing.

He needs air before I do, and he breaks our kiss first. “Please, Jessie. I really need you.”

“And I need you too. But I will never forgive myself if hurt you. And then it will take you even longer to recover, and everyone will be super pissed at me. And we’ll have to wait even longer to do this.”

He shakes his head. “You won’t hurt me. Slide yourself onto my cock, baby.” He runs a hand down my back and beneath my t-shirt and I shiver from his touch. I miss him too. I would love to do just that, but I meant what I said.

“I’ll hurt you,” I say with a shake of my head.

“You’re my nurse, right?” He flashes his eyebrows at me.

“I suppose.” I chew on my lip.

“Well, nurse Jessie. Your patient is in severe pain right now, because all of the blood that he needs for his vital organs is currently rushing straight to his cock. And that,” he nods toward it, “is fucking painful, baby.”

“I am not riding you like a rodeo bull while you have broken ribs,” I say as I push myself up.

He frowns at me.

“But,” I go on as I start to trail kisses down his chest and over his perfectly chiseled abs. “I will do something about this if it makes you feel more comfortable.”

“Jessie,” he groans as his fingers run softly through my hair. “I’d prefer your pussy, baby. But I suppose your mouth will do.”

“You suppose?” I murmur against his skin and he chuckles softly.

I move lower, peppering his fresh, soapy smelling skin with soft kisses until I reach his cock. I place a kiss on the base of his shaft and it twitches, making him groan loudly. I smile as I move past it, down toward his thighs and his balls, trailing butterfly kisses over his skin.

“Jessie,” he growls now as his fingers tighten their grip.

“Liam,” I breathe against him as I move my head and lightly lick the precum from the tip of his shaft.

“Jessie! Please!” he hisses and I can’t help but chuckle.

“So, that’s what that feels like,” I purr softly against his skin.

“What?” he gasps as I cup his balls in my hand and squeeze lightly as I lick his length from root to tip.

“Well, it’s usually me begging one of you guys, isn’t it? Not the other way around. I quite like it.”

“I never make you beg, baby. I always give you what you need,” he groans.

“Hmm,” I say as I continue teasing him with soft kisses and just the tip of my tongue.

“Fuck!” he hisses, and I smile.

“Tell me what you need, baby,” I tease him.

“Suck my cock. Now!” he growls and the wet heat sears between my thighs as I suck his beautiful cock into my mouth, taking him all the way to the back of my throat and the groans of pleasure rumble through his body. I suck him, running the flat of my tongue along the underside of his shaft before swirling it over the tip and starting again.

“Damn! Jessie. Where the hell did you learn to suck cock like that, baby?” he hisses, as he rocks his hips into my mouth. “Fuck!” he growls a few moments later as he comes in my mouth and I swallow it greedily before sucking and licking him clean. When I lift my head, he is looking down at me, his eyes dark with desire and lust.

“You feel better now?” I say as I wipe my mouth and move back up the bed.

“Uh-huh,” he grunts his response before his head falls flat against the pillow.

“That good?” I grin at him.

“I wish I could return the favor, baby,” he says with a sigh.

“Oh, I’ll make sure that you do as soon as you’re able to. Don’t worry.” I wink at him and am rewarded with one of his amazing smiles — the kind that makes his eyes twinkle and crinkle at the corners.

“I love you so fucking much.”

“I love you too, handsome.” I kiss his lips softly. “Now, I’m going to make you something to eat so you can take your meds. Do not move from this bed while I’m out of the room.”

“I won’t, Boss.”

CHAPTER

TWENTY-THREE

JESSIE

Dropping the weight onto the floor, I stand up and flex my shoulders. I glance up at Conor and Mikey finishing their pull-ups and stare unashamedly at their glistening bodies as their muscles flex and vibrate. Damn, these boys are fine! They have been working so much lately, they haven't been able to fit as many gym sessions in, so I was very happy to see them stroll in halfway through mine this morning. It certainly makes pounding the treadmill more enjoyable when I have such a beautiful view.

"You going to stand there and stare at them all day, or you going to do a bit of work?" Liam chuckles in my ear as he comes up behind me.

"Actually, I've finished my workout." I turn around and wrap my arms around him. "What are you doing in here?"

"Doc said I'm okay for very light cardio," he shrugs. "Thought I'd have a very slow walk on the treadmill?"

"You want company? I can stay?" I offer.

"I'll be fine, baby," he slides his hand to my ass. "But some company later would be good?" he grins at me.

"Light cardio." I arch an eyebrow at him.

"We can watch a movie and fool around. That's light," he chuckles and the wicked glint in his eye makes me experience an overwhelming a rush of love for him.

"You can't. You promised Mikey that you'd finish watching that God-awful TV series with him tonight before he

goes to work.”

“Shit, yeah. And Cobra Kai isn’t awful. It’s fucking epic!”

“Whatever you say, handsome.” I grin at him. “Enjoy your workout. And don’t do too much.”

Conor and Liam are between sets and walk over to us. “We’ll keep an eye on him, Boss,” Mikey says with a wink.

“Make sure that you do!” I lean over and give him and Conor a brief kiss on the cheek before I leave the gym.

As I’m walking down the hallway, I hear the ping of the elevator doors opening and I stop in my tracks. There is only one other person who has access to this apartment, but he’s not due back until tomorrow. My heart flutters in anticipation at the prospect of seeing him. I have missed him so much. I wonder if he remembers much of his drunken phone call to me the night before last. I got the impression he wanted to talk about something but he was holding back, as he often does.

He steps out of the elevator and turns straight toward me. As usual, he looks good enough to lick from head to toe, while I must seem like a hot, sweaty mess after my workout. Our eyes lock and I swallow hard as my pulse starts to race. Every single nerve ending in my body is aware of his presence. Goosebumps prickle along my forearms, and I literally stop breathing. He drops his bags onto the floor and walks toward me, and I just stand here staring at him like an idiot until he’s standing right in front of me. He glares at me with his beautiful green eyes, and I draw in a breath.

“You brothers are in the gym,” I stammer.

“They all okay?”

“Yes.” *Just breathe, Jessie!*

“Good. I’ll catch up with them later. You okay?”

Apart from feeling like I’m about to pass out or melt into a puddle? “Yes.”

He takes one step closer, until our bodies are mere inches apart and I can feel the heat from his body and smell that goddamn intoxicating cologne he wears. As he looks into my

eyes, my pulse starts to thrum against all of my pressure points and the heat sears between my thighs. I swear this man can see inside my soul.

A few seconds pass before he slides his hands over my hips and onto my ass and pulls me against him and my entire, traitorous body trembles at his touch. He dips his head, leaning his face close to mine. His breath dances over my cheek and sends a shiver skittering down my spine. “I missed you, Hacker.”

“I missed you too, Shane,” I whisper.

With no further warning, he lifts me and wraps my legs around his waist, making me gasp, before he begins walking down the hallway. “Shane. Where are you taking me?”

“To bed, sweetheart. It has been way too long since I fucked you.”

Damn! I love his filthy mouth. I love everything about him. “But... you and me. We don’t...”

“Stop! Talking!” he orders, narrowing his eyes at me before he seals his lips over mine and silences me with a kiss. I melt into him as he literally tongue fucks my mouth, and I whimper shamelessly as I grind my hips against his cock. The waves of pleasure roll through my body as he hardens against my throbbing pussy.

I can barely think straight by the time he walks us into his bedroom and kicks the door closed behind us. Making his way straight to the bed, he throws me onto it and starts taking off his clothes. I can do nothing but stare up at him and watch the spectacle that is Shane Ryan undressing because he has the body of a Greek god. I lick my lips as I think about running my hands over every inch of it very shortly. Because maybe I was wrong? Perhaps just sex with him is better than nothing?

He pushes his jeans and boxers down over his thick, tattooed thighs and when he stands straight again, his beautiful cock is standing to attention.

His eyes are full of fire as he walks over to the bed and crawls over me. He sits back, straddling me with his knees on

either side of my hips, and I shiver in anticipation.

“Just so we’re clear,” he growls as he reaches down and pulls my tank top up before dipping his head low and planting soft kisses over my stomach. “You own every single part of me, Jessie Ryan, and you always have. I am completely and undeniably yours. But I’m done talking, sweetheart. We always seem to screw everything up when we talk. So, I just want to fuck you until the sun comes up tomorrow. Okay?”

The heat sears through my body as wetness pools between my thighs. “Yes,” I groan as he pulls my sports bra up and over my head and tosses it onto the floor. He sucks one of my hard nipples into his mouth and nips me gently as he lifts his hips and begins to tug down my yoga pants. I moan loudly when his fingers slide through my slick heat and straight to my dripping pussy.

“So fucking wet,” he mumbles against me as he moves lower, trailing kisses over my hot skin. “I need to taste you.”

I pull his head away from me as he starts to work my pants off down my legs and I remember that I have spent over an hour in the gym this morning. “Shane, don’t,” I gasp.

He looks up at me with a scowl on his face. “Why the fuck not?”

“I just worked out. I should take a shower first.” I say as the blush creeps over my cheeks.

“Have you got any of my brother’s cum in you right now?”

“No.” My blush deepens.

He pulls my pants off my legs, along with my socks and sneakers, and throws them across the room. “Then why would I give a fuck that you just worked out, sweetheart? I’ve already had my tongue in every part of you, and I am desperate to taste you.” He dips his head low and runs his tongue along my pussy as if to prove his point, and the loud, animal-like growl that rumbles in his throat makes me giggle.

He looks up and winks at me. “Fucking delicious. Now what did I tell you about not talking,” he says as he wraps his arms around the back of my thighs and lies down on the bed

like a sniper as he pulls me down towards him until my pussy is practically pressed against his face. “The only words I want to hear from you are, ‘oh. God. Fuck. Me. Shane.’ Any combination, in any order will do fine,” he winks at me again before his head disappears between my thighs and he swirls his tongue over my clit before moving lower and pushing it inside me.

“Oh, fuck! Shane!” I groan loudly as the warmth rolls through my abdomen.

“Good girl.” He lifts his head and chuckles, and the sound vibrates through my whole body.

His warm breath skitters over my skin and I squirm as he starts to tease me, peppering the top of my thighs with kisses and tiny delicious bites. “Please, Shane?” I whimper shamelessly.

“Damn! I love how you say my name, Hacker,” he growls against me. His kisses move closer to right where I want him until he seals his mouth over my clit again, grazing it gently with his teeth and making my hips jolt off the bed as I feel a rush of wet heat. He presses the flat of his tongue against it and sucks softly, sending endorphins charging around my body. Every hair on my head tingles with electricity and my thighs tremble as he grips them tighter and holds me tighter to him.

“Oh, God, Shane!” I shout as my orgasm crashes over me in wave after delicious wave. I rake my fingers through his hair as he keeps on sucking. My whole body trembles and instinctively, I pull at his hair, trying to pull his head away, but he has his powerful forearms clamped around my thighs still and his head buried in my pussy and I am powerless to move him even an inch. I close my eyes and push my head against the pillow because I realize what he’s trying to do. When the sensitivity passes and I stop struggling, he releases one of my legs and runs his warm hand from my knee up my inner thigh before pushing two fingers deep inside me, and I swear I almost pass out. I groan so loudly and so wantonly that it makes him growl loudly. Curling his fingers deep inside, he

pushes against my G-spot and I feel the intense pressure building in my abdomen.

“Shane!” I breathe as my orgasm rushes out of me in an intense rush of fluid that makes him groan in appreciation.

“I love how hard you come for me, Hacker.”

I manage to look down as my head spins and I pant for breath. “You’ve soaked the bedsheets.”

“No, *you*’ve soaked the bedsheets, sweetheart.” He wipes his jaw and mouth with one swipe of a large hand as he moves up the bed. “With your sweet cum.”

Heat flushes over my chest and neck as he slides his fingers out of me and the wet sound echoes around the room.

“I’ve thought about this every day since you left, Jessie. About seeing your body. Touching it. Tasting it,” he says as he stares down at me as his face glistens with my arousal. His hands slide over my breasts and he squeezes them hard, making me moan again. “It feels even better than I remember.”

“Shane!” I pant as he keeps kneading my soft flesh in his hands and tugging my nipples.

“Do you have any idea how cruel it is to have a taste of this body, and then have it taken away, never knowing if you will ever get it again?” he growls as he stares down at me, his eyes roaming over my body like a hungry lion about to feast on his kill.

“Yes,” I pant. “Because I had a taste of yours too.”

He leans down, resting his weight on his forearms as he nestles between my thighs and nudges his cock at my dripping wet entrance. “Were you a good girl while you were away in Arizona, Hacker?” he arches an eyebrow at me.

Arizona? What the hell? That seems so far away now. “Of course I was,” I blink at him.

“Good. Because if I ever find out anyone else has touched you, I will skin him alive.”

Fuck! His possessiveness is so hot! “Have you been good too?” I groan.

He cocks his head to the side as though he’s thinking about his answer.

“Shane?”

He grins at me and then with a roll of his hips, he thrusts his cock inside me, so hard that I shift a few inches up the bed. “There’s been no one but you, Hacker,” he growls, taking my wrists and pinning them down as he nails me to the bed. “Because you and this cunt have ruined me.”

I suck in a sharp breath as he slams into me. “Damn! You feel so good. I’ve missed your cock.”

He buries his head against my neck and slows his pace. “Just my cock?”

“Hmm, and your mouth. And maybe your fingers too. But that’s all,” I breathe as I wrap my legs around his waist, drawing him closer and deeper.

He sucks on that sweet spot on my neck that he knows drives me crazy and slams into me again. “You sure?” he growls.

I experience another sudden rush of wet heat and tears prick my eyes as another orgasm threatens to overwhelm me. “You know I’ve missed everything, Shane. I love you so much.”

“Fuck, Jessie,” he hisses as he drives harder and I wonder if he heard what I just said. “I can’t get far enough inside of you, sweetheart. Your pussy was made for me.”

I rake my nails down his back as my entire body screams for release. “Please, Shane,” I beg him even though I don’t know what I’m begging for. I have never been fucked harder in my life. Our breathing comes hard and fast. Sweat slicks our bodies as we grasp at each other, desperate to sate the insatiable craving. Stars flicker behind my eyelids as he brings me close to the edge of complete oblivion. And just when I am about to tip over, he lifts his head from my neck, pinning my hands beside my head and lacing his fingers through mine. He

presses his forehead against mine as he slows his pace, making me groan loudly in frustration.

“Not yet, Jessie,” he growls.

“You are a devil,” I pant as I gasp for breath. I squeeze my legs tighter around his waist as my walls squeeze his cock, but he continues his delicious torment, fucking me so slowly but somehow reaching even deeper than before, until every cell in my body trembles with the need for some release.

“You have fucking destroyed me, Hacker,” he groans and his hips drive deeper inside me, hitting that perfect sweet spot at the exact angle with the perfect amount of pressure and my climax tears through my body like black powder. He seals his mouth over mine, swallowing every moan and whimper as I ride the waves of euphoria. When I feel like I might pass out from lack of oxygen, he throws his head back and shouts my name as he finds his own release and then he kisses me again as we take everything from each other, kissing and grinding our bodies until there is nothing left to give.

He pulls back, and we stare at each other, panting for breath. “I think I just blacked out,” I breathe.

“You *only* blacked out? I think my soul just left my body,” he pants, making me laugh.

He pulls out of me and rolls onto his back, pulling me with him so that I am lying on his chest with his arms wrapped around me. He runs his fingers gently up and down my back, and his heartbeat thrums against my ear. I sigh contentedly as I snuggle closer to him.

“Did you mean what you said before, Jessie?” he asks softly.

I tilt my head to look at him. “That I love you?” I whisper. I wasn’t sure if he’d heard me over the sound of his growling.

“Yes.”

I shift my body slightly, so I can look directly into his eyes. “Of course I meant it. I never stopped, Shane.”

His eyes narrow as they search my face. He opens his mouth to speak but then he closes it again.

“It’s okay,” I say as I brush his hair from his face. “You don’t have to say it back.” I am so desperate to hear the words, but even if he is not ready to say them, I feel it anyway.

“Those three words,” he breathes, and my racing heart stops beating.

Please don’t fuck this up after what we just did, Shane!

He brushes his fingertips over my cheeks. “They don’t feel like enough. For this. For you.”

“But they are.”

“Then I love you, Jessie Ryan,” he whispers.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-FOUR

LIAM

As I reach for the jar of peanut butter on the top shelf, the pain shoots through my neck and shoulders. “Fuck,” I hiss as I pull my hand back and rub the back of my neck. “Why the fuck do we put this shit up so high?” I snap.

“Erm. Because we’re all like six foot two. Except Jessie, obviously, and I like to watch her stretching for things,” Mikey chuckles as he sits at the kitchen island behind me. “And I told you I would make your sandwich, bro.”

“I can make it myself,” I snap at him, frustrated by the pain and the limits it places on my body. I wince as I roll my shoulder. I probably shouldn’t have pushed myself so much in the gym earlier, but as soon as the doctor approved me for some light cardio, I couldn’t wait to get back in there. Like I had some point to prove, if only to myself. I shake my head in annoyance. I only did a one-mile walk at the pace of a fucking limp tortoise.

“Suit yourself,” Mikey snaps.

“Are you boys fighting again?” Shane says from behind us and I spin around as fast as my body allows to see my oldest brother walking into the kitchen with the biggest smile I have ever seen on his face. We all figured he was home when we saw his bags in the hallway, and when we couldn’t find Jessie, well it wasn’t hard to figure out where the two of them were. I for one, am relieved that they have sorted their shit out, and from the expression on his face, they have been doing it all afternoon.

“Shane!” I say with a grin as Mikey jumps up from his stool and wraps him in a giant bear hug.

“Okay. I was only gone a week,” Shane laughs but he hugs Mikey back just as fiercely. We have all been through so much these past few months, it has seemed like a lifetime. Now that we are all back under the same roof, and things are good with him and Jessie, maybe things can start getting back to some sort of normal around here.

When Mikey finally lets Shane go, our oldest brother walks over to me. “You’re looking great, kid,” he says with a twinkle in his eye.

“Feeling great,” I nod.

“You weren’t saying that when you couldn’t reach the peanut butter ten seconds ago,” Mikey laughs.

“Asshole!”

Shane laughs and then he wraps his arms around me too, making sure not to squeeze me too hard. “It’s good to have you back, bro,” I say in his ear.

“It’s good to be back,” he replies as he takes a step back. “You making PB and jelly sandwiches?”

“No. Mikey is,” I wink at my twin who rolls his eyes and walks over to us.

“Out of my way then,” he says, and I shuffle over to the kitchen island.

“So, where is Jessie, Shane?” Mikey asks as Shane takes a stool beside me.

“Power napping,” he replies.

Mikey spins around and grins widely at him. “Fuck! You wore her out already?”

“Don’t be crass, Michael.” He flashes an eyebrow before smiling. “But yeah, I kinda did. So you’d better make her a sandwich too, and I’ll take it in to her. You know how cranky she gets when she’s hungry.”

Mikey laughs out loud before he turns back around to continue making sandwiches.

“You two good now, then?” I ask.

Shane turns to me and nods. “Yeah. We’re good, kid.”

“Good.” I smile at him because him and Jessie being good means we’re all good.

“You don’t mind if I steal her for the night, do you?” he says this louder so Mikey can hear him too.

“No. Not at all,” I reply.

“Your need is greater than mine, bro,” Mikey adds.

“Good. Where is Conor?” Shane asks.

“He’s downstairs meeting with some new suppliers. But he saw you were back and assumed you were going to be otherwise engaged for most of the afternoon. He said he’ll catch up with you later.”

“Oh,” he frowns.

“I’m pretty sure he won’t mind you stealing Jessie away, either. We’re all glad you two are sorting your shit out.”

“You’ve all been talking about us then?” Shane arches an eyebrow at me.

Mikey walks over to us, carrying a plate with a sandwich on it. He hands it to me with a grin before he answers Shane’s question. “Yep. When we saw your bags in the hall and couldn’t find either of you, we figured you were fucking each other senseless.”

Shane gives me a feather light slap on the back of my head.

“Oi! I never said anything.”

“Yeah, but I can’t reach him and don’t you two feel each other’s pain or something?” he grins.

“Are you forgetting I almost died a week ago,” I say, rubbing the spot dramatically.

Mikey rolls his eyes. “How much longer are you going to dine out on this almost dying thing? It’s a good thing you’re back, Shane, because Liam has been doing some major slacking off. Lying around all day, eating Cheetos and watching Netflix.”

Shane shakes his head in mock disgust. “Disgraceful,” he says as he takes one half of my sandwich from my plate and takes a huge bite.

“Actually,” I say with a dramatic sigh. “I’m feeling kind of dizzy after that nasty blow to the head. I think I might need Jessie to look after me tonight, after all.”

Shane turns and narrows his eyes at me while Mikey howls laughing in the background. “You wouldn’t?”

“You’ve just assaulted me and stole my fucking sandwich. Watch me, bro. All I’d have to do is tell her I’m not feeling too good and she’ll be in my bed all night long.” I wink at him.

“If you weren’t still recovering from your near death experience, I would kick your ass right now.” Shane scowls before he shoves the rest of my sandwich into his mouth.

“Jessie!” I croak, and Shane glares at me.

“What?” she says as she strolls into the kitchen, taking us all by surprise. She walks straight over to me and drapes an arm around my shoulders, and I can’t help but grin at Shane. Before she walked in here, looking good enough to eat in just one of his t-shirts and probably fuck all else, me talking about making her spend the night with me was just a joke, but now he’s not sure if all bets are off. Because every single man in this kitchen would fuck her where she stands given half the chance.

She traces a fingertip over the fading bruise on my cheek. “Are you okay?”

I wrap an arm around her waist and pull her close to me and I can sense the frustration coming from my older brother in waves now. “I’m fine, baby. I was just playing with Shane,” I say as I brush her hair back from her face before I look past her and wink at him.

“Don’t upset him. You know how he gets,” she whispers, but clearly loud enough for him to hear.

Shane stands up and pushes his stool back. Standing behind her, he wraps her hair around his fist and tilts her head slightly. “I’m going to make you pay for that later, sweetheart,” he growls in her ear and she shivers against me making my cock twitch in my shorts.

As Shane moves closer to her, he presses her body further into mine. “Jessie,” I groan as my cock stiffens. “If you don’t stop pressing up against me like that, I’m going to have to make you do something about this situation you’re causing here.” I glance down at my groin.

She opens her mouth in surprise, but she knows exactly what she does to all of us with her hot little body. “I only just walked in here. I am not responsible for that,” she says as she looks down too.

Shane peers over her shoulder, glancing down at the outline of my hard cock in my shorts, still with his hand fisted in her hair. “Well, I’m certainly not responsible for it, sweetheart,” he laughs softly before he releases her hair and checks his watch. “I’m going downstairs to check in with Conor.” Then he places his hand under Jessie’s chin, turning her face slightly until she’s looking directly at him. “I’ll be back up here in one hour. I want you in my bed. Naked,” he orders and then he glances back at my cock and rolls his eyes. “And showered,” he adds before he kisses her softly.

Shane takes the other half of my sandwich and winks at me. “Thanks for the food, boys,” he says before he walks out of the room, leaving Jessie alone with us — for one whole hour.

I pull her between my thighs and wrap my other arm around her too. “So?” I arch one eyebrow at her.

“So, what?” She bites her lip, and I want to bite it too.

“You know what, baby.”

“You’re supposed to be taking it easy, Liam,” she breathes. “You already did too much in the gym this morning.”

“I will take it easy, baby. I’ll fuck you real slow,” I say as I drop my head and trail kisses along her collarbone and onto her neck because it drives her crazy.

“Liam,” she pants, and it has been way too long since I heard her say my name like that. I stand up and lift her onto the counter, ignoring the searing pain that shoots through my arms and torso when I do. She places her hands on my shoulders and looks at me with those beautiful blue eyes as I slip my hands beneath her t-shirt until I reach her panties. “I’m surprised you’re wearing these,” I say softly as I pull them down over her hips.

She wiggles her ass to help me get them off easier and shakes her head. “I always wear panties around the house.”

“Oh, so it’s just when you’re lying in bed watching movies with me that you don’t, then? Don’t think I haven’t noticed you teasing me this past week, baby.”

“That was one time because I’d just got out of the shower,” she says as her cheeks flush pink. “I have not been teasing you.”

“Hmm?” I shake my head. “What do you think, Mikey? Is Jessie a tease?”

Mikey walks around the kitchen island to where we are with his plate and sandwich in his hand, and takes a seat. “You’re both teasing me right now,” he says with a flash of his eyebrows. “Because you know I’ve gotta get to work soon. So, hurry up and fuck her, bro, so I can at least watch the whole show.”

Jessie’s cheeks turn an even deeper shade of pink, which only makes me laugh because me and my twin have fucked her together, and watched her being fucked more times than I can count, but I love that it still makes her blush.

“And take off her top. Amateur,” he shakes his head and takes a bite of his sandwich.

I wink at Jessie as I reach for her t-shirt and she lifts her arms obligingly, allowing me to pull it off and over her head before I throw it at my annoying brother. Once she’s naked, I

wrap my arms around her waist and pull her toward me. “How long has it been since I fucked you?” I whisper in her ear.

“I don’t know. A little over a week?” she offers.

“Almost two weeks, Jessie. So this is way overdue,” I groan as I line my cock up at her wet entrance and she moans softly. Her body is flush against mine and her nipples are hard against my chest as I run my hands over her beautiful soft skin. I am so hard for her; I’m not going to last much longer.

“Liam,” she groans as she rocks her hips against me.

“You want fucking, baby?”

“Yes,” she gasps as I thrust my hips forward and drive my cock into her tight, wet pussy and my balls immediately draw up into my stomach and I have to grind my teeth together and think of anything but her to hold off from blowing my load in her right now. Her walls squeeze me tight and I moan into her neck before I drop my head lower, sucking one of her pebbled nipples into my mouth as I slide one hand from her back and down to her clit and rub — slowly but with plenty of pressure because that is the quickest way to get her off. If I’m coming fast, then so is she. I keep sucking on her nipples, holding her tight to me as I rail into her. I tried to go slow but I can’t help it. I can’t get deep enough inside her.

“Oh! Liam!” she groans as she rakes her nails down my back, somehow managing to avoid my stitches because she knows where all of my wounds are. She has taken care of me so well this past week. I don’t know what I’d have done without her.

“I’ve missed this sweet pussy, baby,” I mumble against her skin.

“I’ve missed you too. You feel so good,” she pants as her walls tighten around me and I feel her on the edge and thank the heavens because I am about to come and I can’t stop myself. I empty myself inside her while she teeters on the precipice of her own release. I suck and rub and fuck her harder until she moans my name loudly, her legs trembling as she comes for me.

I press my forehead against hers. “That was incredible, baby,” I pant, even though every single part of my body is aching and sore. But it was so fucking worth it.

“It was,” she smiles at me and I kiss her softly and then have to force myself to pull my dick out of her because as much as I enjoy pushing Shane’s buttons, I wouldn’t deprive him of a night with our girl after everything he’s been doing for us these past few weeks.

“That was quite the show,” Mikey nods his approval as I help Jessie down from the counter. He takes the last bite of his sandwich and holds out her t-shirt to her.

“Thank you,” she whispers.

“My pleasure, Red. Now come here.”

She pulls on her top while I pull up my shorts and she takes the few steps toward him before he pulls her into his arms and kisses her softly. I watch as he slips his tongue inside her mouth and then he just kisses her with his arms wrapped around her waist. When they finally come up for air, he stares at her. “I love you so fucking much. You know that, right?”

“Yes,” she breathes. “I love you too.”

His smile takes over his whole face and I realize I am witnessing my idiot twin completely and utterly in love for the first time in his life. I mean, I already knew he loved her, but fuck, he *really* loves her. The moment is broken when he catches me staring at the two of them and rolls his eyes before slapping her on the ass and making her squeal. “You’d better go take a shower before Shane comes back.”

She nods. “Yeah. I will.”

“There’s a sandwich on the counter for you.”

“Thank you.”

“And don’t forget, you and me have got a date in the gym tomorrow morning. I’m gonna have you bench pressing your personal best before the week is out.”

“I won’t forget,” she smiles at him.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-FIVE

JESSIE

After I've showered and slathered myself in cocoa and vanilla body butter, I lie in Shane's bed waiting for him. The cotton sheets are soft and cool against my hot skin and I stretch like a cat, feeling so content that I could purr like one right now too. Shane is a complicated, moody asshole, but he is my asshole, and it seems like we are finally back on track. I glance at the clock and notice it's been over an hour since he left the kitchen to see Conor. Is this some sort of test from him? Is he trying to see how long I'm going to lie here waiting for him? I turn on my side and reach for my phone, just as he walks through the door.

"Hey," I smile at him.

His eyes are dark as he glares at me and I wonder what I've done to make him mad now when I haven't even seen him since the kitchen.

"Are you naked under there, Hacker?" he growls, and I realize he's not mad at all. Just horny.

"Of course," I whisper. "And freshly showered. Just like you told me."

He arches one eyebrow at me. "It's not like you to do as you're told so easily, though."

"Were you hoping I'd disobey you?" I purr as the wet heat sears between my thighs.

"No," he shakes his head as he peels his t-shirt over his head. "I don't need a reason to spank your ass, Jessie."

“Good,” I whisper as he stalks toward the bed. “Was Conor okay?”

“Yes. Just busy. I didn’t get much chance to chat with him. I’ll catch up with him tomorrow.”

“Oh?” I bite my lip. So where the hell has he been?

“What?” he frowns at me.

“You were gone for a while, is all. Longer than an hour.”

He crawls onto the bed, holding himself over me. “Erin called. I had to discuss some urgent business with her.”

Her name is a like a dagger to my heart. I know that I shouldn’t let her get to me, but she is always there in the background. Making me feel like I don’t belong with him.

“Jessie!” He shoots me a look that makes goosebumps prickle along my forearms.

“What?” I frown. “She was with you on your trip too, wasn’t she? I thought you two would have sorted all of your business out then.”

He closes his eyes and I see him take a deep breath, as though he’s trying to get his temper under control. “She came to Chicago with me. For one night. That was it.”

“Did she share your hotel room?” I ask, even though I get that I’m being petty and childish, because he wouldn’t be here with me now if he was screwing Erin.

“Don’t!” he says with a sigh.

“That’s not an answer, Shane.”

“That’s because it’s a stupid fucking question, Jessie.”

Damn! He was right earlier. We do screw everything up when we talk.

“It’s not stupid to me,” I whisper, and his face softens slightly.

“Of course she didn’t share my room. Erin is a good lawyer, Jessie. She has worked for me and my family for years. She’s going to be in my life, but there will never be

anything between us like that. I need you to find a way to be okay with that, because I can't keep having these conversations with you."

"I am okay with it. I will be. It's just that she's so damn beautiful and elegant — like this graceful swan, while I'm a..." I trail off, unsure of what I am compared to her.

"You're a what?" he arches one eyebrow at me.

"A penguin!" I offer.

Shane presses his lips together as he tries to stop himself from laughing, but it has certainly diffused the tension between us. "What kind of penguin?" he eventually asks with a frown.

"I don't know. One of those little dumpy ones you see in the zoo."

"I happen to think they're adorable," he laughs openly now.

"It's not funny, Shane," I make a feeble protest. "I'm trying to explain how she makes me feel."

He sucks the air through his teeth as he stares down at me. "I have touched, kissed and tasted every part of your body, Jessie. I can hardly keep my hands off you. You've got my cock weeping to get inside you here, sweetheart. Whether you think of yourself as a swan, a penguin or a fucking pigeon, do you honestly believe that I don't worship every single inch of you? I want you so fucking much." He growls out the last words, and I feel them deep in my core.

"I know," I whisper as his rock hard cock twitches against my abdomen through the thin sheet as though to confirm what he's just said.

"So, can we make sure Erin never comes between us again?"

"I just don't understand how you can feel nothing for her," I admit.

"Why?" he frowns.

“Because you were in love with her once?”

“Yes. So?”

“I’ve never been in love before now, but I don’t understand how once you’ve loved someone, you won’t always love them on some level. I can’t imagine ever not loving you. Even when I was desperate to hate you, I couldn’t.”

He brushes my hair from my face. “I guess some people’s stories are only written in the sand. And some are written in the stars.”

Before I can ask where our story is written, he seals his mouth over mine and slides his tongue between my lips. Our mouths mesh together as he swirls his tongue against mine, and the wet heat rushes between my thighs. My hands fist in his hair as he holds my face still while he claims my mouth. I remember how long it took him to first kiss me on the lips and how much I have missed the taste of him. Running my hands down his muscular back and beneath the band of his sweatpants, I slide them over his perfectly toned ass. I groan in frustration as he reaches back and moves them, pinning them either side of my head instead. I spread my legs further apart, so he slips between my thighs and I groan into his mouth as his rock hard cock presses against my pussy. I grind myself on him, desperate to feel him inside me, but he just keeps kissing me until I’m aching for him.

I wrench my lips away from his. “Shane! Why are you punishing me?” I groan.

He pulls his head back and stares down at me. “Kissing me is a punishment?”

“Not at all! But denying me the rest of you is.”

He smiles before brushing his nose along my throat and my jawline. “Maybe I’m punishing myself, Hacker?”

“If you are, then please don’t. I want all of you, Shane.”

“Even the dark parts?” he asks softly.

“Especially those. I want every bit of you. The light and the shade.”

I hear the groan rumbling through his chest and throat before he pushes himself up onto his knees and pulls his sweatpants down until his beautiful cock springs free. Then he pulls the covers off of me, making me shiver with excitement and anticipation. I help him by wriggling my legs out and wrapping them around his waist.

‘I could fuck you like this forever, sweetheart,’ he whispers as he drives his cock into me and I moan loudly, hoping that he’ll do just that.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-SIX

SHANE

She is gone when I wake up. I slept much later than usual, but it still hurt like hell when I realize she isn't there. Pulling on my sweatpants, I walk down the hallway to the kitchen. My pulse quickens when I see her standing there, leaning against the kitchen island in her yoga pants and sports bra, sipping a cup of coffee.

She looks up and smiles at me and my cock twitches to attention.

"Good morning," she says sweetly.

"Morning, Hacker." I walk over to her and take the coffee mug from her hands, taking a gulp before I place it on the counter behind her. "Why didn't you wake me?" I arch an eyebrow at her.

"You looked so peaceful. Snoring and drooling onto your pillow." She flashes me a wicked grin. "I didn't want to disturb you."

Fuck! I have missed her smart mouth. "I do not snore. Or drool," I growl as I slide my hands around her waist.

She tilts her head. "Well, I guess you'll never know. But you did look peaceful. And I promised Mikey I'd meet him in the gym this morning before he had to go upstate today. He wanted to put me through my paces. Hence, me being all sweaty and disgusting."

"Mikey put you through your paces, huh?" I drop my head to her neck and trail kisses along her throat, making her groan

softly. Her skin is salty and sweet and I want to lick every inch of her.

“Not those sort of paces, you deviant,” she giggles.

Lifting my head up, I stare into her bright blue eyes, and they sparkle with mischief. She is a world away from the woman who was last in this house two months earlier and I couldn't be happier about that fact. Maybe her time alone in Arizona was exactly what she needed? “I'm a deviant?” I narrow my eyes at her.

“Yes,” she purrs.

“Hmm,” I slide my hands into the waistband of her yoga pants and my cock throbs in appreciation as I find she's not wearing panties. Her pants glide easily over her ass and down over her thighs as I work my hands inside them.

“Shane, what are you doing?” She stares into my eyes.

“Taking off your pants.”

“Why?” she breathes as I slide them further down her legs.

“So I can fuck you.”

“What? Here in the kitchen?”

“Well, since you left me without waking me this morning without even a kiss, what choice do I have but to take you wherever I can get you?” I growl as I lift her up onto the counter and continue peeling her pants down her legs until they are completely off. My hands travel up to her sports bra and she lifts her arms in compliance as I pull it off over her head and toss it onto the floor.

“For the record, I did kiss you. But you were out of it. And, we cannot have sex on the counter where everyone is about to come eat their breakfast.”

“Why not?” I grin as I wrap my arms around her naked body and kiss her neck.

I love the way she tilts her head back to give me easier access whenever I kiss a certain spot. “Because we'll be in

their way, and it's unhygienic," she says in a feeble protest as her hands run over my back and she pulls me closer. She is so soft and warm and I contemplate carrying her back to bed and staying there for the rest of the day — but I have work to do now that I'm back.

"But, you are my breakfast, Hacker. And everyone in this house has eaten your cunt and your ass, and they will have absolutely no problem with you dripping your cum on here."

"Shane," she hisses as her neck flushes with heat, making me chuckle.

"Jessie," I reply as I pull my sweatpants down enough to allow my cock to spring free. I run one of my hands down to her cunt and stifle a groan as I feel her slick heat. I could bury myself in her forever and it still wouldn't be enough. "I went without being inside you for almost three months, sweetheart. You don't get to leave me in bed all alone unless I say you can. And later, I'm going to spank that beautiful ass of yours for doing it today."

She groans as I push two fingers inside her and her walls clench around me. Fuck! I almost forgot how much my girl loves a spanking.

"Shane!" she groans again and the sound of my name on her lips sends all the blood rushing straight to my groin. I pull my fingers out of her and drive my cock into her instead.

She wraps her legs around my waist and clings to me as I fuck her. I'm so lost in her, I don't notice Conor walk into the room. But she does and her body tenses.

"I see you two have made up?" he says as he sits a few feet away from us at the kitchen island and pours a bowl of muesli before topping it with some milk from the counter.

"Yeah," I grunt.

"Shane!" Jessie hisses in my ear.

"What? Conor has seen me fucking you before."

"I know," she breathes, but she looks at him. He's sitting there with his head bent low, scrolling through his phone. "He

looks pissed,” she whispers.

“He’s not pissed. He’s tired,” I growl as I press her closer to me and bite down on her neck until she moans, but she’s still distracted by him. I’d ask him to join us, but he looks exhausted and he’s hardly stopped working since he got back from Arizona almost two weeks ago.

I press my lips against her ear. “If you don’t stop looking at him instead of me, I will spread you open on this counter and eat your cunt while he eats his fucking cereal.”

Conor laughs softly as he keeps his head bent low, and she turns back to me. “Sorry,” she breathes.

“I’m going to leave you two alone and take my breakfast to go,” Conor says as he stands up and walks out of the room. Once he’s gone, she relaxes into my arms again and I fuck her until she shouts my name. When I find my own release, I stand there with her, my dick still inside her and my arms wrapped around her waist as she breathes against my neck.

“What was that about, Hacker?”

“What?” She looks up at me and stares at me with her bright blue eyes.

“You were acting weird when Conor came in.”

“Oh,” she blushes. “It’s just I’ve hardly seen him since we got back from Arizona. Between him working so much and me looking after Liam, I haven’t spent much time with him.”

“We’ve all been busy and distracted.”

“I know. It just seemed like he was pissed then, that’s all.” She bites her lip. “We were so close on the drive back to New York, and now it seems like there’s a little distance between us.”

“He was just tired. He’s been working non-stop since he got back.”

She nods and chews on her lip and looks so damn beautiful it makes me want to take her to my bed and never let her leave. “Jessie?” I breathe. I can’t believe I’m going to ask her this question, but I have to know the answer.

“Yeah?”

“Would you have come back from Arizona if it was me who came for you instead of Conor?”

She doesn't hesitate for even a second. “Yes.”

The rush of love I feel for her almost knocks me off my feet. I narrow my eyes at her. “You sure?”

She places her hands on my face. “One hundred percent. I mean, I would have made you work a little harder for it,” she grins at me. “But I would go anywhere with you, Shane Ryan. You think I don't have a connection with you like I do Conor and the twins, but you're wrong. You're a hard person to get close to, but you push me in ways no one else can.”

“Just don't let me push you too far, Hacker, because I hated every second you were away from us.”

“I won't,” she smiles. “You are never getting rid of me again. I swear on my life.”

I swallow hard as I think about the apology I owe her. “I need to talk to you about what happened the last time you were here. In the basement.”

“When you hate-fucked me?” She arches an eyebrow at me.

I wrap my arms tighter around her. “I'd call it angry fucking, but yeah. And also for those things I said.”

“When you called me a whore?” She bites her lip seductively while I'm filled with shame and remorse. I had no right to call her that, no matter what I thought she'd done.

“Yes,” I nod. “You know I was just angry, and I don't really think that, right?”

“Hmm.” She presses her lips together and tilts her head to one side as though she's considering whether to accept my apology, even though I know she forgave me for it a long time ago. But it still needed to be said.

“And for what happened after that too. I'm so fucking sorry, sweetheart.”

She presses a soft kiss against my throat. “Well, I accept your apology for calling me a whore, and for leaving me alone in that horrible cell, because that was an asshole move. But the angry fucking was super hot.”

“Hmm. It definitely was,” I chuckle against her skin.

“In fact, it was so hot, that I intend to purposely make you pissed at me on a regular basis.”

“That could be a very dangerous move, Hacker.” I scrape my teeth along her jawline.

“I hope so,” she purrs. We stand in silence for a few seconds before she speaks again. “I’m sorry too, Shane. I know how much it took for you to let me in. I know I let you down. But I never lied. Everything I felt. Everything I told you was real.”

“I know, Jessie,” I say, kissing her on the forehead. “You want to go clean up and check on him?”

“Would you mind?”

I pull my cock out of her and a rush of our cum dribbles onto the counter. Fuck! This girl is going to end me. “No. I’ve got some work to do anyway. I’m going to clean up your mess,” I look down between her thighs. “Then I’ll grab some breakfast and a shower. I’ll be in my office all day so come find me when you’re done.”

“I think you’ll find you are the one responsible for the mess.” She flashes an eyebrow as I help her down from the counter and she picks up her clothes. “But thank you for taking care of it.” She pushes up onto her tiptoes and wraps her arms around my neck before she presses her lips softly against mine. “I love you,” she murmurs against me and I can’t help but smile.

I smack her on the ass. “You too. Now go see Conor before he goes to sleep.”

She walks out of the kitchen, swaying her hips and that perfect peach of an ass as she clutches her clothes in her hands. “Put your clothes on after you clean up, Hacker. He needs some sleep!” I shout after her.

“Will do, Sir,” she shouts back and my cock twitches to life.

Sir? Fuck me! I could get used to that.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-SEVEN

JESSIE

I take a super quick shower and throw some underwear and one of Shane's t-shirts on before I walk along the hallway to Conor's bedroom. I don't knock in case he's already fallen asleep and I don't want to wake him if he has. Pushing open the door, I step inside to find him lying in bed, but he's still awake.

"Jessie?" He blinks at me as I walk closer to him.

"Hey." I chew on my lip. Not even sure what I want to say.

"I'm really fucking tired, Angel. Can this wait until later?"

I swallow hard and maybe it's the expression on my face, but he holds out his hand. "Come here," he says, and I walk over to the bed and sit beside him.

"I know you're tired. I just haven't seen you for a few days and I wanted to make sure we were okay?"

He reaches up and brushes my hair back from my face. "Of course we are. Why wouldn't we be?"

"I don't know. We shared a lot of stuff while we were on the road. I've never felt that close to anyone before. But since we got back..." I shrug. "I kind of feel like there's some distance between us. But am I just imagining it?"

He frowns at me, his beautiful brown eyes as dark as coal. "Take off the clothes, Angel, and get in here."

"What? No. You're tired. I just-"

“Take it all off, Jessie. Now!” he commands.

I do as he tells me, peeling off the clothes that I’ve only just put on, and I climb into bed beside him. He holds out an arm and I lie on his chest before he wraps his huge biceps around me. “Do you think I’m pissed because I walked in on you and Shane fucking?”

“It kind of seemed like you were.”

“I love watching you being fucked by my brothers. But I’m fucking exhausted, Angel. I’ve been working sixteen hour days to catch up in the club. I also got you all to myself for five days, and I know how much Shane and the twins have missed you. I’m sorry if I’ve neglected you, but there is no distance between us, Angel. None at all.” He plants a kiss on the top of my head. “But I do need some fucking sleep. So now that you’re here, you’re going to have to lie here with me until I doze off, because I fucking love falling asleep with your hot, naked body on me,” he groans as he closes his eyes.

I smile as I press my cheek against his chest and listen to the soothing rhythm of his soft breathing as he drifts off to sleep.

CHAPTER

TWENTY-EIGHT

JESSIE

As soon as Conor is sleeping soundly, I untangle myself from his warm body and slide out of bed. Grabbing my underwear and Shane's t-shirt from the floor, I get dressed quietly, careful not to disturb him. I turn and look at him before I slip out of the door. He looks so peaceful and content, and I'm overwhelmed by a rush of pure love for him.

I close his door softly behind me and make my way down the hall to Shane's office and find him as I always used to in here. Head bent low over his computer and a slight frown on his handsome face.

"Has anyone ever told you, you work too hard?" I say as I walk into the room and sit opposite him.

He looks up with a devilish grin on his face that makes my insides melt like chocolate. "How else am I supposed to distract myself, Hacker? If I didn't have my work to keep me busy, you would never leave my bed."

I smile at the thought of being a permanent resident of his bed. Shane Ryan and his brothers make me constantly horny. I shake my head. I am not here for that. Not right now, anyway. "I thought that maybe now Liam's no longer on bed rest, I could..." I chew on my lip because Shane Ryan makes me nervous as hell, but for all the right reasons.

He closes his laptop and leans forward in his seat, narrowing his eyes at me. "Thought you could what?" he asks in that low gravelly voice that vibrates through my bones.

“Maybe I could pull my weight a little more around here. Help you out with those contracts you’re working on. Or anything really? I’d like to get more involved in the business, if that’s okay?” I whisper.

He sucks in a breath and sits back in his chair. “You want to be more involved in the family business?” He arches an eyebrow at me.

“Yes.”

“Why?” He frowns and suddenly I get the sense that this is some sort of test.

“Well, it kind of makes sense, seeing as we’re...” I swallow hard.

He reaches across his desk and takes hold of my hand, brushing his fingertips across my palm and sending skitters of electricity shooting up my forearm. “We’re your family too?” he finishes my sentence for me.

I lift my gaze to meet his, for a second worrying that I have made an assumption that I shouldn’t have and overstepped. But his eyes are burning into mine, full of emotion and longing, and I realize he needs assurance about what we are, just as much as I do. “Yes,” I whisper.

I’m rewarded with one of his genuine, killer smiles before he lifts my fingers to his lips and kisses the tips softly. It’s such a tender act from him that I am completely blindsided. I rarely see this side of him, and I realize how privileged I am to be allowed to, when he is vulnerable and laid bare for me. The electricity in the room is palpable now. My breath catches in my throat as he continues pressing soft kisses against my fingers that send jolts of warmth and pleasure coursing through my body. The familiar wet heat is beginning to build in my core and I shift in my seat, squeezing my thighs together to quell the growing need. He reads me so well, as though he has known me forever. Gently placing my hand back on his desk, he leans back in his chair. “We’d better get to work, Hacker. Because if you keep looking at me like that, we won’t get anything done.”

“Why not?” I purr as I lean forward, closing the distance between us again, even though I know exactly what he means because whenever we are in a room together, the air is supercharged with sexual electricity.

He leans back in too, until he is so close that I can smell his incredible scent — cologne, sex and masculinity. “Because I will have you naked and bent over my desk in about ten seconds flat. So, stop with the flirting. Pull your chair around and fire up the desktop. We’ve got lots of business to catch up on.”

The wicked twinkle in his eyes makes me laugh softly. “You’re so bossy,” I say, pushing myself up from the chair and wheeling it around to his side of the desk. I place it next to his, so it’s close but not touching and sit back down. Flexing my fingers and my shoulders, I switch on the desktop just as Shane grabs hold of my chair and pulls it toward his, until they are flush together. I smile at the screen as I resist the urge to turn and look at him, but I can see him watching me from the corner of my eye.

“Don’t be distracting me now. I have lots of work to do,” I say as I continue staring at the screen.

He laughs softly. “I’m distracting you, Hacker? You’re the one walking around here in just your underwear and my shirt. How the fuck am I supposed to concentrate?”

“Would you like me to go get changed?” I breathe, still refusing to look him in the eye.

“Fuck, no,” he growls. “Now get to work.”

CHAPTER

TWENTY-NINE

JESSIE

I'm still sitting in Shane's office when Conor saunters into the room with a huge smile on his face. He's been in bed for over ten hours. He's wearing just a pair of shorts and his magnificent torso is on full display as he stretches and yawns. "That was a fucking epic sleep," he groans.

"Glad to see you're back in the land of the living," Shane smiles at him.

Conor nods. "The twins are helping me out tonight, so you two will have the place to yourselves." He walks to the sofa and flops down onto it.

"Liam too?" I ask.

"Yes." Conor rolls his eyes. "He's desperate to feel useful, so I promised him he could do some paperwork in the office for me. I'll keep an eye on him the whole time. Don't worry."

"Now that he's back on his feet, there will be no stopping him, Jessie," Shane says with a smile. "You might need to distract him a little more to keep him up here in the apartment."

"Fuck! I wish the Russians had kidnapped me this time," Conor says and both he and Shane laugh out loud.

"That's not funny!" I reprimand them and try to stop myself from smiling, because it is so good to see them laughing together like this.

"Come here, Angel," Conor says, and I walk over to him before he pulls me down onto the sofa, so I'm sitting with my

legs over his lap. “We’re just kidding. We promise never to let anyone kidnap us. Okay?”

I roll my eyes and shake my head as they continue laughing.

Shane’s cell phone rings and he answers it, leaving Conor and I to talk between ourselves. “I’m sorry if I seemed distant this morning,” he says, brushing the hair back from my face.

“You weren’t. I know you’re busy. I just miss you.”

“I miss you too. I have to work again tonight, but then I’ll take tomorrow off, and you and I can spend the day and night together. How does that sound?”

“That sounds good.” I smile just as Shane ends his phone call and stands up from his chair. He walks toward us and I see him and Conor share a look that I don’t quite understand, but that makes goosebumps prickle all over my body.

Suddenly, Conor turns me in his arms, so I am sitting over his lap, facing forward, with my thighs draped over his and my ass against his groin. “We need to talk about this morning, Angel,” he murmurs in my ear as Shane reaches us.

“What about this morning?” I say as my pulse thrums against the skin on my throat where his lips are resting.

“I can’t have you thinking I’m pissed at you because you’re fucking one of my brothers, can I?” he growls as his hands drop to my hips and he spreads his legs wider so that my thighs are now wide open and my ass drops into the open space.

“No,” I whisper as my stomach contracts in anticipation. It seems like the two of them are playing a game and I’m not sure of the rules. I know they haven’t spoken to each other since this morning because Conor has been asleep all day, and I’ve been working with Shane, but it seems like they both understand exactly what the other one is thinking.

“Whose is this t-shirt, Angel?” Conor asks as his fingers grip the edge of it.

“Shane’s,” I breathe as I look up at him standing in front of the two of us.

“Shall we give it back to him?” Conor chuckles as he peels it off while Shane winks at him.

I lift my arms and allow Conor to pull the shirt off over my head before he tosses it onto the floor. Shane remains silent, but he looks down at me the whole time, his dark green eyes blazing with fire.

“I think we need to remind you how this thing between us works, Angel,” Conor says as he plants soft kisses against my neck while removing my bra.

“What? Why?” I mumble as my breasts fall free and they can both see how hard my nipples are. Shane’s eyes drop to them and he palms his cock through his suit pants. We have been working so hard that we have managed to spend the whole day and early evening together, and for the most part, barely touched. We had an epic make-out session on this sofa after lunch, but we were interrupted by Shane’s cell phone ringing. And apart from our hands accidentally brushing, or his knee grazing mine occasionally, we haven’t touched each other since. Now, I’m hyper aware of the sexual energy vibrating through the room and the heat pools in my core.

“I suspect our time on the road showed you a little more of my possessive side, Angel. And know that I meant it when I said I would burn down the world for you. I would cut off the hands of any man who touches you, or any body part that he touches you with,” Conor says in my ear. “You belong to me. This,” he slides his hand beneath my panties and grabs hold of my pussy, “belongs to me.”

“Conor,” I pant as my eyes are drawn back to Shane, who is glaring at me so hard my skin burns.

“But you belong to my brothers too, Jessie. And I will never be pissed at them for touching you, or at you for wanting them to. It makes me so fucking hard to see you coming for them.”

My heart flutters in my chest at Conor's words and I watch in anticipation as Shane's hands move to his belt and he unbuckles it slowly. The sound of him doing that is all that can be heard in the quiet of his office, and the rush of wet heat surges between my thighs. I don't understand what the hell these two are up to, but I already have an idea it is going to be hot and I can hardly wait.

As though he's reading my thoughts as well as Shane's, Conor tells me what is about to happen. "I'm going to hold you down while Shane fucks you, Angel," he growls as he wraps one of his giant arms around me, pulling me back until I'm lying against his chest and my hips are tilted upwards. "And when he makes you come, I'm going to feel every single tremor and whimper just as much as he does."

"Oh, God," I groan as Shane pulls his cock free and drops to his knees in front of me, hooking his thumbs into the side of my panties and pulling them down over my legs until I am bare and open for him.

Conor spreads his legs further apart so that my thighs open even wider and Shane stares at my pussy. "Fucking beautiful, Hacker," he hisses.

Conor slides his free hand over my stomach and down between my legs, stroking my slick folds and dipping one of his fingers inside me, causing me to whimper. "She is so fucking ready for you, Shane," he laughs softly before sliding his finger out and moving his hand up to my neck, where he wraps it around my throat, tilting my head back slightly and holding me tight.

Shane looks behind me and grins at his younger brother while I feel like I might pass out from how turned on I am. I swear I'm going to burst into flames if this gets any hotter. "She's always ready, aren't you, sweetheart?" he winks at me as he places his warm hands on my hips and lines his cock up at my wet entrance.

"Shane," I pant as I wait for him to give me what my body is craving.

He rubs the pad of his thumb over my clit and I try to raise my hips, but he holds me down with his other hand, pressing down on my abdomen while Conor tightens his grip on me, until both of them are holding me firmly in place. “So impatient, Jessie,” Shane growls. “Shall we show Conor how I make you squirt?”

The heat flushes over my entire body and I have to close my eyes as the growl rumbles through Conor’s chest so fiercely that I experience every tremor. “You’ve made her squirt too?” he groans as his hard cock twitches against my back.

“Plenty,” Shane grins wickedly.

“That’s not fair. You’re not supposed to talk about this kind of stuff with each other,” I whimper in a feeble protest.

“No more talking then,” Shane growls. “Shall I just fuck you?”

“Yes,” I whimper shamelessly.

“I wish you could see how good you look right now. With Conor holding you wide open for me. Your cunt dripping wet and your thighs trembling while you wait for my cock. Tell me what you want, Jessie. I want to hear you say the words.”

My eyes burn into his. I suppose after what happened this morning in the kitchen, this is the perfect way to teach me a lesson. “Fuck me, Shane. Please?” I beg.

He holds onto my hips again as he pushes his cock into me and I moan so loudly I’m sure Mikey and Liam must have heard me at the other end of the apartment. My entire body trembles as he rails into me, while Conor holds me tight. “You think this could ever make me mad, Angel?” he breathes in my ear. “You look fucking incredible being nailed by my brother.”

I tilt my head back so I can look at him, but Shane drives harder into me, making me groan his name. “Look at me, Jessie,” he commands and I drag my eyes back to him as Conor laughs softly beneath me. “When I’m inside you, I want your eyes on me. Is that clear?” he growls as he continues

fucking me so hard that my body presses further and further into Conor's.

"Yes," I breathe.

"Good girl," he says as he bends his head low and sucks one of my hard nipples into his mouth before biting gently and I come with a rush of wet release a few moments before he does. Conor releases his grip on me and as the last of my orgasm rolls through my body, I glance at Shane and experience such a rush of emotion that tears prick at my eyes. Shane Ryan is on his knees before me, completely undone, and Conor is holding onto me like he will never let me go. I can hardly believe that just two weeks ago, I was in Arizona, completely alone and busting my ass in Ray's bar and convincing myself it was what I needed to make me happy. I made myself believe that I didn't need any of this and that I would never feel any of it ever again.

Shane pulls out of me, tucking his cock back into his boxer briefs and zipping up his suit pants before he looks at me again. When he does, I see the concern flash across his face. "You okay?" he asks as he rubs the pad of his thumb over my cheek.

"Better than okay," I nod before drawing in a shaky breath.

"Good," he says with a flash of his eyebrows before leaning in to kiss me softly.

While Shane is kissing me, Conor shifts me slightly on his lap so that he has enough room to take his cock out of his sweatpants before he presses his lips against my ear. "This wasn't part of the plan, and I know you've been fucked non-stop since Shane got back home, but if I don't get inside you now, I think I'll fucking explode. Because you've got me as hard as fucking steel here, Angel. So, slide yourself onto my cock, and I promise I'll take it easy with you."

My pussy is tender and throbbing, but I want him just as much as he wants me. I plant my hands on Shane's shoulders to steady myself, and lift my hips, allowing Conor to guide his cock against my entrance before I sink down onto him.

“Fuck, Angel,” he hisses. “You feel so damn good even when you’re full of Shane’s cum.”

Shane chuckles softly as his hands slide to my hips and he rolls me gently over Conor’s cock as he stares into my eyes. “Show me how you make him come, sweetheart,” he growls before he looks down at my pussy being filled by his brother. Conor pulls me back against his chest, one hand around my throat and one toying with my nipple.

“Fuck, Con. She looks so damn good too,” Shane hisses.

“Such a good girl,” Conor growls in my ear and I whimper.

“She on the edge again already?” Shane asks as he slides his hand up my inner thigh until his fingers find my swollen clit and he begins to rub slowly.

“Shane!” I groan, and Conor tugs hard on my nipple while Shane chuckles.

“You still not learned your lesson, Angel? Who’s inside you right now?” Conor asks, his lips brushing my ear as he squeezes my breast and drives himself harder into me, like I might have forgotten the answer to that question.

“You are,” I pant.

“Exactly. So whose name do you moan?”

“Yours,” I groan loudly as Shane increases the pressure on my clit and my impending orgasm threatens to overwhelm me.

Conor tilts my head back so I’m looking at him and can no longer see Shane. But Conor isn’t looking at me. He’s looking right at his older brother with a wicked glint in his eye and the next thing I know, he has released his grip on me and begins lifting me off his cock.

“Turn around, Angel,” he says softly. “I want to see your face.”

I do as he tells me, shifting myself around so that I’m straddling him and looking into his handsome face. As he places his hands on my hips, he kisses me deeply before pulling me down and impaling me onto his cock and I groan into his mouth.

“Tell me who gets to fuck you whenever they want, Jessie?” he growls as he breaks our kiss.

“You do,” I pant.

“And who else?”

“Shane, Mikey and Liam,” I breathe as his hands slide onto my ass.

“No one else. Ever!” he growls.

“Okay.”

“Damn, you’re so fucking close, Angel,” he hisses in my ear. “I love filling you with my cock. How about you, Shane?”

“My favorite fucking thing in the world,” he replies behind me as his fingers slide down the seam of my ass. “And seeing you fucking our girl makes me desperate to be back inside her.”

His hand disappears, and the sound of his zipper opening again makes me tense. “We have no lube,” I breathe.

“Who needs it?” Conor laughs softly as he slides his cock out of me and a rush of cum flows with it, making my cheeks flush with heat.

Shane pushes a finger inside me, coating it in my juices before replacing it with his cock. He leans over me as Conor wraps my pony tail around his fist, giving the two of them better access to my neck, and growls in my ear. “Plenty of lube right here, sweetheart,” he whispers as he pushes deeper inside me and the waves of pleasure roll through my body. A few seconds later, he pulls out of me again and Conor thrusts himself back inside me until I moan his name.

Shane lines his cock up at the seam of my ass while Conor pulls my thighs wider apart to allow his brother easier access. Shane pushes in slowly and I inch forward instinctively, but Conor holds me in place until his brother is able to press almost all the way inside. “Oh, God,” I moan loudly.

“No, just me, sweetheart,” Shane whispers in my ear as he pushes his hips forward until he is buried inside me.

“Shane! Conor!” I moan at the sensation of being so full of the two of them as they start to fuck me at a delicious pace as one pulls out and the other drives into me.

“Fuck! Take it easy, Angel, or I’m going to come too soon,” Conor pants as my walls squeeze around him while I teeter on the edge of oblivion. I drop my head, pressing my forehead against his chest as I try to deal with the overwhelming sensation of these two incredible men and the things they’re doing to me. “Our girl sure loves being fucked by both of us,” Conor growls. “She is creaming all over my cock.”

“Don’t come yet, Jessie. Not until we say,” Shane whispers in my ear.

I bite the inside of my cheek, trying to stave off the orgasm that is bursting to be released, but Conor cups my chin in his free hand and lifts my head so that I’m forced to look at him. “You like being fucked by both of us at the same time, Angel?” he growls.

“Yes,” I breathe, almost on the verge of tears.

“You want to do this more often?”

“Yes,” I whimper as Shane wraps one arm around my waist, pulling me tighter to him as he fucks me harder and slides his free hand over my hip and between my thighs until he finds my swollen, throbbing clit and begins to rub firmly. While Conor drops his lips to my neck and begins to suck softly as Shane presses soft kisses along my spine.

“Please? I can’t hold on,” I breathe as every single nerve ending in my body sizzles with electricity and euphoria. I think I really am going to pass out when they finally let me come. “This is your show, Con,” Shane says quietly.

“Hmm,” Conor chuckles as he keeps on nuzzling my neck and prolonging my agony. My body starts to buck between them as their hands and mouths explore me. “You can come, Angel,” Conor eventually growls and my climax bursts through me like a river breaking a dam, soaking Conor and the sofa beneath us. As my entire body trembles with my release,

they press me tighter between them and go on fucking me until they each find their own a few moments later.

CHAPTER

THIRTY

JESSIE

I stand at the elevator and wave Conor and the twins goodnight as they head off to work for the evening. Shane walks up behind me and slips his arms around my waist.

“So, what shall we do tonight, Hacker?” he whispers in my ear.

“What do you want to do?” I ask as I turn in his arms.

“You.” He flashes his eyebrows at me.

“You did me about two hours ago. You’ll have to wait until later. Or I’m not going to be able to walk.”

“Later then,” he says with a wink. “I wish I could take you out. As soon as we’re back on track with business and I don’t have to worry about Liam, I’m going to take you out for dinner.”

“Out? Like on a date?” I smile at him.

“Exactly like a date,” he nods as he presses his lips against my neck. “I’ll take you to the fanciest restaurant in New York, and then I’m going to fuck you in the restroom, and then again in the limo on the way home.”

“Is that all you ever think about?”

“When you’re around me, Hacker,” he groans. “You drive me to distraction.”

“How about a swim on the roof?”

He bites on his lip. “You in a bikini...”

“I don’t have a bikini.” I arch an eyebrow at him. “Or a swimsuit.”

“Then unless you just want to go with my plan, where I just fuck you all night, that will have to be a no.”

“A workout?”

“We’ll end up fucking,” he shrugs.

I roll my eyes. “It’s a shame we can’t go out somewhere.”

He sucks on his top lip as though he’s deep in thought. “You still have that sexy little dress you wore to the club that night?”

My insides flutter at the memory of that night when I danced with Conor, and Shane spanked me with his belt, which was as hot as hell, but then he sent me away hot and wet and needy. “Yes, I think so anyway.”

“Go get yourself ready and meet me in the dining room in an hour. Wear the dress.”

I frown at him, wondering what he’s got up his sleeve. Shane Ryan never fails to surprise me. “Okay,” I say as I turn to walk to my room.

“Jessie,” he shouts after me, and I spin around to face him.

“Wear those black heels too.”

I cross my arms over my chest as though I’m annoyed, but I love it when he’s bossy. “The mini dress and black heels? Is that all, Sir?”

“Yes, that’s all. *Nothing* else!” He arches an eyebrow at me before a wicked grin flickers across his lips.

Goosebumps prickle along my flesh and the wet heat flushes between my thighs. He stuffs his hands into his pockets and turns around, making his way toward the kitchen and leaving me to stare after him. A hot, trembling mess.

ONE HOUR LATER, I smooth the black minidress over my thighs as I stand at the doorway to the dining room. As instructed, I’m wearing no underwear and my black six-inch pumps. My pulse thrums against my skin as I wonder what Shane has

planned for the rest of the evening. As I open the door, the delicious aroma of Italian food hits me.

The table is set for two, with a single candle in the middle. Shane is serving up pasta onto plates with his back to me.

“Did you cook?” I ask as I stride into the room.

He turns to me. “No. Cooking isn’t my thing. I ordered in.”

“It smells incredible,” I say, walking over to the table to see the plates of pasta and a selection of fresh breads. “It looks delicious.”

He places the dish onto the table and slips his arm around my waist, skimming his hand over my ass and confirming I’m following his instruction. “You look delicious,” he growls before planting a soft kiss on my neck.

I lean into him as a soft moan escapes my throat, and he smiles against my skin. “Let’s eat, Hacker, before I eat you,” he whispers in my ear. He steps aside and pulls a chair out for me to sit in and then he sits opposite me before pouring us each a glass of champagne that I hadn’t even noticed was there.

“This is all incredible. Thank you,” I smile as I lift my glass to his.

“It’s nothing.”

“Really. You do this for all the girls?” I grin at him. “I never had you down as the romantic type, Shane Ryan.”

“Eat your food, Hacker!” he warns as the hint of a smile plays on his lips.

THE FOOD IS delicious and we sit and chat about all of the mundane things we can think of before we have to confront one of the topics we’ve been avoiding all night, because we’re having such a pleasant evening.

“So, Arizona?” he asks with an arch of one eyebrow.

“Seemed like as good a place as any,” I reply with a shrug.

“I’ve never been.”

“It was nice. We should go sometime. I could take you to Ray’s bar,” I laugh, imagining how out of place Shane Ryan would appear in Ray’s dive bar.

“I don’t think that would be a good idea.” He narrows his eyes at me. “Conor told me Ray was an asshole to you, and I might have to teach him some manners if I ever ran into him.”

“He was an asshole. But he gave me a job with no references or anything.”

Shane rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

“What?” I frown at him.

“I’m pretty sure he took one look at your ass and got all the references he needed, sweetheart,” he laughs.

“Or maybe I just seemed like a nice person and a hard worker?” I offer.

“Well, I know you’re both of those things. But I would bet my life on Ray being more interested in the fact that you don’t need no belt to hold up your jeans,” he flashes his eyebrows at me.

“You’re an asshole!” I grin at him. “Are you saying I have a fat ass?”

“No! Your ass is perfect.”

I try to feign a scowl but I can’t even pretend to be mad at him and I smile instead.

“Conor told me you cured his fear of the dark in Ray’s basement?” He stares at me and the flush creeps over my neck and cheeks.

“He told you about that? I thought you guys didn’t discuss what we do, you know, in private?”

“We don’t,” he shakes his head. “He didn’t tell me how. He just said you ended up locked in a basement. And now he doesn’t sleep with the light on.”

“Well, I’m glad I could be of help.”

“You’re good for him, Hacker,” he says and my heart swells with pride. “You’re good for all of us,” he says in that low growl that turns my insides to molten lava. The sound vibrates through my core and suddenly I’m hyper aware of the fact I’m not wearing any panties. I cross my legs beneath the table, squeezing my thighs together, and he obviously realizes because he smiles wickedly at me.

Shane has had music playing quietly in the background all evening, and Sam Smith’s *Like I Can* comes on. “I love this song,” I say, feeling the need to change the subject. Too much praise makes me uncomfortable.

“You want to dance?”

“Here? With you?”

“Yes.” He pushes his chair back and stands, holding his hand out to me.

I reach out and take it, and his warm fingers curl around mine as he pulls me to my feet. “Volume up!” he commands, and the music gets louder.

Shane slides his hands around my hips, slipping one on to the small of my back and the other to my ass. Wrapping my arms around his neck, I lean my face against him. Damn! He always smells so freaking good.

He is a surprisingly good dancer. He presses me closer to him as our bodies move in time to the music and his cock hardens against my abdomen as we dance. “This dress is incredible on you, Hacker,” he growls as he squeezes my ass in his palm.

“Thank you.”

“Do you remember what happened last time you wore it?” His hand slides lower until he reaches the edge of the fabric before slipping beneath my dress, until his palm is resting on my bare ass cheek.

“Yes,” I breathe, recalling how he spanked me with his belt and then sent me to my room with my pussy dripping wet for him.

He walks us toward the sofa. “And you snuck away this morning without waking me. And I had to wake up without this sexy, warm body in my bed,” he growls.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t realize you’d miss me so much.” I bite my lip.

“Oh, Hacker. What have I told you about lying to me?”

“I’m not lying,” I breathe.

“But how could I not miss this?” he growls, squeezing my ass hard.

“So, are you going to punish me?” I purr as the heat surges between my thighs.

“What do you think, sweetheart?” He turns, sitting on the sofa and pulling me down onto his lap so I’m lying face down with my ass in the air.

“Shane!” I stifle a giggle as he pulls my dress over the top of my thighs and my hips until it is sitting around my waist. My thighs tremble in anticipation as his strong hand skims over my bare skin.

“This is a fucking beautiful backside, Hacker,” he growls as he squeezes one of my ass cheeks. Then he spanks me hard and I groan loudly as the rush of wet heat almost floors me. He delivers four more hard slaps before he dips his finger inside my pussy. “You really like my spankings, Hacker?” he growls and I whimper as a rush of my cream coats his fingers. He rubs his free hand over my reddened skin, soothing the burning before he slaps me again and pushes his finger deeper inside.

My walls squeeze him, trying to pull him deeper. “Shane,” I moan out loud.

“Damn! You look so good bent over my knee. I’m going to put you over it more often.” He laughs softly before he withdraws his finger from my pussy and grabs my hips, pulling me into a standing position.

I blink at him. Surely that’s not it? Because I am desperate for more. He narrows his eyes at me as he stands too. “Take

off the dress,” he growls as his hands drop to his belt buckle. I pull it off over my head until I’m standing in just my heels and when I glance back at him, he is sliding his belt off. The sound of the leather whispering against the fabric makes my knees almost give way.

He reaches out a hand to steady me, his fingers digging into my hip as his green eyes burn into mine. “You didn’t think that was it, did you, Jessie?” he smiles.

“No,” I whisper.

“Good,” he growls as he turns me around and moves behind me, pulling my hair to one side and pressing his lips against my ear. “You’re going to want to hold on to the back of the sofa, sweetheart.” He keeps one hand on my hip while he places the other between my shoulder blades, forcing me to lean over the sofa. I plant my hands on the back and lock out my arms as he peppers kisses along my back and shoulders before he speaks again. “Because I’m going to make this hurt.”

Those words send shivers of excitement and anticipation skittering up my spine, and I draw in a breath as my fingers flex on the sofa cushions, gripping them harder as I brace myself. I close my eyes at the sound of the leather slicing through the air before it lands with a crack across my ass cheeks. It stings like hell, but it sends more shudders of pleasure through me. He strikes me again, and a growl rumbles in his throat as my body shudders.

“Your ass looks incredible with my belt striping it, Hacker,” he groans before he delivers the third blow, which hits me exactly where the last one did, as does the fourth. Damn! He knows what he’s doing. The tears prick at my eyes from the sting of the burning on my skin, but I take a deep breath and wait for the next one as wetness drips down my thighs. Because I love this, and he knows it.

The next blow lands lower, at the top of my thighs, grazing my dripping pussy and I flinch, but he doesn’t stop. He pushes me to the very edge of my limit, as skilled at causing pain as he is at giving pleasure. And just as I am wondering if I have

the words to tell him that I've had enough, he drops the belt to the floor and his warm, rough hands run over my ass and thighs, soothing the burning as I arch my back in pleasure. "Beautiful," he growls before he sits on the sofa, pulling me to straddle him before he unzips his fly. Looking up at my face, he rubs the tears from my cheeks with the pads of his thumbs.

"I'm not crying," I whisper. "My eyes are watering."

"I know." He leans forward and plants a soft kiss on my forehead. "Now, show me how much you love my belt."

I take hold of his stiff cock and lower myself onto it, savoring the feeling of him filling me completely and letting out a low moan.

"Jesus, Hacker!" he sucks in a breath. "You feel so fucking good." He palms my ass and squeezes, making me groan wantonly. "You like that spanking?" he growls as he nuzzles my neck. "Because you're fucking soaking."

"You know I did," I moan as I roll my hips over him.

"Such a good girl," he chuckles before he bends his head lower and sucks one of my pebbled nipples into his mouth as he starts to move my hips for me. I might be on top, but there is no doubting he is in full control, pushing against the sweet spot deep inside me as his teeth graze over my skin.

"Shane," I whimper as my orgasm threatens to burst out of me at any moment.

"Let go, Jessie. I've got you," he murmurs against me and I throw my head back and obey him. Like I always do.

AFTER HE FUCKED me on the sofa, Shane carried me to his bed and ordered me to lie on my front while he disappeared into the bathroom. I lie waiting for him, with my bare ass on fire, and a few seconds later, he walks back toward the bed holding a small bottle in his hand. Sitting beside me, he pours a small amount of liquid onto his palms and rubs them together before he bends down and plants a kiss on each of my ass cheeks. Then he begins massaging them softly.

"Oh," I groan in pleasure as I press my ass into his hands. "What is that?"

“Arnica oil. It’s good for bruising.”

“Have you bruised my ass, Shane Ryan?” I sigh contentedly.

“No, but this will help with any swelling too.”

“Well, it feels good.”

“Hmm. It does,” he laughs. “Your ass is incredible, Jessie.”

He pushes himself off the bed, and undresses and I watch him, unapologetically staring. “Your entire body is pretty incredible,” I breathe, and he smiles at me.

“You like?”

“You know that I do.” I roll my eyes.

He slides onto the bed beside me. “You didn’t just roll your eyes at me, did you, Hacker?” he says as he pulls me into his arms, so I’m lying on his hard chest.

“Sorry,” I whisper. “You bring out the spoiled brat in me.”

He runs a hand up my back and wraps my hair around his fist, tilting my head so I’m looking directly into his green eyes. “I doubt that you were ever a spoiled brat. But, I love that you are one for me.”

“You might be right. It must be your incredible spankings. I don’t think anyone else brings out my bad attitude quite like you do,” I giggle.

“Promise me they never will, Jessie,” he whispers.

“Shane Ryan, are you telling me you enjoy me giving you attitude?”

“Well, I certainly enjoy fucking it out of you,” he growls as tightens his grip on my hair and tips my head back further. “Now tell me that it’s just for me.”

“It’s only for you, Shane,” I breathe just before he presses his lips against mine and kisses me so deeply, I feel tears welling in my eyes. This closeness between us has been hard won, but it’s exactly what I’ve always wanted from him.

With my head on Shane's chest and his arms wrapped around me, I fight the urge to sleep. He trails his fingertips up and down my back as I snuggle against him and sigh with contentment.

"You tired, Hacker?" he asks softly.

"Yes. But I don't want to go to sleep yet. I just want to lie here like this for a while. Is that okay?"

"Yeah," he whispers as his hand slips lower and he rubs it gently over my ass. "How is this beautiful ass doing?"

"It's throbbing like it has its own pulse," I giggle. "But I really like it. I'm good."

"Good." He places a kiss on the top of my head.

"How did you know just how far to go? I mean, you stopped at exactly the right time. How did you do that?"

"I understand how to test people's limits, that's all. And I know you better than you think."

"Hmm." I press my cheek against his chest and listen to the sound of his steady heartbeat. "I wish that I understood you, Shane."

"You do. Much better than you think too, sweetheart. You've been under my skin since that day I found you in Nikolai's office and you squared up to me, even when Conor had a gun pointed in your face."

I lift my head up to look into his deep green eyes. "I have?"

"Surely you know that already? I can barely keep my fucking hands off you, Jessie. I think about you constantly. Why do you think it hurt me so much when you walked out on us and left us that damn note?"

A wave of guilt washes over me as I recall leaving a few months earlier with the man I thought was my father, and with only a brief note in my place. "I'm truly sorry that I hurt you all," I whisper.

He narrows his eyes at me and cups my chin with his hand. “I know. I’m sorry I hurt you too. But I need you to promise me you’ll never leave us again. And I need you to mean it this time. I don’t care who turns up here looking for you. You come talk to us about it, okay?”

“Yes. I promise.”

CHAPTER

THIRTY-ONE

CONOR (BONUS CONTENT)

It's four am and I just finished work. I'm bone tired but I know I won't be able to sleep yet. Mikey is working until the club closes, but Liam left a few hours ago. I pop my head into his room to check on him, smiling when I see him sleeping soundly. If Jessie's not with him then she must be still with Shane. I know the devious fucker had some kind of plans for her last night and while I don't begrudge him a second of his time with her, I wish it was my body she'd spent the night wrapped around. I need some quality alone time with her very soon.

I check Shane's room and she's lying in bed beside him, her on her front and him with a protective hand on her back. I stand in the doorway, the light from the hallway illuminating enough of the bed for me to see them, and I listen to the sound of their soft breathing. Shane doesn't share his bed with anyone but her, but right now I need her so fucking bad.

I walk into the room and sit on the bed beside her, making Shane stir.

"Everything okay, Con?" he asks.

"Yeah, I just wanted to touch her." She's covered by a thin sheet but I run a hand over her back and down to her ass and she flinches at my touch, which makes me scowl at my older brother. "What the fuck did you do to her?" I growl.

He rolls his eyes but Jessie interrupts us. "Conor. Are you okay?" she asks, her voice still thick with sleep.

"Yeah, Angel. I just wanted to see you is all."

She pulls the cover back a little. “Climb in here and see me then,” she says with a sleepy smile.

I kick off my shoes and do as she asks me, sidling up close to her body and slipping an arm around her waist. “Is your ass sore?”

“Uh-huh,” she says with a soft giggle.

“What did my brother do to you, Angel?”

“He spanked me with his belt. It was super hot,” she breathes out the words, like even the thought of what he did is making her wet.

I pull back the cover, exposing her body and see the thick red welts all over her perfect skin. It makes anger prickle beneath mine but I swallow it down. I know that’s what she enjoys and he would never hurt her—at least not any more than she wanted him to anyway.

“I took good care of her, Con,” he says as he stares at me.

“Yeah, I know,” I say, resting my head on the pillow beside her. She smiles sweetly at me. One day I will explore that side of myself with her. One day it will be my belt leaving thick welts on her ass.

“He would never hurt me,” she says softly.

I brush my fingertips over her cheek. Her trust in him reminds me of our road trip, and how she allowed me to tie her up with duct tape, the exact same way that sick fuck who kidnapped her did, and use her exactly how I wanted to. And now my cock is hard. Fuck.

She feels it too. Digging into her hipbone through my suit pants. “You just wanted to see me, huh?” she asks me with a soft laugh.

“Yeah, but we both know me seeing you naked is only going to end with my cock as hard as iron.”

“Exactly how I like it, big guy.”

I skim my hand over her ass and she doesn’t flinch this time. “Did Shane fuck you as hard as he spanked this ass?”

Her eyes widen and she bites into her bottom lip. “Not quite.”

“I need you, Jessie.”

“Take me whenever you want, Conor. I’m always yours, you know that.”

I swallow hard as my cock throbs painfully. “Yeah you fucking are. Turn to face me.”

She shifts onto her side as I unzip my pants and free my aching dick. I’d prefer to nail her to this bed but I’m conscious of her tender ass, so I pull her leg up, draping it over my hip until I have access to her pussy. I edge the tip inside her and she whimpers softly. She’s soaking wet thanks to whatever her and Shane were doing earlier, so I don’t tease her any longer, sinking all the way into her silky heat until my eyes roll back in my head.

“Fuck, you feel so good,” I growl, banding my arm around her waist and pulling her as close as possible.

She places her hand on my cheek. “You do too,” she moans softly, dusting her lips over mine.

I rock my hips slowly. “I could fuck you like this until my dying breath, you know that?”

Her fingers thread through my hair as she kisses me softly, slipping her warm tongue into my mouth and flicking it against mine. A deep groan rolls in my chest. That’s about as much control as I’m willing to give her. I palm the back of her neck, holding her in place as I claim her mouth and her pussy at the same time. Driving into her tight channel over and over again until the only thing in the world is this—me and her right now. She consumes every part of me and I gladly let her. She’s my fucking everything.

When she comes a few moments later, milking my cock with her pussy as she does, I lose myself right along with her, falling over the edge of the cliff as I empty my balls inside her hot wet cunt. She rakes her nails over my shoulders, moaning into my mouth, her back arching in pleasure as she takes

everything I give her, riding the last waves of her climax as I grind mine out into her.

“Fuck, Angel,” I grunt as I let her up for air and she gasps in a stuttered breath.

“That was so unexpectedly intense,” she says with a sigh.

I slip my cock out of her and she presses her face against my chest, her eyes fluttering closed as she does.

I look at Shane who’s watching us intently. He arches an eyebrow. “Did you just fuck our girl into a coma, Con?”

I glance at her face, eyes closed and smiling. “I think so.”

“You feel better?”

“Fuck, yes.”

He shifts onto his side until he’s lying behind her with his chest against her back. “Good. Now give her back to me.”

A wave of exhaustion rolls over me and my eyes roll for an entirely different reason than they did a short while ago. “Soon. Just let me lay here with her.”

He grunts his annoyance but he doesn’t tell me to leave. Instead he slides his hand over her hip, splaying it flat on her stomach as he pulls her close to him. I shuffle forward so I remain still flat against her too. His hand is now wedged between the two of us but I don’t give a single fuck because I need her body next to mine, and he doesn’t seem to care either. I can hardly believe how much I love sharing her with him, or how cool he is with the arrangement either. I guess Jessie Ryan is worth changing all of our rules for.

Jessie breathes softly, already in a deep sleep, and the sound makes me smile as I drift off to sleep too.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-TWO

LIAM

The sound of Mikey coming into the room at 6am wakes me and I sit up and blink at him. I worked until midnight in the club last night, same as I did the night before. It's felt good to be able to do something. Even if I do suspect it was something that someone else usually does for Conor anyway, but I appreciate him finding me something to do to help me feel useful.

I don't take as many pain meds now and I'm no longer sleeping for sixteen hours a day. It means I'm recovering, but it also means I have much more time on my hands. I'm not a big reader, and I think I've watched every good program Netflix has to offer. And now that Shane is back, and Conor isn't working so much, I no longer have my hot nurse mostly to myself to spend the whole day and night with me. I miss waking up with her next to me.

Mikey flops into bed with exhaustion while I suddenly am wide awake. I climb out of bed and wander down the quiet hallway. Everyone is sleeping and I feel a sense of loneliness being the only person up and about.

I make my way to the stairway leading to the roof and head up to the terrace. It's a beautiful space, and we don't use it nearly often enough. The morning is warm and the sun is coming up. I tilt my face toward it and let the sunlight warm my skin. The sound of the street below reminds me that I'm not alone. Despite the occupants of our apartment sleeping, the city is very much awake.

I lean on the railing, looking at the streets coming to life below and have no idea how long I stay there before I hear footsteps behind me. Turning around, I see Jessie walking toward me.

“Good morning. You’re up early,” she says with a smile as she reaches me and slides her warm arm around my waist.

“I couldn’t sleep.” I kiss her head and wrap my arm around her shoulder. “How did you know I was up here?”

“I came to see if you needed anything and you weren’t in bed. And you weren’t in the apartment, and I saw the door to the roof open.”

“You should be a detective,” I chuckle, and she rolls her eyes and smiles up at me.

“This is some view,” she says as she peers over the railing.

“Sure is.”

“You feel cold.”

“I’m fine,” I say with a sigh.

“I’m not nagging you,” she whispers. “I just worry about you.”

“I know, baby. But I promise, I’m fine. It’s nice to get some fresh air. Are you cold?”

“A little,” she shivers.

I turn around and wrap my arms around her. “Come with me and I’ll keep you warm,” I whisper in her ear before we walk to the pool and the sun loungers. We have towels in a locker up here, and I take one out and wrap it around her shoulders.

“Thank...” she starts to say, but then she looks over my shoulder and her flushed cheeks suddenly turn pale.

I turn around to see what it is that has spooked her.

“What’s that in the pool, Liam?” she whispers.

I blink at the small, dark mass in the pool. We usually have it covered, but I’ve been swimming up here the past few days

because it's good for my recovery. "It's a dead bird, baby. That's all. I'll fish it out later."

"Is it a Blue Jay?" she asks with a tremor in her voice.

I release her from my embrace and walk closer to the pool and she follows a few steps behind me. "I think so. Why?"

"There's blood."

"Yeah," I agree as a small pool of blood surrounds the bird. "We'll get the pool cleaned." I turn to her and frown and her entire body is trembling from head to toe and she is so pale, I'm worried she's going to pass out.

"Jessie." I walk back to her, wrapping her in my arms again and holding her close to me. "What is it, baby?"

"Do you get many Blue Jays dead on your roof?"

I look down at her. "Not really. But this is New York. There are birds everywhere. I'm pretty sure we've had a few dead ones up here before. It probably drowned in the pool or something."

"But it was bleeding." She shivers in my arms.

"So?"

"So, like someone hurt it. And then they put it here."

"We're ten floors up, Jessie. It fell out of the sky. Maybe someone shot it and it flew away?" I look down at her and the sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach begins to grow. This isn't about a dead bird.

I walk us over to a sun lounger and sit down, pulling her onto my lap. I brush the hair back from her pale face. "What is it? It's just a bird."

"No. It's a Blue Jay," she stammers.

I frown at her as she stares into the distance.

"Jessie. I need you to tell me what's going on, baby. Because you're freaking me out."

She turns and looks at me. "Sorry," she says with a shake of her head, as though she has come back to reality.

“Don’t be sorry. Just tell me what’s wrong?”

She swallows hard and nods her head, but it’s a few seconds before she speaks. “When the Wolf kept me prisoner, I had no one to talk to. I never saw another living soul the whole time I was there. He didn’t like animals, and he used to shoot the raccoons or the birds that came into the yard. It was like a sport. He would lie on the roof with his sniper rifle and pick them off,” she shudders and I pull her closer. “One day, I found an injured Blue Jay. I made it a nest from branches and leaves and I nursed it back to health. I understood that as soon as it could fly, it would leave the yard, and I wanted it to, because he would have shot it anyway. So, I knew that I was never going to keep it. But for two weeks, I cared for it every day and I lived for my hour outside where I could check on it and make sure it was okay. It was so nice just to have another heartbeat around, you know?” She wipes a tear from her eye and I swear my heart is about to break into pieces. “It was doing really well. It was almost ready to fly, and then one morning I woke up and it was on the pillow next to me.”

“Jessie.” I squeeze her tighter.

“He had sliced off its head, and left it there with blood dripping onto my sheets.” She wipes her cheeks again as the tears run down them.

I pull her against my chest, and she sobs in my arms. While I hold her there, I look at the bird in the pool. It still has its head. No doubt, it was shot or injured and it flew up here and died. But my girl is spooked and I can’t blame her after what she just told me.

When she stops crying, she looks up at me and I wipe the tears from her face with the towel. “You okay?”

“Yes,” she nods. “You think it did just fly up here and die, Liam?”

“Yes. New York is full of Blue Jays, baby.”

“I know,” she sniffs.

“I’ll get Mikey to fish it out and we’ll bury it somewhere. Okay?”

“Okay,” she says as she lays back against me. “I’m sorry for being such a crazy person.”

“You are not crazy. Not even a little bit,” I assure her. “I’m sorry for everything he did to you, Jessie. If I ever meet him, I will happily cut his head off for you.”

“Thank you,” she says and I see the hint of a smile on her lips before she cuddles closer to my chest.

I wince instinctively as she shifts her position and she gasps out loud, sitting up quickly. “I’m sorry, Liam. Your ribs.” She bites her lip.

“My ribs are good. Come back here.” I hold my arms out. “Now!”

“When did you boys all get so bossy?” she says as she leans back against me.

I cup her chin in my hand and tilt her face up so I can look into her bright blue eyes. “You haven’t even seen me bossy yet,” I grin at her and she smiles back up at me so fucking genuinely that it makes me want to bury myself in her. I lean down and kiss her softly and she melts into me, deepening our kiss and allowing me to slide my tongue into her mouth. She tastes of peppermint and coffee and I have to hold myself back from flipping her over and nailing her to this sun lounge because she just damn near passed out from terror at the sight of a dead bird and the memories it triggered.

But she slides her hand from beneath the towel and onto my bare stomach, trailing it down to the band of my sweatpants before slipping her hand inside and squeezing my cock, which was already stiffening and it completely hardens in her hand.

“You want that, baby?” I ask her as she squeezes harder.

“Yes,” she pants.

I pull her up and she swings her legs around until she is straddling me. “Show me,” I groan as I press soft kisses against the sweet smelling skin on her throat. She works my pants down so my cock is free and rubs the pad of her thumb across the tip, making my balls draw up into my stomach.

My hands dip beneath her t-shirt until I find her panties, pushing my hand inside until my fingers slide over her wet clit and her soft moan rumbles in her throat. She works my cock, pumping the shaft as I slide my fingers lower until I find her slick heat and push two fingers deep inside her and she coats me in her juices.

“You’re so fucking wet, baby,” I growl in her ear and she lets go of my cock, wrapping her arms around my neck instead, she whimpers as I fuck her with my fingers until her cum is running down my hand and onto my wrist.

“God, Liam,” she groans and my dick throbs at the sound as her walls squeeze around me. She rocks her hips as she presses her face against my neck and comes hard for me.

When she’s stopped trembling, I pull my fingers out of her and tug her panties to the side. “Slide that hot pussy onto my cock, Jessie.”

She looks at me as she does as she’s told, licking her lips as she lowers herself onto me. Her eyes roll when she is all the way down and I pull her deeper as her pussy clenches and releases around me. “You’re so hot and tight, baby,” I hiss as she drives me crazy with her hungry squeezes. “Do you have any idea how much I missed this pussy when you left us?”

“Liam.” Her cheeks flush pink and she buries her head in my neck again as I wrap my arms around her and hold her to me while she rides my cock like a pro.

“You’ll never keep it from me again, will you?” I growl in her ear as I get so close to the edge, I’m about to fall into oblivion with her. This girl is my whole fucking world.

“No,” she breathes as she holds onto me and I come inside her with a roar that I’m pretty sure could be heard on the street below. I slip my hand between us and rub her clit as she keeps on rolling her hips over my cock, chasing her second orgasm, which hits a few seconds later.

I press my forehead against hers. “That is the most fun I have ever had on this rooftop,” I grin at her.

“It’s the most fun I’ve ever had on any rooftop,” she giggles, slightly breathless from our exertions. I brush the hair back from her face, glad to see her happy again and recovered from the whole Blue Jay incident. But that doesn’t mean I’m still not freaked out, and will be speaking to my brothers about it as soon as I get the chance.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-THREE

JESSIE

I took an extra long soak in the tub after Liam and I came down from the roof. Seeing that Blue Jay dead in the pool brought back so many buried memories. I wonder if I will ever be free of my past and the hold that the Wolf still has over me. But Liam was right. New York City is full of birds and while it's not common to find a dead one in the pool, it's not unlikely either. The poor thing must have been injured and fallen onto the roof.

At least that's what I keep telling myself, despite my mind trying to convince me otherwise.

I slather my body in my favorite vanilla body butter and pull on a clean t-shirt and panties before going to find the brothers.

I check the kitchen and the den first, but they are empty. Liam said he was going back to bed, and I expect Conor and Mikey will still be sleeping too, so I walk along to Shane's office to see if he's awake, because he's likely to be in there. The door to his office is open and I pop my head inside, surprised to see all four Ryan brothers in there with serious looks on their faces. Mikey and Conor are only wearing shorts and look like they've just got out of bed and I can't help but wonder why they appear to be having a family meeting without me.

"Jessie," Shane says as he looks up and sees me and the other three turn their heads and look at me too.

“What’s going on?” I stammer as I step inside the room, with the distinct impression that I am missing something.

Conor holds out a hand to me. “Come on in, Angel.”

I take his hand and he pulls me to sit on the sofa between him and Liam.

“I was just telling them about the bird,” Liam says. “In the pool.”

I blink at him, and then I look at their concerned faces. “But you said it was just a bird. Nothing to worry about.”

“Of course it was,” Liam replies, taking my hand and squeezing it gently.

“Yeah. We’ve found at least half a dozen dead birds on that roof,” Conor adds.

“So why are you all sitting here talking about me? Like I’m crazy or something?” I hear my voice going up a few octaves, but I can’t stop the panic and hysteria from setting in again. Liam convinced me it was nothing, and now they’re all looking at me like it’s something.

“Liam just wanted us to know what happened, is all.” Conor reaches for my hand, but I snatch it away, pulling my other hand from Liam’s at the same time.

“Did you all have a good laugh at how crazy I am freaking out about a dead bird?” I say, spiraling into some sort of panic attack meltdown that I can’t seem to stop.

“No, Jessie,” Liam shakes his head.

“Really? You expect me to believe that?” I push myself up and start to walk out of the room.

“Jessie Ryan!” Shane shouts at me in a tone that makes me freeze in my tracks, and I turn to look at him. “Sit your ass back down.”

I glance back at Liam and Conor who avert their eyes while Mikey clears his throat nervously.

“Now!” Shane barks, and I hesitate for a few seconds before I walk back to the sofa and take my seat again.

“Look at me,” Shane growls and I lift my head to see him glaring at me. “You want to think about what you just said?”

I swallow as I glare back at him. “I’m sorry. I know you wouldn’t do that.”

He runs a tongue along his lip and then sits back in his chair, seemingly satisfied with my response. “Yes, we were talking about you, but of course we weren’t laughing at you. Because if there is *any* possibility that you are in danger, Jessie, then we will talk about it. Conor was about to come and get you so we could discuss it with you too before you walked in here.”

“Oh?” I swallow. “I’m sorry. But the Wolf, he...” I shake my head. “He gets under my skin. I feel like I go crazy whenever I think about him.”

Conor takes my hand again and I curl my fingers around his just as Liam reaches for my other hand and I lean back in my seat, feeling comfort from the warmth of their bodies.

“Well, that’s understandable given everything you went through, baby,” Liam says quietly.

“Yeah, Red,” Mikey agrees.

“Do you think it was him then?” I ask.

“No,” they all say in unison.

“Just a dead bird, Angel,” Conor adds softly. “Me and Mikey scooped it out of the pool and there was nothing suspicious.”

I nod, chewing on my lip absent-mindedly. “I’m sorry I said those things,” I say again.

“You already apologized twice,” Shane says with a soft sigh.

“I know,” I say with a shake of my head. “But I feel bad for accusing you all like that.”

“Jessie,” Shane sighs as he stands up from his desk and walks across the room. “We’re family, right?”

“Yes.”

“So, that means you get to say pretty much anything you want when you’re upset, and we’ll get over it,” he smiles at me.

“Yep,” Mikey nods. “And we know better than anyone how your past can fuck you up, Red. We got more skeletons in our closets than Calvary Cemetery.”

“Yeah? But you guys don’t freak out when you see a dead bird on the roof.” I arch an eyebrow.

“You didn’t freak out, baby,” Liam assures me. “And you are not the only person in this room who lets their past get to them occasionally.”

“Yep,” Conor nods. “We’re all fucked up here. That’s why you fit in so well.” He winks at me and I smile at him. God, I love him so much.

“Tell her why we left Ireland, Shane,” Liam says softly.

Shane looks between Mikey and Liam. “You sure?” he frowns.

“Yeah,” they both say.

“Okay,” he says, pulling over a chair and taking a seat in front of the sofa. “Conor told you that he was a bare-knuckle boxing champion, right?”

“Yes,” I nod.

“Well, Liam and Mikey used to fight too.” He looks between the two of them again and they nod for him to go on. “Well, back in Ireland, my father was often involved in these underground fights, where basically the two fighters would fight to the death.”

I open my mouth in horror. “He made Mikey and Liam do that?”

Shane runs his tongue over his lip and sucks in a deep breath. “Yes. But that’s not it. You have to understand that the fighters in these matches didn’t really have much choice, Jessie. Who the hell wants to go into a fight knowing there’s a fifty percent chance you won’t make it out alive?”

Conor shifts beside me and Liam starts taking deep breaths and I hold his hand tighter. “So, what happened if they refused to fight?” I ask.

“Then they would face a very angry crowd who paid a lot of money to watch two guys beat the shit out of each other, and they would both get torn apart instead.”

I swallow the bile as it burns the back of my throat. “That is so brutal.”

“Yeah,” Shane nods. “And Patrick Ryan entered his youngest sons in a competition. Against each other.”

“What?” My hand instinctively flies to my mouth. “So he expected them to fight? For one of them to kill the other?”

“Yeah,” Conor says.

“What happened?” I ask, looking between the four of them.

“It was fucking carnage,” Mikey says with a haunted expression on his face as Liam simply nods. “Obviously, we refused to fight each other. I begged that bastard to get us out of there. Both of us offered to fight anyone else if he would let the other go, but that sick fuck wouldn’t even consider it. And when we wouldn’t fight each other, that vicious cunt fed us to a baying mob.”

Liam shudders beside me and Mikey sits on the desk with a scowl on his face.

“It was fucking awful,” Liam sucks in a shaky breath. “Hands pulling at us and feet stomping on our heads. They were trying to tear us apart. Like we were animals and not even people.”

“How did you get out of there?” I whisper as my heart physically hurts at the thought of what they went through. And if it was just before they came to New York, they must have only been sixteen.

Mikey and Liam don’t answer, so Shane continues for them. “Conor and I found out about our father’s lunatic plan and we got there just in time to get them out.”

“They were in such a bad way,” Conor adds. “We thought we were going to lose them. Liam almost died on the operating table in the hospital.”

“And that’s why we hate hospitals.” Mikey arches an eyebrow at me.

“And that’s why you left Ireland?”

“Yeah,” Liam says softly. “We were on a plane two days later. Mikey and I could barely walk but Shane and Conor practically carried us onto that plane.”

“It probably wasn’t even the worst thing he ever did to us,” Mikey says with a shake of his head. “But it was the look on his face when he saw how fucking terrified we were. I have never seen that sadistic cunt look at me with so much happiness in his eyes.”

“He sounds like a maniac.” I shake my head, trying to comprehend how someone could do that to his own children.

“He is. Which is why we’ve never spoken to the evil bastard since,” Mikey snarls.

“I’m so sorry that you went through that.” I swallow hard as the four Ryan brothers sit in silence, and I feel the need to lighten the mood. “Jeez! And I thought my father was a psychopath.”

Liam turns to me and smiles. “Erm. He definitely was, baby. Patrick Ryan and Alexei Ivanov are both up there.”

“I guess so.”

“All this talk of Ireland makes me want to lie down in a dark room,” Mikey says as he stands up. “Are we done here?”

“Are we?” Shane looks at me.

“If you’re all sure that there was no one on our roof, then yes, I don’t think there’s anything left to discuss.”

“Good. I need me some sleep.” Mikey stretches and yawns.

“I need to lie down,” Liam groans as he lets go of my hand before standing up and flexes his shoulders.

“You mind if I keep you both company?” I ask.

“I was counting on it,” Liam winks at me and Mikey nods his agreement.

Conor and Shane get up from their seats and each give me a soft kiss on the cheek before I walk out of Shane’s office with the twins.

Ten minutes later, I’m lying in Liam’s bed, sandwiched between him and Mikey as the three of us watch TV. Mikey traces his fingertips up and down my forearm, his eyelids flickering as he fights sleep, while Liam holds my hand and rubs the pad of his thumb over my knuckles.

“I love you both so much. You know that, right?” I say as we lie in silence.

“Yes, Red,” Mikey mumbles sleepily. “I love you too.”

“Love you, baby,” Liam adds and I smile. We are all damaged by our pasts, but we are all stronger for them too. The fact that we have found a way through all of our trauma and the betrayals of the past few months to be here right now, makes me happier than I had ever dreamed possible. I have held onto my thirst for revenge for so long, and maybe now is the time to let it go.

I thought that the Wolf took everything from me, but he can’t take my present or my future. Not unless I allow him to. And I won’t. This life is mine and I will fight for it with every breath in my body. But perhaps it’s time to let the ghost of the Wolf go.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-FOUR

CONOR

I watch Jessie and my younger brothers walking out of Shane's office and smile at the way she always knows exactly what each of us need. Despite reliving her own trauma today, she is there for them now when they need her, and they didn't even have to ask.

The night Shane and I pulled our younger brothers out of the middle of that crowd, who were determined to have their blood, still gives me nightmares. They were just kids, and they were being tossed around like pieces of meat, as though they weren't even human at all. I have killed plenty of people in my lifetime, at least three men at that fight that night, but I have never seen such blatant disregard for human life than from the mob of *respectable* everyday men who almost tore my sixteen year old brothers to pieces.

Shane played it down for Jessie's and my brother's sake, but that night was terrifying. None of us like to talk about it because it was the scariest night of our whole damn lives. Shane and I were lucky to get out alive ourselves. We all bear the scars. Patrick Ryan pulled some twisted shit with all of us when we were kids, but that was a whole new level.

"You think they're all okay?" Shane asks as he steps up behind me.

"Yeah. A morning of TV and whatever else in bed with Jessie and they'll be just fine."

"Hmm," he mumbles. "So tell me more about this Blue Jay on the roof?"

“Mikey fished it out. It looked like it had been shot by an air rifle or some kind of pellet gun. Probably flew as far as it could and fell into the pool,” I shrug.

“You don’t think it was planted up there by anyone then?” he frowns at me.

“I think we’d know if someone had been on our roof terrace, Shane. But, even so, it looks like it was just one of those things. Unsurprisingly, it freaked our girl out though.”

“Yeah,” he nods as he rubs a hand over his jaw. “But not knowing who the Wolf is makes me nervous, Con. He could be anyone.”

“It makes me nervous too, bro. But I don’t know what else we do to find him?”

Shane sits at his desk and opens up his laptop. “Did I tell you I had a call from good old uncle Paul while you were in Arizona?”

“Pol?” I frown at him. “Fuck, Shane. We haven’t heard from him for over twenty years. Why didn’t you tell me?”

“With everything else that’s been going on, it slipped my mind, Con.”

“How did he get in touch with you? Where the hell has he been?”

“It was my business number. No idea where he’s been. But he said he’d heard a rumor the Wolf had surfaced in Russia. I pressed him for more, but he warned me to back off.”

“You think he knows who the Wolf is?”

“Nobody knows who he is, Con. No one except Jessie, anyway. But maybe Pol has some information that could give us a lead, at least?”

“You know how to get in touch with him?”

Shane shakes his head. “Nope. As elusive as ever. But he said he’d be at the funeral when that evil fucker finally dies. I’ll ply the old bastard with a few whiskies and find out whatever he knows.”

“If he knows anything at all. It seems like the Wolf is a ghost, Shane. He could be dead for all we know.”

“I know, Con. But I don’t think Jessie will ever feel safe unless she knows one way or the other. Do you?”

“No,” I agree with him.

“Why don’t you go check on them and get some sleep? You look exhausted.”

“Yeah. I will. Catch you later, bro.”

“Later,” he winks at me and I leave his office and go to find Jessie and the twins.

I find them in Liam’s bed, watching TV. “You guys okay?” I ask as I sit on the edge of the bed.

“Yeah, bro,” the twins mumble.

“Yes,” Jessie smiles sweetly and holds her arms out to me. Unable to resist an invitation to be anywhere near her hot body, I crawl onto the bed and she spreads her legs wide so I can lie between them, with my head resting on her stomach. She runs her fingers through my hair and the four of us lie there in silence and I feel so comfortable and content that I fall asleep.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-FIVE

CONOR

I pull Jessie onto my lap as Mikey places two bowls of popcorn on the coffee table in front of us before sitting beside us on the sofa. A few seconds later, Liam sits beside him and Jessie stretches her legs out across Mikey's until her toes are almost touching Liam's thigh, and he bends his head and kisses them softly, making her squirm and giggle. The sound of her laughing is so fucking good to hear.

Mikey and Liam smile at her and she leans against my chest, her cheeks flushed pink. She looks up as Shane walks into the room and I wait for the change in her, for the tension to slip into her body, but it doesn't. She stays relaxed, even as he reaches us and stands there with a frown on his face.

"No room for me then?" he asks with an arch of one eyebrow.

"You snooze, you lose, bro," Liam laughs and Mikey grins up at him.

Shane, my grumpy big brother, who never takes a night off work to watch a movie with us, simply rolls his eyes before leaning down and kissing Jessie softly before taking a seat on the nearby armchair. It has been a week since he got back from his business trip and things finally seem back to normal around here. In fact, I have never seen my brothers happier.

"Hey, I meant to tell you, Con, I found out what kept blocking up the garbage disposal. It was a piece of Cyril's ear," Mikey laughs as he tosses some popcorn into his mouth.

Jessie looks between the two of us with an expression of horror on her face. “You put someone’s ear in the garbage disposal?”

“No, Angel,” I tell her, brushing her hair back from her face. “At least not up here in the apartment, anyway.”

“So who is Cyril?” she frowns as she looks between the four of us.

Shane flashes his eyebrows at me while Liam and Mikey glance at each other. The truth is none of us want us to think about Cyril and what happened to him.

“What is it? Who, or what, is Cyril?” she asks again, her voice going up a few octaves as she shifts on my lap.

“Cyril was a teddy bear,” I say with a sigh.

“A teddy bear?” She rolls her lips together as though she’s trying to stop herself from laughing. “Who did he belong to?”

I look at my brothers, and they stare back at me. “What?” Jessie says, the edge creeping into her voice as the four of us share uneasy glances.

“Cyril was a huge teddy bear that Conor bought for you the day you left with Alexei Ivanov,” Shane answers her question.

“Oh?” she says and I sigh inwardly as the change in her demeanor is instant.

“He was as big as you, Jessie,” Liam adds.

“What happened to him?” She turns to me, her eyes wide and brimming with tears.

There are a few second’s silence and I wonder who is going to answer because she is fucking killing me here.

“Conor tore him to pieces after you left and set him on fire. Most of him anyway,” Mikey eventually answers.

A single tear runs down her face and I brush it away with the pad of my thumb. I know that she still feels so much guilt for what happened that day, even though we all understand

why she did what she did. And we have all forgiven her, but I don't think she has forgiven herself.

That day when she left almost broke me. It almost broke all of us. It's still too painful to think about, and it makes me feel sick whenever I do. It still stings like fuck. And now the memory of it is here in the room with the five of us, like someone who has gate-crashed our movie night. And while Jessie and I talked about her leaving during our drive back from Arizona, I'm pretty sure the rest of my brothers have avoided discussing it too much because it just fucking hurts. I see the pain in Jessie's eyes too and wish I could take it away for her.

"I'm so sorry," she says as a sob catches in her throat. "Cyril sounds lovely."

"He wasn't. He was the ugliest bear I've ever seen," I tell her. "He deserved to die a terrible death."

"Stop trying to make me feel better," she sniffs. "I can't believe you bought me a teddy bear."

"It truly was fucking hideous, Jessie," Mikey says as he takes her hand in his.

"I know you're only being nice," she says with a shake of her head. "I don't know what I can do to make it up to all of you."

We all sit in silence as the atmosphere in the room grows increasingly tense. Damn Cyril! It's Shane who eventually breaks the tension as he stands and walks over to us. Cupping Jessie's chin in his hand, he tilts her head so she can look up at him. "You want to be punished for leaving us, sweetheart? Will that make you feel better?" He narrows his eyes at her.

"Yes," she breathes, taking me by surprise.

"If we do this, then we move on. No more guilt. No more feeling bad every time that day is mentioned, okay?"

"Okay," she nods.

Shane licks his lips and then his eyes flicker to mine for a moment and I am left wondering what the hell he is cooking

up in that devious mind of his. “Go to your room,” he nods toward the hallway. “We’ll be along in a little while, just as soon as we’ve figured out what your punishment is going to be,” he orders.

I release her from my embrace and she stands obediently, with her head slightly bowed. I’ve never wanted to do the whole punishment thing with her because what we have is about something much deeper than I’ve ever experienced before. But fuck me if seeing her submissive side doesn’t make me as hard as fucking iron.

“Okay,” she whispers before she heads out of the room, leaving Liam, Mikey and me to stare up at our oldest brother and wait for him to explain what kind of punishment he’s thinking about. The wicked glint in his eyes tells me it won’t be about punishment at all.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-SIX

JESSIE

As the minutes slowly drag by, I become increasingly anxious about whatever the Ryan brothers are concocting in the other room. The truth is, I do want to be punished for leaving them. Maybe then I could stop hating myself so much for it. I could stop imagining the pain they must have gone through when they realized I'd walked out on them after promising I would never leave. But now I'm sitting here on my bed, wondering what the hell I've let myself in for.

When the door opens a few moments later, I look up expectantly to see the four men I love more than anything in the world, walking into the room, each dressed in only sweatpants except for Shane who wears his suit pants and his belt, and all looking hotter than molten lava.

My entire body trembles from head to toe as I watch them saunter toward me, oozing sex and swagger.

Damn! I think my ovaries just exploded.

Mikey carries an ice bucket with champagne inside and he sets it down on the nightstand, while Conor holds something black in his hands. As he gets closer, I see that it's my scarf and gloves from the rack in the hallway. Liam sits on the edge of the bed beside me and as he does I see the bottle of lube he's holding. Holy fuck!

“Get her naked. Now!” Shane barks to Mikey and Liam, who dutifully oblige. Liam turns to me and pulls his t-shirt over my head, while Mikey kneels in front of me and hooks his fingers into the waistband of my panties, before pulling

them down quickly and stuffing them into the pocket of his pants. Within five seconds, I am completely naked while the four of them surround me.

Conor holds out the gloves to me. “Put these on, Angel,” he growls.

“Why?” I whisper, looking between the gloves in his outstretched hand and his eyes which sparkle wickedly.

“We want to make it as hard as possible for you to identify who is doing what to you,” he grins at me. “The less you can feel with your hands, the better.”

“We were going to tie you up, but we need you to be able to move around,” Shane adds and a shiver of excitement laced with fear skitters up my spine.

I take the gloves and pull the soft leather over my fingers. They were a gift from the brothers and cost more than a month’s rent on my apartment in Arizona, and they fit me like a second skin.

When I have them on, Conor leans forward with my cashmere scarf. “For your eyes, Angel,” he growls, and I bow my head slightly, allowing him to blindfold me. I suppress a smile as I think about how it is going to take a lot more than this for me not to recognize my boys.

“Lie on the bed, baby,” Liam says once I’m blindfolded. I move back, feeling my way into the middle and then I lie there waiting for whatever punishment they are about to dole out to me, although in my mind all I can think about is this seems much more like pleasure. They could have bound me completely and I would fear nothing from any of them, and that realization makes me so happy I could almost purr.

“You ready for your punishment, Hacker?” Shane growls.

“Yes,” I breathe as I lie waiting.

“You don’t get to come until we say you can, okay?”

“Yes.”

“And from now on, you don’t speak. Unless it’s to say our names, or the words, yes and no. You got that?” he adds.

“Yes,” I am almost panting now. I feel the heat and the energy from their bodies as I lie there waiting for them to touch me. Being unable to see heightens my other senses, and I can smell Shane’s cologne. The expensive soap that Conor uses. The oil from the car that Mikey was tinkering with just before he came upstairs. And the ointment I’ve been rubbing on Liam’s wounds to make sure they heal as fast as possible.

I hear them moving around, but they don’t speak. Then I hear the sound of the ice in the bucket moving when the champagne is taken out, followed a few seconds later by the foil being removed. When the loud pop of the cork happens a moment later, I don’t flinch because I was expecting it.

“Hold onto the pillow, and do not move those hands unless you’re told you can, Angel,” Conor growls and I nod my compliance as I reach back and grab the pillow beneath my head.

“Now, spread those legs, Jessie,” Shane orders and once again I do as I’m told before a few seconds later, the bed dips in front of me and I feel two rough hands running from my ankles to my thighs. I would know those hands anywhere, but even if I didn’t, I would be able to identify who this was, because he can never resist running the pad of his thumb over the scar on the inside of my thigh.

“Mikey,” I groan as his fingers brush over my folds and he chuckles softly.

“That’s right, Red,” he says before he slides one finger deep inside me and I arch my back in pleasure as I feel another body to the left of me.

“Liam,” I say his name softly as he was sitting on the bed beside me and I didn’t feel him move.

“We’re going to have to make this harder, baby,” Liam says against my ear before he begins trailing soft kisses over my neck and down to my breasts, before sucking one of my pebbled nipples into his mouth at the same time that Mikey does the same to my clit and my hips almost shoot off the bed.

As I'm trying to focus on the maddening teasing of the twins' hot mouths, the bed to the right side of me dips and I brace myself for another mouth, but instead ice cold champagne falls onto the hot skin of my chest, making me gasp as it fizzes over my skin, running a trail between my breasts, pooling in my belly button and trickling down between my thighs where Mikey laps it up while he's eating my pussy.

Liam moves lower, licking up some of the expensive bubbles while another hot mouth sucks on my right nipple and I writhe in pleasure as my fingers grip the pillow tighter. The sensation of three hot mouths on me is maddening and as I'm trying to determine if the third one belongs to Conor or Shane, it disappears and I groan loudly, but it is back again a few seconds later, except this time it is ice cold as he sucks my nipple into his mouth along with the ice cube he now has in there. His teeth graze me softly and I focus on the sensation as I figure out who that sexy mouth belongs to. I want to reach out and touch them so badly, but I haven't been given permission to, and I want to do this right for them.

"Conor," I eventually breathe and I hear Shane laughing in the background, confirming I'm right.

"She's good," he says with a chuckle.

"She guessed us all. Can I make her come now?" Mikey groans against my pussy as he keeps sucking and licking me with his amazing tongue.

"Hmm," Shane agrees. "Maybe she'll have more difficulty identifying your cocks, because she sure as hell knows your mouths."

I want to ask whether I'm going to get to feel Shane's hot mouth, or his cock, but I'm not allowed to ask questions either, so I stay quiet. Well, at least I try to as Mikey pushes two of his thick fingers inside me while he keeps nuzzling on my clit and my hips rock against him. Conor and Liam's hands hold me down as they run over my body, along with their tongues, and I swear I think I'm about to pass out.

"Oh, God!" I hiss as the waves of pleasure roll over me.

At which point Mikey stops. “I don’t think ‘oh’ or ‘god’ are on the agreed list of words, Red,” he says with a chuckle.

“Nope. Definitely not,” Shane confirms.

“Damn! Not going to be able to let you come just yet then, Red,” Mikey sighs and I groan loudly, resisting the urge to say how unfair that is.

“Mikey,” I pant instead.

“Aw, Red. I would love to make you come all over my tongue. But rules is rules,” he says with an overly dramatic sigh as he trails kisses along my thighs instead and a few seconds later he is gone altogether and Liam’s hand is sliding between my thighs, rubbing between my folds but purposely avoiding the spot where I desperately want him as he continues to leave me teetering on the edge of oblivion.

“Liam?” I pant.

“Sorry, baby,” he chuckles. “Soon, though. Be a good girl and we might let you come later.”

“Hmm,” Conor mumbles against my skin as trails kisses across my breast before sucking on my other nipple. I hear more rustling in the ice bucket before someone is at my front again and Liam’s hand slides back up to my stomach. Whoever it is, rubs an ice cube through my folds and I buck my hips at the coldness and the contrast between that and the heat that is coursing through my body. Then he pushes it inside my opening and I gasp out loud before he drops his head and laps the melting water from my pussy.

“Fuck!” Mikey hisses, confirming it is him again. Then there are ice cubes in Conor’s and Liam’s hands and I realize Mikey must have handed them some and they swirl them over my stomach and breasts before licking off the melted liquid.

I writhe in pleasure as more champagne is poured over my breasts. Damn! Are all four of them here now? Or does Liam or Conor have hold of the bottle? I can’t tell any longer as I teeter on the edge of an earth shattering orgasm and multiple hands and mouths devour my entire body. I can hardly focus on anything and I’m going to come, really hard.

My thighs tremble and my insides contract as the orgasm threatens to burst out of me at any moment.

“Don’t you fucking dare, Hacker,” Shane warns from nearby, confirming he’s not on the bed with me.

“Shane?” I plead with him. I cannot hold out much longer while his brothers are torturing me with their sinful tongues and fingers. Conor’s hand is traveling southwards, he circles the tip of his index finger over my clit, and I moan so loudly, I’m sure the walls of the apartment shake.

“Finish her off,” Shane eventually says and at the exact same time Liam sucks my nipple and grazes it with his teeth, Mikey pushes his hot tongue inside my pussy and Conor pushes down on my clit like it is a nuclear detonator and I lose all sense of time and space. I’m not sure if that was my permission too, but I am no longer in control of my body.

My orgasm crashes over me like a full scale tsunami and my entire body trembles violently as the three of them continue to coax the last tremors from me until I am lying beneath them like a gibbering wreck. Tears are spilling over my cheeks as my senses completely overwhelm me. When it has completely subsided, I feel them moving away, but not before each pressing a soft kiss on my stomach first.

I lie there, panting and gasping for breath as I wait for the next round of delicious punishment, as I wonder what I ever did to deserve the devotion of these four incredible men.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-SEVEN

SHANE

I squeeze my cock through my pants as I look at our girl lying on the bed, legs spread open and her cum dripping from her pussy. She looks completely wrung out, but we've barely even started yet. Now, she gets to take all four of our cocks and it's taking all of my restraint not to bury mine in her right now. My brothers are aware of what's about to happen next and they're busy removing their sweatpants while I stare at her.

Fuck! She makes me so fucking hard. I can't resist tasting her before she's filled with my brothers' cum and I crawl between her thighs, which are still trembling. Pressing the flat of my tongue against her slit, I lick from her pussy opening to her clit and she shudders beneath me. I don't touch her anywhere else, even though I'm desperate to put my hands on her. But I suck her swollen clit into my mouth and suck her sweet juices.

"Shane," she says with a soft moan that makes my balls draw up into my stomach.

I lift my head and place my hands on her hips and my fingers dig into her soft flesh. Damn! I could eat this girl alive. "Did you know that was me? Or was it an educated guess? I want the truth, Hacker," I growl.

She opens her mouth, but she doesn't answer and I realize it's because she is playing by the rules I set out for her earlier, and that makes me even harder. "You can answer," I tell her.

“I would know your mouth anywhere,” she says with a contented smile that makes my heart feel like it’s going to burst out of my chest. I think about undoing my belt, taking my cock out and driving it into her as I ask her if she would recognize that anywhere too. But, I am a patient man. Instead, I climb off the bed and I don’t fail to notice her smile disappearing when I do.

“Sit up and come here, Hacker,” I say to her and she pushes herself onto her knees and crawls over to me, I reach out and take her hand to guide her to the edge of the bed, until she’s kneeling right in front of me. Her mouth is open in expectation and I lean down and kiss her, distracting her as Conor lies down on the bed behind her. She runs her hands over my chest, but the soft leather gloves are no substitute for the warm caress of her fingertips. I slide one hand to her ass and squeeze hard and she groans into my mouth as I deepen our kiss and take everything I can from her.

My cock is busting the zipper of my pants and I am fucking desperate to get inside her as soon as possible. When Conor is in place, I pull back from her. “Turn around, sweetheart,” I whisper in her ear.

She does so without hesitation and her submissiveness is such a fucking turn on. Conor reaches up and takes her hand, guiding her toward him.

“Slide yourself onto his cock, Hacker,” I tell her and she feels her way up his thighs until she finds it. I watch as she squeezes it and Conor bites his lip to stifle a groan. Then she slides her hot pussy onto him and I close my eyes as I recall how good it feels to have her cunt squeezing my cock. I’m impressed by Conor’s restraint because I understand how desperate he must be to grab her by the hips or moan her fucking name.

“Now ride him, Hacker,” I growl, and she presses her hands flat on his chest and starts to roll her hips over him as his eyes almost roll back in his head.

“You know whose cock you’re grinding on there?” I ask her.

“Conor,” she pants, and he shakes his head in disbelief, but then he takes full advantage of the fact he no longer has to try and hide who he is, grabbing her by the waist and pulling her down onto his cock and making her cry out. Liam stands beside me, coating his cock with lube before crawling onto the bed between Conor’s legs and close behind Jessie.

Mikey sits on the edge of the bed and watches while I pull the chair closer so I can have a ringside view of the action unfolding too, because the only thing better than fucking Jessie myself, is watching my brothers do it instead.

Liam rubs his clean hand over her back and onto her shoulders, and she shivers with pleasure. His cock nudges at her ass and she sucks in a deep breath as she keeps riding Conor.

“Want me to hold her still?” Conor asks.

Liam nods in response and Conor holds onto Jessie’s hips tightly, pulling her down and pressing her body flush against his. “Just until he’s inside, Angel,” Conor says as he brushes her hair back from her face. She bites her lip and nods her agreement and my cock throbs in my pants at how compliant she is. I hope Conor and Liam fuck her quickly because I might just come watching her.

Liam slides his other hand between her ass cheeks and pushes a finger inside her and she groans as her body arches forward slightly. He adds another and then he slowly thrusts them in and out as he readies her for him, and she sucks in a deep breath as the skin on her neck flushes pink, a sign she’s teetering on the edge again.

“She’s close, bro,” Conor grinds out the words and Liam withdraws his fingers and lines his cock up against her ass. He shifts closer and holds onto her waist as he pushes himself inside her, and the sight of her being fucked by the two of them makes my cock weep in appreciation.

“Who do you think is fucking your sweet ass, Hacker?” I ask her.

“Liam,” she pants as he and Conor fuck her in a steady rhythm.

“Sure is, baby,” he says in her ear. “I have missed fucking you so much. And now we get to make you come again.”

She whimpers as they rail her, and the moment she falls apart around them is spectacular to watch. Her head falls back against Liam and he wraps his arms around her, pressing her back against his chest as he increases his pace until he fills her with his cum.

“Fuck, Angel. Your pussy sure loves an ass fucking,” Conor groans as he holds her hips still against him. “I can feel your cum all over my cock.”

“Conor,” she groans as Liam pulls out of her gently and releases her to lie on Conor’s chest.

“I know, Angel,” he says soothingly in her ear. “But we’re not done yet.”

As Liam climbs off the bed, Mikey takes the lube and squirts some into his hand before rubbing it over his cock and taking his twin brother’s place.

“Mikey?” Jessie gasps as he lines up at her ass.

“Yeah, Red. My turn now,” he growls as he pushes his cock deep inside her with no further warning and she shudders between the two of them.

“You made Jessie’s ass nice and slippery, bro,” Mikey chuckles as he starts to fuck her more roughly than Liam just did. I resist the urge to tell him to slow down because we still have more to do, but I remind myself that he knows, and worships her body, as much as I do.

“Mikey. Conor,” Jessie pants and shakes her head as her hands run over Conor’s chest.

She wants to say something, but my good girl knows that she can’t.

“You want to stop, Angel?” Conor asks.

“No,” she shakes her head again and lifts her hands, showing him the gloves.

“You want to take the gloves off?” he asks.

“Yes,” she nods.

Conor glances across at me, and I nod my agreement. She clearly doesn't need to feel us with her hands to be able to identify who we are.

“You can take them off,” he growls, and she pulls her hands free as soon as the words have left his mouth and tosses the gloves onto the floor. She runs one hand down Conor's chest and snakes the other one behind her and around Mikey's neck, pulling him closer to her. He presses his face against the side of her throat and sucks as he grabs her breasts and squeezes. Conor reaches between her thighs and starts to rub her clit and a few seconds later, she is losing control again. She comes with a loud roar of ecstasy, tipping my two brothers over the edge with her. The three of them lie together, a hot sweaty mess of bodies. All three of them sated and spent — for now. Liam grins at me, clearly having enjoyed watching the latter part of the show as much as I did.

I stand up and walk toward the bed.

Now it's my turn.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-EIGHT

JESSIE

Conor and Mikey breathe heavily in my ears and I pant for breath as I lie sandwiched between their two hard, hot bodies. My blindfold is still on, but at least I can touch them now. My whole body trembles and aches and I groan as Mikey slowly pulls his cock out of my ass. He presses a soft kiss between my shoulder blades.

“Love you, Red,” he says softly.

I want to say I love him too, but that’s not in my list of permitted words, so I simply say his name and he kisses me again before he pushes himself off the bed. Conor wraps both of his arms around me and kisses the top of my head. “Love you too, Angel,” he says, and I wrap my arms around him and kiss his chest. “But you know we’re not through yet,” he growls as he slides his cock out of me too. A rush of our cum drips between my thighs and I bite my lip as it dribbles onto his groin. He groans as he rolls me over until I’m lying on the bed and I feel him get up and leave me lying alone.

I strain to hear what is happening next. I knew this wasn’t over. Shane hasn’t even touched me yet, and I still haven’t received any punishment — only extreme pleasure. I hear footsteps padding toward the bed and then the sound of Shane’s belt buckle before the distinctive whoosh of the leather sliding against the expensive fabric of his suit pants. My heart races even faster and I suck in a deep lungful of air. Another spanking from Shane. So, that’s how this is going to end? Despite the three earth shattering orgasms I’ve already

had tonight, my pussy contracts in expectation and the wet heat floods my core.

“You think she needs a break first?” Liam asks.

I assume the response is given non verbally as I don't hear a reply, and I also assume that response is no when I hear Shane's suit pants dropping to the floor and a hushed murmur of voices before someone lies beside me on the bed.

It smells like Shane, but I'm not sure I trust my senses any longer. Whoever it is doesn't speak, instead he pulls me on top of him until I'm straddling him, and I notice he is wearing gloves too so I can't feel his hands. Damn! I would have known for sure who it was then. His cock nudges at my tender pussy and I whimper as he shifts his hips until he is able to push the tip inside me.

“Shane!” I groan loudly.

He doesn't confirm or deny, but as he pulls my hips down and impales me on his huge cock, I know for sure it's him anyway. I bite my lip as I roll my hips over him and a groan rumbles in his chest.

“Fuck, Hacker,” he hisses and then his hands disappear from my hips. A few seconds later, he grabs me again, this time minus the gloves.

“Shane,” I whimper as he takes full control of my body, pushing against the sweet spot inside me and making me shudder with anticipation and pleasure. The noise of his belt buckle jangling directly behind me distracts me and when I feel the bed dip, I realize someone else is joining the fun. Well, of course they are. Why would Shane get me all to himself when none of the others did? I assume it must be Liam, as Mikey and Conor have only just finished, and although they are machines, they usually need at least ten minutes to recover.

A calloused hand slides over my behind. “Conor?” I gasp.

“Yeah, Angel,” he says softly.

“I want to feel you squeeze my cock while you get spanked with my belt, Hacker,” Shane growls and I experience

an intense fluttering in my core and thighs as my head spins. Conor is going to spank me with Shane's belt? Damn!

I lick my lips in anticipation. He swore he would never do this until he trusted me to know my limits, but I suppose with three of his brothers standing around, he doesn't need to worry so much about losing control. Not that I worry about him doing that. I don't think he could hurt me even if he wanted to, at least not physically.

Conor shifts into place at the foot of the bed and I try to brace myself as much as I can while Shane continues fucking me to distraction.

"Don't be gentle," Shane growls to his brother. "She likes it when you make it sting."

"Okay," Conor replies as he sucks in a breath.

I squeeze his cock involuntarily as he talks about me like I'm nothing to them. Why the hell is this so damn hot? But although his words sound cold, his actions are completely otherwise as he reaches up and pulls me down until I'm lying on his chest. He brushes my damp hair back from my face and kisses my forehead before he wraps his arms around me. "The first one is coming in a few seconds, sweetheart," he whispers in my ear.

I nod against him and brace myself as the first strike of the belt hits directly across the middle of my ass cheeks, making them sting with heat. I flinch instinctively, but Shane holds me in place. It wasn't particularly hard and I can tell Conor is holding back. The next two blows are just as light and although they leave a pleasant stinging behind, I need more.

"Stop tickling her with it, Con. I told you how she likes it. Our girl is tougher than you think."

Pride swells in my chest at Shane's praise and I wait for Conor's response. He doesn't say anything but Shane sighs and I feel his breath dusting over my hair. "I won't let you hurt her, Con," he says softly and the tears prick at my eyes. I know how difficult Conor must be finding this. He is terrified that he

might go too far, but to hear Shane tell him that he wouldn't let him makes me feel so safe and protected.

A few seconds later the fourth blow lands much harder than the first three and I whimper against Shane's chest as the wet heat floods my pussy. "Good girl," he whispers in my ear as he rubs his hands over my back and thrusts his cock deeper into me.

For some reason those words almost tip me over the edge. "Shane!" I groan as the heat from my ass and the sensation of his cock filling me as well as his hands rubbing over my skin almost overwhelms me.

"You feel so good on my cock, Jessie," he growls so quietly that I'm sure I'm the only one who can hear him. "I'm going to bury myself inside you every chance I get for the rest of my life. You got that?"

"Yes," I groan.

Conor brings down the belt down again, even harder than the last time, and I press my mouth against Shane's neck to stifle my shriek of pleasure tinged with pain.

"Damn, Hacker," Shane groans as he pumps even harder into me. "You do love a spanking, don't you? Your pussy is milking me so hard, sweetheart."

I can barely form a coherent word as Conor goes on spanking my ass while Shane fucks my pussy. My skin is aflame with heat and fire and I think I'm going to pass out if they don't give me some relief soon. My ass stings like hell because Conor knows how to cause pain, maybe even more than his older brother, but I'm determined to take whatever he can give me. He keeps on spanking my ass with the belt, until my eyes are watering so bad, the tears are running down my cheeks. Shane keeps holding me tight, his arms wrapped around me so I'm pressed close to his chest as he rolls my hips over his cock. Being unable to see sharpens my other senses and I feel everything in high definition, including the tension that begins to creep into his body.

“I think she’s had enough, Con,” he says but the belt cracks over my ass again, even harder than the last time.

“Conor,” Shane shouts, and the sound of the belt dropping to the floor rings around the room.

Shane’s hands rub over the tender skin on my ass, soothing the reddened flesh. But Conor obviously hasn’t finished and a few seconds later he is behind me again. He leans over me, peppering kisses over my back and shoulders. “Turning your ass red has made me so fucking hard, Angel. You think you can go one more round?” he whispers as his fingers circle my hole.

“Yes,” I pant.

“Thank fuck!” he growls as he grabs hold of my hips and pushes his cock deep into my ass in one swift movement, making me cry out his name. Then he and Shane fuck me relentlessly while Liam and Mikey encourage them from the sidelines. I lose count of the orgasms they give me with their cocks and their hands and their mouths on me, but when they finally find their own release, I lie between them, a complete, gibbering, trembling wreck with not a coherent word in my head and I wince as every part of my body aches in the most delicious way.

CHAPTER

THIRTY-NINE

JESSIE

As Conor slowly slides his cock out of me, I groan loudly. I'm still blindfolded so I can't see anything, but I feel him roll to the side and he rests his hand on my back. The bed dips on the other side of us and I wonder if Mikey or Liam, or both, of them have joined us too. My skin tingles with electricity and every part of my body is hypersensitive. Shane holds onto my hips as he pulls out of me too, and the rush of cum that pours out of me makes my cheeks flush with embarrassment. Shane chuckles softly as he holds me tight against his chest. "You've soaked me in cum, Hacker."

"Sorry," I whisper as I rest my head on his chest and draw in shallow breaths as I try to regain at least some of my senses.

Someone unties my scarf and pulls it from my head and I blink in the bright light of the room as Shane cups my chin and tilts my head so I can look at him. "You okay?" he asks.

"Hmmm," I mumble and he lets my head fall back to his chest. But then his arms disappear and he is rolling me off him and into someone else's arms. I glance up to see Mikey's handsome face smiling down at me.

"Let's go get you cleaned up, Red," he says as he walks us toward the bathroom and it's only then that I realize Liam is no longer in the room. The sound of running water and the smell of vanilla tells me he's running me a bath, and I smile as I wrap my arms around Mikey's neck and snuggle against him.

Liam is standing waiting for me as Mikey sets me down on my feet.

“Are you getting in with me?” I arch an eyebrow at Liam.

“I could do with a soak,” he says with a wink as he climbs into the tub, wincing as he lowers himself into the hot water. He’s still not fully recovered and his ribs and shoulders still ache when he exerts himself. When he is sitting comfortably, he holds out a hand to me and I take it, while Mikey holds onto my other one as they help me into the water too. The steam and the heat are making me feel even more lightheaded, and it’s a relief to sit down. Liam pulls me between his thighs and I lean back against his chest.

“You not joining us?” I ask Mikey, who perches on the edge of the tub.

“I’m not sure the three of us in there would be all that comfortable, Red,” he says with a chuckle. “Besides, I’m going to get us some refreshments. I think we could all use some fluids.”

“Red Gatorade for me,” Liam says.

“Blue for me please,” I add.

“You’ll both get whatever I can find,” he says with an eye roll, but we both know he’ll get us exactly what we asked for. He leans down and gives me a kiss on the cheek before disappearing out of the door, leaving Liam and me alone.

Liam pulls my hair back and kisses my neck softly, and I close my eyes and sigh with contentment.

“You were incredible tonight, baby,” he says, his lips grazing my ear and making a shiver run the length of my spine.

“You were pretty incredible yourself. Are you feeling okay?”

“Better than ever,” he growls as he wraps his arms around my waist and pulls me close to him until our bodies are sliding together in the bubble filled water. “I’m just sorry I couldn’t fuck you for longer.”

“It was all perfect.”

“Doc says I’ll be back to full strength soon.” He bites my earlobe. “And then you and me have some serious catching up to do, baby because it damn near killed me having you lying next to me and not being able to fuck you the way I want to these past few weeks.”

“Well, I can’t wait,” I giggle as he rubs his beard over the delicate skin of my neck, tickling me until I squirm in his arms. “It’s not exactly easy for me either. I mean, you’re pretty hot, Liam Ryan.”

“Jessie,” he growls my name, and then he reaches for a washcloth. “Let’s get you cleaned up before you give me another boner. Because if you do, I’ll have to turn you around and make you ride me. Do you want me to wash your hair too?”

“No, it’s okay. I’ll wash it in the morning.”

“Okay,” he whispers as he runs the washcloth down my body, over my breasts and stomach and then between my thighs before he proceeds to gently wash my most intimate areas. Considering he is the biggest, and probably the meanest looking of the Ryan brothers, he is by far the most sensitive and gentle. He makes me feel so cared for and suddenly I’m overcome with a rush of love for him.

“I love you, Liam,” I breathe as the emotion sticks in my throat.

He drops the washcloth into the water and wraps those huge biceps around me again. “I love you too, Jessie.”

“Thank you for tonight. I can’t say it was much of a punishment though?” I turn my head and arch an eyebrow at him.

“Well, that’s because it wasn’t supposed to be, baby. Why punish you when it’s much more effective to show you what you’d be missing if you ever left again.”

“I never will. You know that, right?”

“Yes.” He presses a soft kiss against my temple as Mikey walks back into the room carrying refreshments. Red and blue Gatorade, just like we asked him for.

AFTER I AM THOROUGHLY clean and extremely exhausted, Mikey helps me out of the tub and grabs a huge fluffy towel to wrap me in as Liam hoists himself out too, stifling a groan as he does.

“You sure you’re okay?” I ask, stifling a yawn.

“I’m fine.” He rotates his shoulder and winces. “Nothing a good sleep won’t fix.”

“He’s trying to get another week off work, Red. Don’t mind him,” Mikey says with a wink.

“Asshole,” Liam fires back good-naturedly.

Mikey rolls his eyes. “Some of us have to go pull an eight hour shift in half an hour.”

“I’d say my heart bleeds for you, bro. But I nearly fucking died two weeks ago,” Liam says as he starts to dry himself off with a towel. “Hanging on by a thread, the doc said.”

Mikey dries me off too as he banter with his twin. “Fuck’s sake! How long are you going to dine out on that? It’s been two weeks, bro. I’d have been back to work the next day.”

Liam laughs out loud. “You took two days off because you hurt your toe last year.”

“It was broken. After you dropped a fucking barbell on it!” Mikey protests.

“Boys,” I laugh. “Stop arguing. You’re harshing my mellow.”

“Harshing your mellow?” Mikey raises an eyebrow at me. “Who the fuck says that, Red?”

“What? People used to say that.” I open my mouth and feign my indignation. “It’s cool.”

“No. It was never cool. I’m pretty sure that even when it was cool, it wasn’t cool,” Liam laughs as he wraps his towel around himself and steps toward me. He bends his head low and presses his lips against mine while Mikey finishes drying me with the towel before he starts to rub arnica oil over my ass cheeks.

“That feel good, Red?” he chuckles and I groan into Liam’s mouth. When he has finished, Liam breaks our kiss and Mikey pulls one of his clean, soft cotton t-shirts over my head.

“All done and ready for bed, Red,” he whispers in my ear.

“Thank you both,” I whisper.

“You’re welcome, baby,” Liam says with a wink before he and Mikey leave me alone in the room.

AS I WALK OUT of the bathroom a few moments later, Shane is pulling back the covers of the freshly made bed.

“You changed the sheets?” I say with a smile as I reach him.

“Well, the other ones were soaked with champagne and cum, sweetheart,” he says with a grin as he pats the bed and indicates that I should get in.

I climb in and he pulls the covers over my body before sitting down beside me. “Are you tucking me in?” I grin.

“Sure am. You look beat,” he says as he brushes my hair back from my face.

“I am.” I stifle a yawn.

“You should count yourself lucky that I care about my brother so much, Jessie,” he says with a groan.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that Conor is taking a shower right now, and it’s his turn to spend the night with you. So, I’m going to walk out of here and let him have you all to himself.”

“But why should I count myself lucky that you’re leaving?” I frown at him. I wish he wouldn’t talk in riddles when my brain is already feeling like cotton candy.

“Because,” he licks his lips and bends his head low until his mouth is resting against my ear. “What we all just did was incredible and you’ve got me all fired up, sweetheart. So, if I was to climb into that bed with you, I would spend the whole night doing very, *very* bad things to you.”

Despite the many orgasms he and his brothers have given me tonight, and the fact that I don't think I could take any more of them, my insides still flutter at his words. "What kind of bad things?" I purr.

"Don't, Jessie," he growls.

"What are you going to do instead, then?" I murmur.

"I'm going to take a very cold shower and then I'm going to do some work," he says as he sits up.

Reaching up, I brush a lock of hair from his forehead. "You work too hard. You were supposed to be having the night off. We were supposed to do movie night."

He winks at me. "Doing you was much better."

Damn! He is so freaking hot. "Smooth talker," I say with a yawn as my eyelids flutter, heavy with sleep.

"Hey!" he says sharply, and my eyes snap wide open.

"Yeah?"

He brushes the back of his knuckles over my cheek. "No more guilt or feeling bad over mistakes we've made in the past. Okay?" he says with a frown.

"Okay."

"I mean it, Hacker. It's done."

"Have I ever told you how much I love you?"

"No. Tell me," he grins.

"I love you more than candy," I whisper as my eyes close again.

"Candy, huh? Damn, Jessie! That's some deep shit."

"Hmm," I mumble.

He laughs softly and then he leans down and presses a soft kiss on my forehead. "I love you too," he whispers and then he stands and leaves the room and I'm too tired and content to ask him to stay a little longer.

I MUST HAVE DRIFTED off because I'm woken by someone climbing into bed with me. I smile sleepily as Conor presses his body against my back and runs his hand over my hip.

"You okay, Angel?" he asks as he nuzzles my neck.

"Yes. I am deliciously achy and completely spent. I feel like I'm about to have the best night's sleep of my life," I purr as I stretch.

"Come here," he growls and I turn around and allow him to pull me onto his chest, where I snuggle against him as he wraps me in his huge arms. His hand skims my ass and he sucks in a breath. "Damn, Jessie. Why the hell aren't you wearing any panties?"

"Because you bruised my ass, Conor Ryan, and now it's covered in Arnica oil."

"I'm pretty sure you can still wear panties. What the fuck are you trying to do to me, Angel?" he groans.

"You can't seriously be good to go again?" I yawn as I close my eyes and wriggle myself even closer against him.

"Does it hurt?" he asks softly.

"No. I loved it. All of it," I sigh contentedly. "And I love you. You could never hurt me."

He doesn't answer me and I lift my head to look at his handsome face to find him staring into space. "Did you enjoy it?" I ask.

"Yes," he growls as he squeezes me tighter. "Too fucking much. I'm already thinking of all the filthy things I can do to you while you're tied to my bed. We're going to be doing so much more of that, Angel. But you never told me to stop."

I kiss his chest and then press my cheek against him. He's right. I'm not sure when I would have asked him to stop if Shane hadn't intervened, or whether I would have asked at all. I can't get past the feeling that I'd be somehow admitting defeat if I did. I want to take everything he can give me. "I trust you to never hurt me, Conor," I whisper as I close my

eyes and listen to the sound of his steady heartbeat thumping against my ear as I drift off to sleep.

CHAPTER

FORTY

JESSIE

“Jessie,” Conor says softly as he gently nudges me awake. “We need to get up, Angel.”

I blink in the dark room. Surely it’s not morning already? I feel like I’ve barely been asleep for a few hours.

As I open my eyes, I see Mikey sitting on the edge of the bed with a serious expression on his face. “What’s wrong?” I ask as I sit up.

“Shane needs to see us all,” Mikey replies.

“Is everything okay? Is it Liam?” I ask as my heart starts to race.

“Liam’s fine. Shane just called me down at the club and asked me to come up and wake you guys when I got here. I don’t know what’s going on,” Mikey says.

“I’ve got a good idea,” Conor adds with a sigh as he sits up, taking me with him. He presses a kiss against my temple. “Can you go get Liam, Angel? And meet us in Shane’s office?”

“Yes. Of course,” I say as I blink at him, still groggy from being woken from a deep sleep, before I climb out of bed.

Mikey takes my hand as I pass him and lifts it to his lips, dusting them lightly over my knuckles. “Thanks, Red.”

I WALK along the hallway to Liam’s room, wondering what’s so urgent that Shane has pulled Mikey from work and woken the rest of us up in the middle of the night. My stomach twists itself into a knot as I run through the possible scenarios in my

head. If all four brothers are in the apartment, then at least I know they're all safe, so what the hell is it?

I open the door to Liam and Mikey's bedroom and can't help but smile at Liam's sleeping form. He lies on his back with his arms above his head and his beautiful, tattooed torso on display as his covers rest just beneath his abs.

Walking over to the bed, I sit beside him and place my hand on his chest, my fingers flexing over the hard muscles. "Liam," I say with a gentle nudge and he groans softly.

"Liam," I say louder and he stirs until he's looking up at me.

"Hey, baby," he smiles sleepily. "You miss me?"

I roll my eyes. "Shane wants to see all of us."

"Why?" he asks, his handsome face pulled into a frown.

"I'm not sure. Everyone is okay, though. Mikey and Conor are in his office waiting for us."

He sits up quickly, throwing the covers off himself.

I SIT on the sofa between Conor and Liam while Mikey hovers nervously near Shane's desk as he watches his eldest brother pulling a bottle of Midleton, Chapter One, out of his bottom drawer. I swallow hard. That is a forty thousand dollar bottle of whiskey, the kind you drink on very special, or very sad occasions.

As soon as Conor sees the bottle, his entire body tenses. Lifting his arm, he reaches behind me and places his hand on Liam's shoulder. There are five crystal tumblers on Shane's desk, and we all watch in silence as he pours a generous measure into each one. When he is done, he nods to Mikey, who passes a glass to each of us on the sofa and it's only when we are each holding a drink that Shane finally speaks. "Patrick Ryan died two hours ago," he says as he looks between his three younger brothers. Then he raises his glass in a toast. "May the evil cunt rot in hell for all eternity."

"For eternity," Mikey echoes before we each down the expensive whiskey. The brothers down theirs in one gulp

while I take two. Mikey slams his glass down onto the desk. “Cunt,” he mutters under his breath.

Conor has his eyes closed and his fist clenched as he keeps one arm behind me with his hand on Liam’s shoulder. Liam stares into space while Shane sits back in his chair and rubs a hand over his jaw. The room is thick with tension and emotion and I can think of nothing else to do other than sit here with them and let them feel whatever it is they need to. I place one hand on Conor’s thigh while I reach for Liam’s hand and he entwines his fingers with mine, squeezing softly and then we all just sit there quietly.

It’s Conor who eventually breaks the silence. “I’m not going to his funeral,” he spits.

“I know,” Shane replies softly.

“Me neither,” Mikey snarls. “I’m never setting foot in Ireland ever again.” He looks over at Liam, who nods his agreement.

“I know,” Shane says again with a heavy sigh. “But I’ll have to go. I need to sort out his estate. And...” he shakes his head and pours another shot of whiskey.

“One of us needs to,” Conor finishes for him. “If only to make sure that the fucker is really dead.”

“Exactly,” Shane replies before he downs another shot.

“You can’t go on your own,” Conor shakes his head.

“I’m not planning to. Erin will be coming.”

I tense instinctively at the mention of her name. Despite the circumstances, I hate that she’s going to Ireland with him.

Conor reaches across and squeezes my thigh as Shane looks at me and I swallow, wondering if he noticed my reaction and whether it’s going to be an issue. I promised him I’d let the Erin thing go, but I can’t help how the thought of him and her alone together makes me feel.

“The ice queen?” Mikey snorts. “You might as well be going alone.”

“Well, I was also hoping for some warmer company too,” he replies, still looking at me. “You fancy a trip to Ireland, Jessie?”

“Me?” I blink at him.

“Yes,” he frowns.

My mouth is suddenly incredibly dry. This seems like a big thing for us, but there is only one answer to his question. “Yes. Of course I’ll come with you.”

“How long will you be gone for?” Conor asks.

“A week. Maybe. Ten days, tops,” Shane replies.

“Fuck!” Mikey hisses. “Ten days? You make sure you look after our girl if you’re taking her there, Shane.”

“I will,” he frowns.

“I can look after myself,” I remind them.

“We know,” Conor whispers as he kisses my cheek. “You make sure you take care of our boy too,” he whispers in my ear.

“I will,” I whisper back.

“When are you going?” Liam asks.

“Tomorrow afternoon. There is no rush to get there before then.” Shane replies.

“You taking Alejandro’s plane?” Conor asks.

“Yes,” Shane replies.

“Who is Alejandro?” I ask with a frown.

“A friend of ours,” Conor replies. “You’ll like him.”

“And he has his own plane?”

“He has two,” Shane says as he downs another shot of whisky.

“Wow! So we’re going to Ireland on a private jet?” I ask.

“Yep,” Shane nods.

“It has a bedroom and everything.” Liam turns and grins at me.

“Nice!”

“Family dinner tonight, then?” Mikey says.

“Will you make a huge turkey dinner?” Liam asks. “Like with all the trimmings?”

Mikey walks over and ruffles his twin brother’s hair. “With every trimming there is, if that’s what you all want?”

“Like Thanksgiving in July?” I offer.

“Hmm. If we celebrated Thanksgiving,” Liam says.

“You’ve never celebrated Thanksgiving?” I open my mouth in surprise.

“We’re Irish!” Mikey frowns at me.

“But you live in America! How have you avoided like the second biggest holiday?”

“We’re usually working,” Conor shrugs.

Mikey sits on the arm of the sofa next to Liam. “Thanksgiving in July it is then. You going to help me out, Jessie?”

“Yes,” I smile. I love to cook and Mikey has been teaching me so many new dishes. It will be nice to teach him a few traditional American ones.

“It’s a date then. Dinner at eight before Shane and Jessie go to Ireland to spit on Patrick Ryan’s grave,” Mikey declares.

CHAPTER

FORTY-ONE

CONOR

As I watch Mikey, Shane and Jessie carrying the steaming trays of food into the dining room, I can't help smiling. Jessie has a huge grin on her face as she places the mashed potatoes and string beans on the table, and Mikey and Shane bicker good-naturedly over who is going to carve the turkey.

In the ten years we've been in the States, we've never celebrated Thanksgiving – not in the traditional sense anyway. It's not a thing in Ireland so it's not a part of our family history or tradition. But Jessie is insistent that we're going to change that this year, so our Thanksgiving in July is going to be our trial run. And so, she has insisted we have a full on traditional Thanksgiving dinner, which Mikey was more than happy to put together, with the help of his sexy, red-headed sous chef. And I can't think of a time in my life when I have ever had so much to be thankful for.

Liam sits beside me. He still has a way to go until he's back to full strength, but he's getting there, and with Jessie's help, his emotional scars are healing too.

Shane sets the turkey down and sits with a satisfied sigh, as though he cooked the bird rather than just carried it in from the kitchen. He squeezes Jessie's ass as she brushes past him and she leans down and rewards him with a kiss. As she takes her own seat, he continues watching her and the smile on his face is like nothing I've ever seen before. The two of them have worked out whatever it was that was keeping them apart, and the change in the apartment, and in our family, is

pronounced. It seems like at last we're all in sync and I can't remember a single moment in my life when I have ever felt this content.



“WHAT’S FOR DESSERT?” Liam groans as he rubs a hand over his stomach and leans back in his chair.

“Pumpkin pie,” Jessie says with a smile. “I made it.”

“I’ve never tried that.” Liam narrows his eyes at her. “Is it sweet?”

“Very,” Jessie replies.

“Won’t be the sweetest thing we’ve ever eaten on this table though,” Shane says as he slides a hand onto Jessie’s thigh and squeezes, causing Mikey and Liam to groan their agreement while I laugh as Jessie’s cheeks flush pink.

“It’s Thanksgiving dinner, boys,” she admonishes us. “Can we keep it PG?”

Shane leans across and plants a soft kiss on her neck. “Nothing is ever PG with you around, sweetheart.”

She turns to me, as though I might be the one who agrees with her.

“He’s right, Angel,” I say with a shrug. “But as much as I would love to spread you open on this table and eat your pussy instead of your pumpkin pie, I think I’m too full of turkey and potatoes right now.”

She opens her mouth in mock horror and swats me on the arm. “Conor!”

“I have to agree, bro,” Liam groans. “But I still want some pie.”

“Pie now. Pussy later!” Mikey declares, causing everyone at the table to start laughing, which we’re still doing a few moments later when the intercom rings signaling someone is downstairs at the back entrance to our building. The one nobody ever uses, because we rarely have visitors, and if we

do, they come through the club. Very few people even know about the entrance at the back.

“Who the fuck is that?” Mikey frowns as he grabs the laptop from the cabinet nearby and opens up the security system. As we all look at the screen, it is Jessie who recognizes our visitor first.

“That’s Vlad,” she says with a frown. “What is he doing here?”

Mikey peers closer at the screen. “Looks like he’s alone too.”

“Since when did the head of the Bratva travel without a bodyguard?” Shane frowns.

“And more importantly, why the hell is he here?” I snarl. I knew this fucking happy feeling was too good to be true.

“Let me talk to him,” Shane nods his head toward the laptop and Mikey presses a button that allows him to speak.

“Vlad. I’m surprised to see you here after our last encounter,” Shane says.

“Mr. Ryan. I need to speak to Jessie. Is she there?”

Jessie opens her mouth to speak, but Shane holds his hand up and shakes his head and she remains quiet. “Why do you want Jessie?” he snarls.

“I have something to discuss with her.”

“You heard of this thing called a telephone?” Shane snaps as Jessie frowns at the screen.

“It is not the kind of news I want to give over the telephone.”

“You come alone?” Shane asks.

“Yes.”

Shane nods to Mikey who turns off the microphone so we can speak freely.

“What the hell has made the head of the Bratva come here alone to speak to Jessie?” Mikey asks with a scowl.

“I don’t know. But I need to find out,” Jessie replies.

“It could be a trap, Angel,” I remind her.

“I don’t think so. He was so lovely to me when we met in Central Park. Besides, he’s alone. And I don’t know. I kind of think Vlad is a man of his word. I don’t think he’s here to start something.”

“I’ve got a bad feeling about this, but it’s your call, Jessie. You want to hear what he has to say?” Shane frowns at her.

“I have to, Shane,” she says with a shake of her head. “For him to come all the way here?”

Shane sits back and rubs a hand over his jaw before he glances at me. I nod at him because Jessie is right. There is no way we can turn him away when he has something important to tell her.

“You’d better go let our guest in then,” Shane says to Mikey with an arch of one eyebrow.

FIVE MINUTES LATER, the head of the Bratva is sitting at our dining table eyeing the remainder of our Thanksgiving feast, but as we’re not sure yet why he’s even here, he hasn’t been afforded any of our Irish hospitality.

Jessie sits between me and Liam, while Mikey stands behind us and Shane sits to our left. He leans back in his chair, allowing Jessie to do the talking.

“What did you need to speak to me about, Vlad?” she asks.

He glances between me and my brothers, his eyes narrowed in suspicion.

“You can talk in front of them. We have no secrets,” she says as she leans forward, resting her arms on the table and I realize she would have made an excellent head of the Bratva. She is tougher than anyone else I know.

Vlad clears his throat before he leans forward too. He seems like he’s going to speak, but then he just stares at her and I sense Liam getting twitchy in his seat beside me.

“You look so much like your mother,” he finally says.

I hear the breath catch in Jessie's throat, and it makes me wonder whether Vlad has a game plan here. Is he trying to endear to him, or throw her off by mentioning her mom right now?

His eyes dart around the room before he focuses on Jessie. "I've been hearing rumors for a while. I didn't speak of it when we last met, because they were just rumors, and I prefer to deal in facts. But now I have proof, and I thought you should be the first to know."

Jessie visibly trembles in her seat and I take hold of her hand and squeeze reassuringly, although my own anxiety levels have just ratcheted up several notches too.

"Proof of what?" she asks, and the tremor in her voice is clearly audible.

Vlad's Adam's apple bobs in his throat as he swallows, and I know what he's going to say before he opens his mouth, and I'm pretty sure Jessie does too.

Despite that, it still hits me like a truck when he speaks. "The Wolf. He's back."



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RYAN REIGN

CHAPTER I

JESSIE

Adrenaline courses around my body and blood thunders in my ears as I sit at the dining table trying to process the information I've just been given.

The Wolf is back.

Conor rests a reassuring hand on my thigh, while Liam places one on my shoulder as they sit either side of me. We have just finished our 'Thanksgiving in July' dinner, but the celebrations have now come to an abrupt halt.

I'm vaguely aware of the Ryan brothers talking to Vlad, the head of the Bratva, and the man who's just brought my world crashing down around me. Suddenly, their voices seem so far away. The room is spinning and the air has become thick and cloying, making it difficult to swallow. I reach for my throat as I gasp for breath. Something is happening. Has Vlad somehow poisoned me? Is he really working for the Wolf?

"Jessie!" Conor's voice cuts through the fog as he takes my free hand and curls his fingers around it.

I turn to him, my eyes wide as I struggle to breathe. He places his other hand on my cheek while he circles the pad of his thumb over the pulse point on my wrist. I look down at his strong fingers wrapped around my arm.

"Look at me," he commands.

Lifting my head, I look into his deep brown eyes.

"Breathe, Angel," he says softly.

"I can't." I shake my head as I draw in ragged breaths.

“Yes, you can. Breathe with me, okay?”

I nod.

“In.” He takes a deep breath and I try to mimic his movements. “Out.” He releases. He continues doing that and I try to keep pace with him. The room is silent, as though there is only him and me in it. I don’t know how long it takes but eventually my breathing matches his and I no longer feel like I’m about to suffocate.

He smiles at me. “Better?”

“Yes,” I whisper, and he lifts my hand to his lips and presses a soft kiss on my wrist.

I turn back to the table to see four pairs of anxious eyes trained on me and heat flushes over my cheeks. I can’t believe I just had a panic attack.

Liam reaches for my other hand. He squeezes gently and I offer him a faint smile. When I catch Mikey’s eye, he winks at me, but Shane goes back to staring at our visitor.

“So why is it you’re so certain he is back, Vlad?” he asks.

Vlad looks directly at me when he responds. “There have been a few hits recently that have had his particular brand.”

“The one in Belarus?” Shane says, making me turn my attention to him. He knew about this and he didn’t tell me?

“Yes. I see you’ve been following him yourself?” Vlad asks with one arched eyebrow.

“I’ve been tracking hits that have had similarities with the Wolf’s style, yes,” Shane says with a nod as he glances at me before turning his attention back to Vlad. “There have been more?”

“One in Kazakhstan.”

Shane frowns. “I didn’t hear about that one.”

“Hmm.” Vlad rubs a hand over his beard and nods softly. “Politics. It was kept very quiet.”

“Hang on a minute,” I say, finally finding my voice. “You’re telling me that the Wolf has been active again? For how long? And why didn’t you tell me?” I direct my last question to Shane.

“I only knew about the hit in Belarus. And while it had similarities to the Wolf, I wasn’t sure it was him.”

“You should have told me.”

“Told you what, Jessie?” He frowns at me. “There was nothing to tell.”

I swallow the retort that lodges in my throat. “I didn’t even know you were looking for him,” I say instead.

Conor squeezes my hand as Shane shakes his head in exasperation. “You didn’t think I’d be trying to find him? After everything he did to you? When even the mention of his name sends you into a blind panic?”

Tears prick at my eyes as I realize he’s been looking out for me all this time. Of course he has. It’s what he does. I can’t deal with him right now though and I turn back to Vlad. “What makes you so sure it’s him?” I pull my hand from Conor’s and wipe the tears from my eyes. Leaning forward, I place my arms on the table. This is no time to get overemotional.

“As well as the two I just mentioned, there was a hit in Moscow last night. Same MO and this time my sources tell me the Wolf has taken full credit. He is now back online and offering his services to the highest bidder.”

I feel my heart starting to race again but I take a deep breath and remember the sound of Conor’s soothing voice. I reach for his hand once more and the warmth of his skin on mine is comforting. “You’re sure it’s really him, Vlad?” I ask, desperately trying to keep the tremor from my voice.

“Unfortunately I am,” he says with a solemn nod of his head. “I suspect Alexei’s death has allowed him to slink out of whatever hole it was he crawled into. But he’s using the same call sign and accounts that he did in the past, even though such methods are now somewhat outdated.”

“Do you have any idea who it could be?”

“None.” He shakes his head and looks at Shane again. “You?”

“No,” he replies with a deep sigh.

Vlad clears his throat and turns back to me. “If there is anything I can do, Jessica,” he says softly.

I smile at him although my insides have turned to jelly, and not in a good way. “Thank you.”

He pushes his chair back and stands. “I’ll leave you to your dinner.”

“Can you show Vlad out, Mikey?” Shane growls as he rubs a hand over his jaw, his eyes narrowed as he appears deep in thought.

“Sure.” Mikey gets up and escorts Vlad out of the dining room.

Once Vlad is gone, Shane stands and walks around the table to me, holding out his hand. “We’ve got a lot to talk about. Let’s go sit in the den?”

I stare up at him blankly, still completely blindsided by Vlad’s revelation. “Okay,” I whisper.

“Con, can you get the good whiskey?” he asks as he pulls me from my chair.

“Will do,” Conor replies. He gives me a soft kiss on the cheek before he leaves the room.

TEN MINUTES LATER, I’m sitting on the sofa in the den, sandwiched between the twins with a glass of Midleton Chapter One in my hand, while Shane and Conor sit opposite us.

I take a sip of the expensive whiskey and the warm, rich liquid soothes my throat.

“How are you feeling, Angel?” Conor finally asks.

“I don’t know.” I shrug. “I mean, I always suspected he was still alive, so I suppose this shouldn’t come as a shock. But to find out he’s active again...”

“Yeah. It’s fucked up, Red,” Mikey says as he puts an arm around my shoulder.

“Did you find out anything else about him, Shane?” I ask.

He shakes his head and takes a swig of his whiskey. “Nothing at all. If I had, sweetheart, I would have told you. I wouldn’t have kept the Belarus hit from you if I’d known it was him.”

I nod, at a loss for what else to say.

“What about your trip to Ireland?” Conor asks.

Shane looks at me and my heart skips a beat. “I still have to go. But I can put it off for a few days if you need me to, Jessie?” he offers.

“No,” I shake my head. “We can still go tomorrow. Nothing has changed. We knew the Wolf was still out there.”

“*We?*” Conor narrows his eyes at me. “You’re not going, Angel.”

“Why not?” I frown.

“Are you being serious right now?”

“Yes. I still want to go to Ireland and I don’t see why I shouldn’t. Hasn’t the Wolf already dictated enough of my life?”

“Shane?” Conor turns to his older brother.

“If Jessie wants to come, then it’s up to her,” he says with a shrug as he downs the last of his drink.

Liam and Mikey stay silent and look down at their glasses. They know better than to get in the middle of their older brothers.

“She’s safer here with me and the twins,” Conor snarls.

“She’ll be just as safe with me,” Shane fires back.

“Boys. You must agree with me?” Conor says to the twins.

“It’s up to Jessie what she wants to do, Con,” Mikey says and I place my hand on his thigh and squeeze. I love that he always has my back.

“Liam?” Conor snaps.

“I don’t want her to go either, bro, but...”

“For fuck’s sake!” Conor hisses. “I can’t believe you’re even considering taking her there, Shane!”

“You think I’m not capable of protecting her?” Shane growls at him.

“Not as well as three of us can here,” Conor growls back as he glares at his older brother.

“Hey!” I lean forward and slam my now empty glass down on the coffee table. “I’m sitting right here.”

The two of them stop glaring at each other and look at me.

“In case you haven’t noticed, I am perfectly capable of looking after myself.” Conor opens his mouth to speak but I don’t allow him the chance to. “And I hate to break it to you, boys, but if the Wolf wants me, he’ll find me. He’s a patient man. He’ll wait until the perfect moment and then he’ll strike, whether that’s in two days or ten years. And I’m not going to spend the rest of my life hiding in here waiting for that to happen.”

“Red!” Mikey snaps as he sits forward, cupping my chin in his hand, he turns my face to his. “You know we would never let him take you. I promise.”

I stare at him. I wish I could believe him. But when I see the look of anguish in his eyes, I don’t have the heart to tell him that I can’t. “I know,” I whisper instead.

“So, you’re still going to Ireland tomorrow then?” Conor scowls.

Shane looks between me and Conor and sighs. “If the reason the Wolf is back is because Alexei is dead, then there is every chance he knows that Jessie is here too. She’s safer in Ireland than she is here.”

Conor leans back in his chair and runs a hand over his jaw.

“Shane’s right,” I say. “Besides, I’m not just going to sit around in this apartment, waiting for the Wolf to come and

pick me off. Now that he's active again, I'm sure I'll be able to track him, but let me have one more week of not being completely consumed by him first. Please?"

Conor rolls his eyes but he doesn't speak.

"The Wolf will have no idea I'm in Ireland," I add.

"And I promise I will take care of our girl, boys," Shane offers as he shoots me a look that tells me not to open my mouth and contradict him. Then he stands and places his empty glass on the coffee table. He walks over to me and grips my chin in his strong hand, tilting my head to look at him. "I'm going to pack. I'll meet you by the elevator at ten tomorrow morning."

"Okay," I blink at him. It's only six p.m. so why am I not going to see him until morning?

He turns to his brothers. "You've got sixteen more hours with our girl, boys." Then he walks out of the room and I'm left with his three siblings.

"What do you feel like doing, baby?" Liam says softly as he curls his fingers around mine. "We can watch a movie if you like. We never did get to that pumpkin pie."

"Or pussy," Mikey mumbles beside me.

I turn to him, my mouth open as I feign my indignation, but the truth is I can't think of a better way to take my mind off the Wolf. And I'm going away from them for at least a week, and despite how much I'm looking forward to my trip with Shane, I'm going to miss these guys like crazy.

"You're really thinking about pussy right now?" I nudge him in the ribs.

"I'm *always* thinking about your pussy, Red," he says with an apologetic shrug.

I push myself up from the sofa. "You can come help me pack if you like," I offer.

Mikey and Liam are beside me before I can even finish the sentence but Conor stays in his chair. He frowns at me. I know

he's worried about me but he must see that Shane and I are right.

I hold out my hand to him. "I'm not going to Ireland with you mad at me, Conor Ryan."

"I'm not mad at you, Angel," he says as he stands and walks toward us. He leans down and presses a soft kiss on my temple. "But I have something to do. I'll come find you later."

CHAPTER 2

CONOR

I watch Jessie and my brothers walk to her room before I head off to find Shane. Vlad's announcement has completely floored me. I suppose that Shane has a point about her being safer in Ireland. If the Wolf knows she's here then it's only a matter of time before he comes for her. Despite that, I can't shake the feeling that she would be safer here with me and the twins. Safer with me. I would never let anyone harm a hair on her head, even if it meant never letting her out of my sight for a second. I consider the possibility of going with them, even though I've sworn never to set foot in Ireland again, but I would for her.

Shane is in his room when I find him. I walk inside and sit on the bed while he packs his small suitcase.

"I'll keep her safe, Con," he says, reading my mind. We've always been in sync, he and I, but I don't agree with him on this one.

"I know you will, Shane..."

"But?"

"You'll be distracted there. You won't be able to watch her every second of every day."

He closes his suitcase and shoves his hands into his trouser pockets. "The Wolf is in Moscow. I'm certain if he knows about Alexei then he knows about Jessie too, and it's only a matter of time before he comes here looking for her, Con." He shakes his head and I see the worry etched on his face.

"You really think she'll be safer there with you?"

He nods at me. “Liam still isn’t one hundred percent. You’ll be running the businesses. Mikey will be run off his feet helping you. There are more distractions here, and you know she won’t stand for being locked up in this place.”

“And in Ireland?”

“She’ll either be with me or she’ll be in the suite at the hotel.”

I let out a long breath and close my eyes. “I can’t believe he’s back, Shane. I was starting to believe he was dead. I think she was, too.”

“I know. But once we get back, we can focus our energies on finding him. When I’ve sorted out Patrick’s estate and tidied up all of our affairs, there will be nothing tying us to Ireland any longer. Liam will have had another week to recover. We’ll be back to full strength and we can focus on what needs to be done.”

“I suppose you’re right.” I look up at him. “You sure you don’t need me to come with you?”

He narrows his eyes at me. “You want to come?”

“No!” I shake my head. “But I will if I need to. If you both need me to.”

“I need you to take care of business here, Con. Jessie and I will be fine.”

“You just want her to yourself for a week,” I say, throwing a pair of balled up socks at him.

He shrugs and grins at me. “Yep.”

“Lucky fucker.”

“I sure am,” he winks at me.

“I’ll miss you both,” I say. The thought of him in Ireland makes me feel something I can’t quite put my finger on. Perhaps I’m worried that he’ll remember how much he loved the place and never come back home.

“I’ll miss you too, Con. We’ve spent more time apart these past few months than we have in our whole lives. She’ll miss

you too,” he adds, “so you’d better go and give her the send-off she deserves.”

“Yep,” I say as I stand. “I’ll catch you in the morning, bro.”

“I love her just as much as you do, you know?” he says as I’m near the door.

I turn to him and frown. “I know.”

He nods. “I know it might not always seem like it, that’s all. But I would die before I let anyone hurt her.”

“Well, yeah. How much you’re into Jessie isn’t quite the secret that you think it is, bro,” I chuckle. “Anyone can see you’ve got it bad for her.”

He picks up the socks I just threw at him and launches them across the room at my head. “Asshole.”

CHAPTER 3

LIAM

Jessie zips up her suitcase and rests her hands on the top. “You think I’ve packed enough?” she asks with a flash of her eyebrows.

“You’ve packed plenty. If it was me you were going on a week long vacation with, you’d barely need a thing,” Mikey chuckles as he slides his arms around her waist. “Because we would never leave the hotel room.”

She grins as she turns in his arms. “I’m pretty sure this is not that kind of vacation.”

“Every vacation with you is that kind of vacation, Red,” he growls as he squeezes her ass and runs his nose along her throat. “You think Shane isn’t thinking exactly the same thing as I am right now?”

“I’m sure he’s thinking of sorting your family’s estate,” she purrs.

I put the suitcase on the floor and lie back on the bed as I watch the two of them.

“How many pair of panties do you think you can wear between now and when you leave tomorrow?” Mikey asks as he arches an eyebrow at her.

“Not many. Why?” she laughs.

“Because your clean panties just don’t do it for me the same, Red, and I’ll need a supply to keep me going while you’re away.”

She opens her mouth, feigning her horror as she pushes him in the chest. “You and my panties. You’re such a deviant, Mikey Ryan!”

“I’m a deviant?” Mikey looks over her shoulder at me and rolls his eyes. “This coming from the woman who needs all four of us to keep her satisfied.”

“I do not *need* all four of you to keep me satisfied,” she protests.

“Really?” Mikey grins at me.

“Yes, really.”

“If that’s true, how about we send Liam out then and I’ll have you all to myself?” he suggests.

I frown at him. That’s not happening and he knows it.

Jessie turns to me and smiles. “No way. I said I don’t *need* all four of you, but that doesn’t mean I don’t *want* all of you.”

I smile at her as she chews on her bottom lip. “Come here, baby.” I pat the top of my thighs. Mikey releases her from his embrace and she crawls onto the bed and straddles me. I reach up and brush her hair from her face. The dark brown dye she used when she went to Arizona is finally fading and her hair is almost back to her natural shade of red. Packing for her trip seems to have taken her mind off the Wolf at least, but it’s also a reminder that this time tomorrow she is going to be thousands of miles away from us.

“I’m going to miss you.”

“I’m going to miss you too,” she breathes.

I reach for the t-shirt she’s wearing, which is one of Conor’s, and peel it off over her head. She lifts her arms in compliance and my cock twitches against her pussy. Mikey watches us as I reach forward and unhook her bra before sliding it over her arms and letting her gorgeous tits fall free. When I cup them in my hands she moans softly and I rock my hips against her as my cock hardens further.

“Liam,” she pants.

“Come up here,” I touch my lips and she looks down at me. She leans forward, about to kiss my lips, but I shake my head. “Not your mouth, baby. I want your pussy. Right here.”

I see her swallow as she sits back up but then she moves up the bed until she is hovering over my neck and shoulders.

“Closer, Jessie,” I growl. “I want your pussy on my face, baby.”

She shifts closer and I wrap one arm around her waist and pull her toward me as I tug her panties to the side with my free hand. “Let’s make these panties nice and wet for Mikey,” I say as I lick the length of her slick folds before sucking her swollen clit into my mouth. Fuck! She tastes so fucking good. How am I supposed to live without this pussy for the next week, or maybe even longer?

“Liam.” She shudders as I flick my tongue over her clit and suck her sweet juices into my mouth. I love making her come this way.

She grinds herself on my face and my balls draw up into my stomach as her soft moans and whimpers vibrate through her body.

I grab her ass before I slide a finger inside and she inches forward, pressing her sweet pussy further against me. As I graze her with my teeth and move my finger in and out of her ass, I feel her teetering on the edge of oblivion. A final flick of my tongue has her tipping over the edge and she comes all over my face, her thighs squeezing me instinctively as she rides the waves of her orgasm and I suck and lick her through it.

When she has stopped trembling, I lift her hips and she looks down at me, those incredible blue eyes of hers dark with desire. I palm my cock through my sweatpants as I think about her lips around it in a few moments time, because our girl sucks cock like she was raised in a bordello.

Sure enough, when she can breathe again she moves down the bed and tugs the waistband of my sweatpants down. I brush her hair back so I can see those beautiful lips sucking

every inch of me. Mikey has been quietly watching the show up to now but he climbs on the bed behind her and starts to take off her panties.

“Let’s get these off you, Red. I don’t want any of my own cum spoiling them,” he chuckles as he peels them down over her legs and she helps him by wriggling herself out of them. Then she bends her head low, sticking her beautiful peach of an ass high in the air as she sucks my cock all the way to back of her throat.

“Fuck!” I hiss and watch as Mikey grabs her by the hips and prepares to rail her while she gives me head. When he drives into her a few seconds later, he forces my cock further down her throat and she groans loudly. The sound is muffled because her mouth is so full and her moans vibrate through my whole body. She pulls back, running her tongue the length of my shaft before swirling it over the tip and driving me crazy.

“Liam made your pussy so fucking wet, Red,” Mikey growls as he slams into her from behind. “You’re such a good girl the way you take us both.”

“Fuck, baby!” I hiss as I guide her head back down. I want to fuck every single part of her, and before this night is done, I will.

CHAPTER 4

CONOR

It's been over five hours since I left Jessie and the twins and I figure that will have been plenty of time for them to do what they need to do before I steal her away for the rest of the night. When I walk into her room the three of them are curled up in bed together, with her in the middle. They are kissing but not fucking. They don't stop when they hear me. We are all well used to sharing her now. It's not until I sit on the bed that the three of them take a breath and look at me.

"You all okay?" I ask.

"Hmm," Jessie purrs and stretches like a cat.

"Sure am," Liam says with a grin as he puts his arms behind his head.

"It's almost midnight," I say, looking at the clock on the nightstand.

"So?" Mikey shrugs.

"That means it's my turn." I wink at Jessie and she smiles at me.

"Aw, Con. You can stay in here with us if you like?" Mikey offers as he lifts the duvet, which makes Liam laugh out loud.

"Thanks for the offer, boys, but I think I'll pass." I reach out and take Jessie's hand and pull her up.

Liam sits up and kisses her softly. "We'll see you in the morning, baby."

“Yeah, Red,” Mikey agrees as he kisses her neck.

“Goodnight,” she whispers to them while she looks at me through her long dark lashes.

“Come on, Angel,” I stand, pulling her off the bed and picking her up. She wraps her arms around my neck and presses her face against my chest, her legs swinging in the air as I carry her to my room. Once we’re inside I set her on her feet and close the door behind us.

I trail my fingertips over her cheek and she shudders. “What did my little brothers do to you, Angel?”

“Everything,” she whispers as her cheeks flush pink.

“Shall we take a shower first then?” I arch one eyebrow at her.

“I think that’s probably for the best,” she purrs. Then she stands there, chewing on her bottom lip as she watches me pull off my t-shirt and sweatpants and toss them into the hamper.

Taking her hand, I lead her to the bathroom and turn on the shower. I step in first. After the day we’ve had, the hot water feels good on my face. I pull her in with me and she squeals as the first jets of water hit her body.

She presses herself against me. Her nipples are hard against my chest, making my cock stiffen. Reaching for the soap, I squeeze some into my palm and start to wash her. My soapy hands glide easily over her soft, wet skin and she moans as I wash every part of her body. I am desperate to fuck her, but this will be our last night together for over a week and I want to take my time. Patrick Ryan’s funeral date isn’t even set yet, so I suspect it will be closer to two weeks that she and Shane will be away.

I’m going to miss her so damn much. I feel like we only just got her back. And now we have the Wolf to worry about too. I sigh heavily and she looks up at me.

“Is everything okay?” she asks.

I slide my hands to her ass and press her body against mine. “Are you okay?”

“Here with you? Yes,” she whispers.

“And what about in Ireland with Shane?”

“I’ll be okay there too,” she says with a smile. “I am not going to hide away any longer, Conor. Besides, *he’s* in Russia, not Ireland.”

I sweep her wet hair back from her face. “As soon as you’re back, we’re going to find him. Okay?”

“Okay.”

I lean down and kiss her softly as the water runs over us, washing the soap from our bodies. She slides her tongue into my mouth and pulls my hair gently and my cock twitches against her stomach. “Conor,” she moans as her hands slide down my back, but I don’t want her here.

I break our kiss and shut off the water before handing her a towel and we both dry off. She watches me the whole time and I wonder what is going on in her head. She almost passed out earlier when Vlad told us about the Wolf, but she seems much calmer now.

I narrow my eyes at her. “What are you thinking about?”

“Those beautiful tattoos of yours,” she grins at me as she drops her towel onto the floor and steps closer to me.

“Anything else?”

“Yes. Your amazing fingers,” she breathes as she threads hers through mine before she pushes herself onto her tiptoes and dusts her lips over mine. “And your hot mouth.”

“Is that all?” I growl as I wrap my arms around her and squeeze her ass cheeks, because this is how my girl deals with all the shit that goes on in her life and in her head. And if she wants to use my body to deal with her trauma, then who am I to stop her?

Her hand slides down my chest until she grips my cock in her hand. “And this too,” she whispers, suddenly coy all of a sudden.

“Well, you’re going to get all three, Angel,” I growl as I lift her until she wraps her legs around my waist and I carry her back into the bedroom. I lower us down onto the bed until she is lying on her back and I am nestled between her thighs. I nudge the tip of my cock at her entrance and she winces for a split second before she smiles at me again.

“You want me to take it easy, Angel?”

“You don’t have to,” she whispers.

I narrow my eyes at her. “But that’s not what I asked you.” As much as I love to fuck her hard, tie her up and spank her ass, I love being gentle with her too. I have never fucked a woman the way I do her. I have never wanted to. But she makes me want to savor every single kiss. Every single touch. Every single whimper and moan. “I am happy to fuck you any way you need, Angel. I just want inside you.”

“Then taking it easy would be good,” she whispers.

“Good girl,” I mumble before I start to trail soft kisses over her neck and breasts, squeezing each one gently in my palm as I kiss the other and making her moan my name. Her fingers thread in my hair, urging me to the spot where she wants my mouth, but I take my time. Tasting her skin. Covering every inch of her with soft kisses and tiny bites until she is writhing beneath me.

“Please, Conor?” she groans and I smile against her skin.

“I thought you wanted to take it easy, Angel?”

“I do, but this is torture,” she pants.

“Torture? Really?”

“Delicious torture,” she smiles as my hand slides up her leg to the apex of her thighs and she bucks her hips, making me chuckle.

“Soon, Angel. I got you,” I murmur as I keep kissing the inside of her thighs until she is whimpering with need. When I finally slide a finger into her hot pussy, she is dripping wet. She moans with relief and my cock twitches at the sound.

“Oh, you’re so ready for me, Jessie,” I chuckle as I add a second finger and she grinds her hips onto them. As I pull them out again, they are thick with her cream and I can’t resist sucking them clean before I ease them back inside her. “You taste so fucking good, Angel,” I growl before I press the flat of my tongue against her opening and run it up to her clit. She shudders and bucks and begs me for more, but I keep taking my time. I finger fuck her slowly, drawing them in and out of her as I suck softly on her clit. Each time I push back inside her, she squeezes me, trying to pull me in deeper. Her cum is dripping down my fingers and onto my palm and I keep easing her to the edge of orgasm before bringing her back down.

“Conor, please let me come,” she groans and I take pity on her as I curl my fingers deep inside her, pressing down on her abdomen with my free hand before I flick my tongue over her clit as I suck harder.

“Oh, fuck! Conor!” She shouts my name as her orgasm tears through her body and she coats me in her slick juices. The sound of her wetness as I keep finger fucking her through it makes me feel like I’m on the edge myself.

When she finally stops shaking, I crawl up the bed and settle between her thighs. My cock is beyond weeping now as I press it against her. “Wrap your legs around me, Jessie,” I whisper and she does as she’s told. Completely submissive in my bed, even if she’s not when she’s out of it.

With my hands fisted in her hair, I seal my mouth over hers, kissing her so deeply that I can feel her moans of pleasure and relief rumble through me as I finally drive my cock inside her. She tries to break away but I keep her there, swallowing every single delicious sound she makes as I fuck her slowly.

This right here is everything I’ve ever wanted.

CHAPTER 5

JESSIE

Looking up at the private jet as it sits on the runway I feel like I've entered an alternate universe. "This is actually your buddy's plane?" I say to Shane as I stand there open mouthed.

"Yep." He grins at me. "We thought about getting one for ourselves, but we don't fly enough to get the use out of it, and Alejandro lets us use his if it's free."

"Wow! But imagine just being able to jump in your own plane and go anywhere you fancy, like the Bahamas?" I flash my eyebrows at him and he slides an arm around my waist.

"Flying to places where you will spend most of your time in nothing more than a string bikini might just change my mind, sweetheart," he whispers in my ear.

I shiver in anticipation at the thought, but the moment is ruined by Erin walking up behind us. "Shall we board?" she purrs as she sashays past in cream pants and a cashmere cardigan. Even dressed for travelling, she is the picture of elegance, while I'm dressed in skinny jeans, a tank top and a hooded sweatshirt.

Shane rolls his eyes, but he takes my hand and follows her to the steps of the plane. He looks effortlessly classy too. In dark jeans and a white polo shirt, he looks just as hot as he does in a suit. I wish that Erin wasn't on this flight with us. No matter what Shane says, I can't help feeling inferior whenever I'm around her. And I know that she hates me. Even when I try

to be nice to her, she just looks down her perfectly shaped nose at me.

I hold onto Shane's warm hand and remind myself that this is just an eight-hour flight, and after we land in Ireland, I'll get him all to myself, and hopefully we'll have to spend only a minimal amount of time in Erin's company.

As we board the plane, Shane introduces me to the pilot and co-pilot, Theo and Andrew, who give me a quick tour of the cockpit because I have never seen one before. Shane comes with me while Erin rolls her eyes at my lack of culture and goes to take her seat. Theo is young for a pilot, or so he seems to me, given that I've never met one before. He is tall, dark, and handsome, while Andrew is slightly older and has sandy blonde hair. Both of them are charming and cute, but they have nothing on my Irish bodyguard who keeps his hand on my waist or my ass the whole time I'm in there. I can't help but smile to myself because I love his possessive side.

As we walk into the cabin, I nearly bump into the stewardess. She is almost a carbon copy of Erin. Tall, blonde, skinny. "Jessie, this is Wendy," Shane introduces her.

She smiles widely. "It's a pleasure to meet you," she says as she extends her hand.

"You too," I smile back.

"This your first time flying?" she asks.

"No. I've flown coach a few times, but I've never left the States before and I've never been on a plane quite like this," I look around at the spacious cabin which is tastefully decorated in cream leather, walnut and chrome.

"Yeah, this plane is quite something," she giggles softly and I realize she is nothing like Erin. "If you could take your seats and I'll be along to take your drinks order before we take off."

"Thank you, Wendy," Shane says.

"No problem, Mr. Ryan," she purrs and I wonder if he has that effect on all women.

When we're settled in our seats, which are as big as armchairs, Wendy comes back through. "Can I get you anything?" she asks.

"I'll get a large Jameson on the rocks," Shane says.

"Jessie?"

"Umm." I shrug. "A Coke?" I don't drink a lot and I get giddy enough flying without having alcohol too. My stomach grumbles loudly and Shane chuckles. I was too excited to have anything to eat before we left the house.

"Anything else?" Wendy smiles. "We'll be serving a meal in a few hours, but we have snacks?"

"Cheetos?" I arch an eyebrow.

She nods her head. "Perfect."

I sit back in my seat and look out of the window. I could get used to this kind of living. I can hear Wendy taking Erin's order now. "A Dry Martini and some green olives," she purrs and I roll my eyes. Even her order is classy. If that isn't a perfect example of how different she and I are, then I don't know what is.

AFTER WENDY SERVES OUR DRINKS, the plane takes off and I watch out the window like an excited toddler while Shane and Erin talk about some land he wants to sell now that his father is dead. I listen at first, until they start to discuss deeds and property law, and then I switch off and concentrate on the view.

"You okay?" Shane says as he leans forward and places his warm hand on my knee.

I turn to him. "Yeah, just admiring the view."

"Me too," he says quietly and my pulse quickens. Why is everything he does and says so damn hot? "You didn't eat your Cheetos." He nods to the bag on the small table beside me.

He reaches over and picks them up before opening the bag and eating one. He hands them to me and his fingers brush mine when I take them from him, sending sparks of electricity skittering over my skin.

“Those things will turn your insides orange,” Erin snipes as she pierces an olive with a cocktail stick before sucking it into her mouth.

“Maybe,” I shrug, “but they taste pretty good.”

“Hmm,” she sniffs as she looks at me.

If only to try and make this entire journey more bearable, I try to make conversation with her. “I’ve never tried olives,” I say as I toss a Cheeto into my mouth and chew, swallowing it before I add, “some guy I once worked with told me they taste like pussy.”

Shane was in the unfortunate position of having just taken a mouthful of his whiskey and the sound that he makes as he almost chokes on his drink, while simultaneously laughing and coughing, makes me giggle.

I look over at Erin, who simply rolls her eyes in disgust as Shane tries to stop whiskey from running out of his nose. It is a beautiful sight to see the usually cool, calm and collected alpha I have come to love, so completely undone, and I don’t think he has ever looked sexier.

When he finally regains his ability to breathe normally he looks at me. “Fuck, Jessie,” he says as he shakes his head.

“Well, do they?” I ask with an arch of one eyebrow.

“Not like any pussy I’ve ever tasted,” he replies as he starts laughing again.

“Well, you would know,” Erin says, almost inaudibly. “You’ve tasted every pussy on this plane.”

Shane stops laughing and scowls at her as I blink at him. There are three women on this plane. I think of the beautiful, tall, blonde stewardess who just served us. Damn! He really does have a type.

“Erin!” he snarls.

I blink at him in confusion. “You and Wendy?”

He takes a deep breath and opens his mouth to answer but Erin speaks first. “Oh, yes. You and she had quite the trip to

Italy, didn't you?" she says over the rim of her martini glass.

"Italy?"

"It was an extended layover."

"An extended lay," Erin snorts.

"Enough!" Shane barks to her.

I sit back in my seat feeling wounded. I know that Shane has slept with plenty of women before me. It shouldn't be a big deal. But the fact that, once again, Erin has been allowed to blindside me, stings. Not to mention he took her to Italy! Like one of the most romantic places in the world.

He leans forward and places a hand on my knee. "I didn't realize she'd be on this flight, or I would have told you before," he says quietly.

I turn my head to look out of the window and hear him sigh as he leans back in his seat.

Only a few minutes have passed when he stands up. He holds his hand out to me so it is practically in my face and I can't ignore him.

I want to, but then I see Erin watching us from the corner of my eye. I know where Shane wants to take me. There is a bedroom on this plane and isn't that how we always work out our differences? A part of me would like to tell him to take one of his other conquests in there instead, but if only to wipe the smug grin of that woman's face, I take his hand and follow him to the back of the plane.

I step inside the room and he closes the door behind us. He reaches for my hand but I back away from him.

He frowns at me. "I didn't know she was going to be on this flight. I haven't seen her for years."

"You should have told me once you knew that she was," I say as I fold my arms across my chest.

"Really? How would that have gone? Jessie, meet Wendy. We used to fuck back in the day."

"You don't have to be sarcastic," I snap.

“For fuck’s sake!” He runs his hands through his hair. “So we fucked? I fucked a lot of women before I met you, Jessie.”

“Okay,” I say as I take a step towards him. “How would you have felt if Erin had just casually announced that I had sucked every cock on this plane?”

His face darkens as he glares at me. “Then one of us would be learning to fly a plane real quick, sweetheart, because you only just met them today!”

I shake my head. “You know what I mean, Shane. Don’t make out like I’m always being unreasonable. You took our stewardess to Italy and fucked each other’s brains out, and Erin had to be the one to tell me.”

“I didn’t take her to Italy. She was working on the plane. We hit it off.”

“So you did fuck her brains out then?” I ask, noticing he didn’t deny that.

“Jessie!”

Of course he did. This man fucks like it’s an Olympic sport.

“It was just sex. Nothing more,” he adds softly.

“Well you and I were just about sex once. Remember?”

He bends his head lower, his breath dusting over my cheek. “You and I both know that we have *never* been just about sex, sweetheart. Now, stop being a brat or I will take off my belt and spank your ass so hard that everyone on this plane will hear.”

Why the thought of that makes my pussy contract in anticipation is beyond me, but this man does things to my body that I can barely fathom. “I doubt they would hear it over the engines,” I whisper as I slide my hands around his neck and curl his hair around my fingertips.

“You willing to bet your ass on that?” he breathes.

“No.” I give a small shake of my head. As much as I love his spankings, I really don’t want Wendy or Erin to hear that.

“But are there any more little secrets that Erin might spring on me?”

“None that I can think of. But we might run into an ex-girlfriend or two when we’re in Ireland. You okay with that?” He slides his arms around my waist.

“Yes. But please let me know when I do.”

“I will.” He bends his head and brushes his lips over mine, taunting me with the promise of a kiss.

“Did you fuck Wendy in this bed?” I whisper and he pushes me back against the wall, sliding one of his hands up my body, he wraps it around my throat, tilting my neck slightly so I am staring up into his incredible green eyes.

“No,” he growls. Then his free hand slides to the waistband of my jeans and he tugs open the button before reaching for the zipper.

“What are you doing?” I whisper.

“Getting you naked so I can fuck *you* in it.”

“But what if Erin or Wendy hear us?”

He pulls my zipper down and slips his hand inside my panties. “You just said they wouldn’t hear because of the sound of the engines. Besides, I don’t give a fuck who hears us, Jessie. If I thought you’d be into it, I would take you out there and fuck you right in front of them.”

“Shane!” I gasp as he rubs soft circles over my clit.

“I would show them how hard you come for me, sweetheart. Then there would be no doubt that you belong to me and that I am entirely yours.”

“You really want to fuck me in front of your ex-girlfriends?” I pant as the warm wetness begins to pool in my core.

“I would fuck you in front of anyone. Anywhere. It takes all of my goddamn restraint not to bury myself in your cunt every time I look at you.”

“You have such a filthy mouth,” I pant as I press my head back against the wall and suck in a breath while he pulls his hand from my panties and starts to work my jeans down over my legs.

“You love my filthy mouth.” He winks at me before he drops to his knees and presses his face between my thighs. “Fuck, Jessie, you smell fucking delicious.”

“Shane!” I groan as he pulls off my socks and sneakers before tugging my jeans over my legs. Then his hand slides up my leg, over my calf and up the inside of my thigh. I shiver at his touch and he looks up at me and smiles. He knows exactly what he does to my body. I crave him like a drug.

“You still mad at me, sweetheart?”

“Yes!” I lie.

“What can I do to make you forgive me?” he growls as his fingers trail higher and he tugs my panties to the side. He pushes one finger inside me while he circles my clit with the pad of his thumb.

“You could keep doing that for a start,” I groan.

“You like that?”

“Yes,” I gasp. As if he needed to ask. He knows my body better than I know it myself.

“You just want my fingers, Jessie?”

“No,” I whimper as he adds a second one and my walls clench around him.

“What else do you want, sweetheart? Tell me.”

“You know, Shane,” I pant as I rock my hips against him.

He chuckles softly before he pulls his fingers out of me and stands up.

I groan in frustration as I blink at him. He trails his fingertips, damp with my arousal, over my cheek and leans his face close to mine, until his hot breath skitters over my neck. “Seeing as you’re being so shy in asking for what you want today, shall I tell you what I’m going to do anyway?”

“Yes,” I whimper shamelessly.

“I’m going to take off these panties and carry you to the bed. Then I’m going to bury my face in your sweet cunt and eat you so good that you scream my name all over this goddamn plane. And when you think you can’t take any more, I’m going to slide my fingers inside you and fuck you just the way you like.”

“Shane!” I gasp as the wet heat builds in my core.

“You’re going to squirt for me, Jessie. You’re going to drench these sheets with your cum.”

He lifts his head and I stare into his eyes. They are dark with desire and longing, and they make my breath catch in my throat. “And then what?” I whisper.

“Oh then I’m going to fuck you, sweetheart. I’m going to fuck you so hard you won’t be able to tell me what day it is.”

With that, he lifts me up and carries me the few steps to the bed before lying me down on it.

“You’re a devil,” I whisper.

“But I’m your devil,” he grins at me.

TWO HOURS LATER, when Shane has delivered on every one of his promises, we walk out of the bedroom together. Erin glares at me. Her eyes burn into my skin with the heat of a thousand suns, but I walk to my seat, willing myself not to blush as I wonder if she just heard any of that. Shane Ryan is a devil, but he also makes me come harder and louder than anyone I have ever known.

I reach my seat, holding my head high and being super proud of myself for maintaining my dignity despite Erin looking at me like she just stepped in me on the pavement. I almost make it, but then Shane slaps my ass just as I’m about to sit down. The sound echoes around the cabin and my cheeks flush with heat. I turn and glare at him but he pulls me into his arms and kisses me so deeply that I no longer give a single damn about Erin and what she might think of me.

CHAPTER 6

JESSIE

With the five hour time difference, it's after midnight by the time we arrive at our hotel in Belfast. Erin is staying at the same one as us, much to my annoyance. I assumed she might have family here she could stay with, but I can't help but feel some sympathy for her when I see the look of sheer anguish on her face as Shane checks us in to the presidential suite under Mr. and Mrs. Ryan.

Jessie Ryan is the name on my false passport, after all, and I can't very well pretend to be his sister, can I?

I know that she comes off as a cold, heartless bitch, but I can imagine how much that must hurt. I glance at her but she avoids my gaze and for the first time ever, I feel like she is the one who may be envious of me. She had this incredible man all to herself. He was going to marry her. I know that the end of their engagement was due to her lying to him, but Shane is as loyal as they come. I bet they would have stayed together forever. It can't be easy to spend so much time with him and be reminded of what she's lost. Especially when I'm tagging along for the ride this time.

WHEN SHANE UNLOCKS our room with the electronic key, he opens the door and I step inside. The room is palatial, with floor to ceiling windows, a huge living area and a bar.

I kick off my sneakers and flop down onto the huge sofa. "This place is bigger than the house I grew up in." I smile at him as he tips the bellboy before walking over to me. He lifts

my feet and sits down beside me before placing them over his lap.

“Bigger than the house I grew up in too.” He cocks an eyebrow as he looks around the room.

“I thought your family always had money?”

He nods. “My father always had money, but he squandered most of it on women, fast cars, and anything else that gave him a buzz. It wasn’t until I started earning for myself at fifteen that my brothers or I had any real money.”

“You started working for your father at fifteen?”

“No.” He shakes his head and smiles. “I started getting paid for it at fifteen. And I made much smarter investments than my father ever did.”

“How old were you when you made your first million?”

He tilts his head to one side as he considers my question. “Twenty,” he finally answers.

“Wow!” I stretch my legs over his and he rubs my feet. “You’re pretty amazing, Shane Ryan.”

“Well, that means a lot coming from you, Jessie Ryan,” he smiles at me and I feel the heat building in my core, but then I’m reminded of when we checked in a few minutes ago and I feel a pang of guilt. “What is it?”

“You think that was a little insensitive before? Checking in as Mr. and Mrs. Ryan?” I bite on my lip.

“Why?” he frowns.

“Because that was almost you and Erin. She looked really hurt, Shane.”

He reaches over and brushes his fingertips over my cheek. “She knows who you are to me. She chose to travel with us. To stay at the same hotel as us. I’m not going to apologize for being with you, Jessie.”

I swallow hard. This man makes my entire body tremble with need just talking to me. “Okay,” I breathe.

He stands up and holds out his hand to me. “We’ve got a long day tomorrow. I have to go meet with some of my father’s business associates and fake a smile while they pay me condolences for my loss. I want you to come with me.”

I take hold of his hand and allow him to pull me up. “Of course. I’d love to meet some of your old friends.”

“There won’t be any friends of mine there, sweetheart, which is why I want you with me.”

“I will be anything and do anything you need me to this week.”

He arches one eyebrow at me. “You’re going to do as you’re told the whole time we’re here?”

“Yes.”

“No attitude? No acting like a brat?”

“No!” I frown at him. “I am not a brat!”

He slides one arm around my waist and pulls me closer to him, brushing his fingertips over my cheek with his free hand. “That doesn’t sound like much fun at all,” he grins before he hoists me up onto his shoulder and slaps me on the ass before carrying me to the bedroom, which is almost as big as the living area outside. He throws me onto the huge super king-size bed and I bounce into the middle with a giggle.

My stomach growls loudly as he holds himself over me and I blush. I didn’t eat much of my meal on the plane, conscious of Erin watching every move I made.

“We should get some room service,” Shane says as he checks his watch.

“Sorry!” I bite my lip and glance down at my stomach. Damn my hunger ruining the mood.

“I’m starving too, sweetheart,” he says before pressing a soft kiss on my stomach. “And besides, we’ve got the whole week together.”

“I know,” I breathe as I look into his eyes. The thought of an entire week in this beautiful hotel room with him makes me

tremble with anticipation.

“I am going to enjoy doing filthy things with you, Mrs. Ryan,” he growls.

“I’m pretty sure I’m going to enjoy it even more, Mr. Ryan.”

CHAPTER 7

JESSIE

After breakfast in our room the following morning, Shane and I meet up with Erin in the hotel lobby. I could barely hide my disappointment when he told me that she would be joining us today too, but I suppose this is a business thing and that's what she's here for. Shane has hired us a town car with a driver for the week and when the huge, sleek black car pulls up outside the hotel, he opens the door for me and I climb inside and scoot along to the edge of the seat. Erin climbs in next and sits in the middle beside me and I curse under my breath. I hadn't thought that through. Now she'll be sitting beside Shane instead of me.

Shane pokes his head inside the car and he looks at the two of us. "Unless you want to sit on my lap, sweetheart, I'd suggest we rethink this seating situation," he flashes an eyebrow at me.

I look to Erin beside me. "Can you scoot over, please?" I ask, forcing a smile.

She rolls her eyes so hard I think they may have fallen into her brain.

"You really want to sit next to Shane while he's feeling me up on his lap the entire way?" I ask and that seems to do the trick as she slides along the seat with a deep sigh and I scoot into her place.

"Thank you," Shane says as he steps inside and sits beside me.

I lean close to him and he rests his warm hand on my thigh. I fidget and pull at the hem of my dress, not used to wearing them, and Shane takes hold of my hand to stop me. This dress is one of the ones Conor chose for me. Shane packed it in his suitcase, knowing full well that all I would bring would be jeans and tank tops, which I am much more comfortable in. I'm grateful he did though. I would have felt out of place otherwise.

Erin, as usual, is effortlessly chic and stylish. I have to give her that. She is to clothes what peanut butter is to jelly.

I sit back in the seat and we drive to the venue in almost silence. The air is thick with tension and I feel the frustration seeping into Shane the closer we get to our destination. His fingers flex in my hand and his chest is rigid as we drive through the streets of Belfast. From the little he's told me, this event today has been put on just for him. A chance for all of his father's friends and associates to see him after all this time and pay their respects, but mostly to talk business — notably, who is going to take over operations in Ireland now that Patrick is dead.

AS SOON AS we get inside the pub where the gathering is happening, Shane is accosted by a group of men who all offer their condolences and push glasses of whiskey into his hands. They try to usher him into a corner of the room which is full of men in suits drinking and smoking cigars. He looks at me apologetically but I smile at him. "I'll be fine," I mouth.

"I'll look after her," Erin says coolly.

Shane frowns at her as I almost pass out with shock, but I hide my surprise. "Go," I say to him and he winks at me before disappearing into the crowd.

"Shall we get a drink?" Erin says as she turns to me.

I look behind me to see if she's speaking to somebody else, but there is no one else here. "Umm. Yes, okay," I say and then I follow her to the bar where she orders us each a whiskey. "I don't have any money with me," I whisper as I look around the room for Shane.

She rolls her eyes. “Relax. You don’t need any when you’re with Shane. He takes care of everything,” she says and there is a sadness in her voice. As much as she annoys me, I understand how much it must hurt her to see the two of us together.

The bartender hands us each a whiskey over ice and I raise mine to Erin. “Cheers,” I offer.

“Cheers.” She actually smiles at me and clinks her glass against mine. “Come on, I’ll introduce you to a few people,” she says with a nod of her head and I follow her into the crowd wondering for a second who she is and what the hell she’s done with the real Erin.

She makes a beeline for a small group of men standing at a table on the other side of the room.

“Sean?” she says as she reaches them and the man with his back to her turns and smiles.

“Erin McGrath?” he grins at her. “How long has it been?”

“Not long enough, Sean,” she smiles at him and reaches back for me before pulling me to stand beside her. “This is Jessie. Shane’s girlfriend.”

“Hi,” I say, extending my hand and feeling incredibly awkward all of a sudden.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Jessie,” Sean says as he takes my outstretched hand and kisses my knuckles.

“I have to talk to a few people. Can you look after Jessie for me?” Erin flutters her eyelashes.

Sean nods his head in agreement. “Of course. Anything for Shane.” He turns back to me and winks.

“Great. Thanks,” she says before she disappears in a waft of Chanel perfume.

“So, Jessie?” Sean says as he looks me over. “You and Shane Ryan?”

“Yes,” I stammer.

“Me and Shane go way back,” he smiles at me. “I’m glad to see he’s dumped that one.” He indicates his head toward Erin’s retreating back. “She has a stick so far up her arse, it’s a wonder she can sit down.”

I smile and stifle a laugh.

“And she’s a lawyer,” he says quietly behind his hand, pretending to hide what he’s saying. “Do you know what the difference is between a lawyer and God?”

“No,” I frown at him.

“God doesn’t think he’s a lawyer,” he winks at me and I can’t help laughing now. It’s a terrible joke, but that’s what makes it so funny.

I’M WALKING TO THE LADIES’ room when a strong arm grabs me by the waist, pulling me into a dark corner and pressing me against the wall. I look up into Shane’s fierce glare. He leans down, his breath dancing over my neck and making me shiver. “If you don’t stop flirting with Sean O’Connor, I will take off my belt, along with your panties, and spank your ass in the middle of this room,” he growls.

“What?” I suck in a breath as I look into his eyes to determine whether he’s being serious or not. He glares back at me, his green eyes almost black as they smolder like the embers of a fire. “I wasn’t flirting with him.” I try to pull back from his grasp but that only makes him hold me tighter.

“You weren’t?” He narrows his eyes at me. “Because the two of you looked all kinds of friendly over there.”

“Exactly. Friendly. We were just talking. He is friendly,” I start to say but he cuts me off.

“So, he was flirting with you?”

“No,” I shake my head.

“Because if that’s case, I’m more than happy to walk you back over there and fuck you over his table if that’s what it takes to show everyone in this room who you belong to.”

“You wouldn’t,” I swallow.

“Watch me, Hacker. And I will take perverse satisfaction in making them watch while you come so hard that you scream my name.”

“You’re an asshole,” I hiss.

He leans closer to me, caging me in with his arms and pressing his groin into mine. “Yeah? But I’m your asshole, sweetheart. And you belong to me. So behave your fucking self.”

Despite my annoyance, I feel a familiar fluttering in my abdomen that always comes from being this close to Shane Ryan. But I refuse to accept that I have done anything wrong. “I was just talking,” I snap.

“No,” he takes my hand and pulls me forward so that we are no longer in the shadows. “That,” he points at Erin, who stands demurely with about two feet of space around her entire person, “is just talking.”

The tears prick at my eyes and I swallow the emotion that balls in my throat. *Erin!* How fucking dare he! I spin on my heel and glare at him, wishing I could make him feel some of the pain he just caused me. “No! *That* is having the personality of a fucking ice cube. But if she is the woman you’d rather I behaved like, why don’t you just go fuck her in front of all these people instead. Because I am going back to the hotel.”

“The fuck you are!” he hisses.

“So, you expect me to just stand in this room on my own and not smile or make eye contact with anyone? Is that it?”

“Just fucking behave, Jessie,” he snarls, but before I can respond we’re approached by an older couple.

“Are you not going to introduce us to your lovely lady, Shane?” the man says loudly while the woman I assume is his wife beams at the two of us.

Shane smiles as he slips an arm around my waist. “Of course, Jacob. This is Jessie,” he says with a warning glance and I force my best smile as I greet them.

They ask Shane about his brothers and listening to him talking about them makes me miss them so much, but after a few minutes someone else comes along and demands his attention. He leaves me talking to Jacob and his wife, Ruth, and I assume Shane's twisted logic considers them safe for me to converse with.

I'M STILL TALKING to Jacob and Ruth when I catch Erin staring at me with a smug grin on her face. I excuse myself and make my way over to her.

"Is something about me amusing you this afternoon, Erin?"

She tilts her head as she looks me up and down. "Hmm. Perhaps I should have warned you how much Shane hates Sean O'Connor," she says with a smile before she takes a sip of her champagne.

God, she is a Grade A bitch. But why did I expect any less from her? I can't even be bothered arguing with her about it. "Why does he hate him so much?"

"Because Sean was always his father's right hand man, at least until Shane was old enough to be anyway. He hated that Patrick's son took over and he did everything he could to make his life as difficult as possible. He was especially partial to fucking Shane's girlfriends if he ever got the chance to be alone with them, whether they consented or not," she says with a shudder and suddenly I wonder if she was ever a victim of Sean's advances.

"But why didn't Shane deal with him?" I frown because I can't imagine the man I know allowing any of that to go unpunished.

"Because Patrick Ryan loved Sean. No doubt he saw a lot of himself in the sadistic prick. So he was basically untouchable. If Shane had retaliated, then Mikey and Liam would have borne the brunt of their father's frustrations."

I shake my head. The more I learn about Patrick, the more I wonder how his sons turned out to be the men they are today.

“It was fun watching Shane’s face turn purple when he saw you and Sean chatting like old pals.” She laughs and it’s not a pleasant sound, more of an annoying, high-pitched whinny.

I glare at her, wondering how much of a commotion it would cause if I were to punch her in the face right now. But that would only make her look like the victim and I can think of a much better way to hurt her.

“Yeah, he sure was pissed,” I say with a smile. “So, thank you, Erin.”

She frowns at me. “What for?”

I look over at Shane. He is talking to a group of people and they are all hanging on his every word. Dressed in his exquisitely tailored suit that hugs his broad shoulders and thick thighs perfectly, he can hold a room like no one I have ever met and he is the sexiest man in here by a long shot. He glances at me, and our eyes meet for a second, making me swallow in anticipation before I turn back to Erin. “You must remember how well that man fucks? And when he’s pissed? *Wow!*” I fan myself with my hand. “I doubt either of us will be getting any sleep tonight.” I flash my eyebrows at her before walking away and leaving her standing with her mouth open and the shadow of a scowl on her botoxed forehead.

As I walk away from Erin, I look around the room for Jacob and Ruth again but they’re talking to Sean O’Connor, and despite the fact that I’m still completely pissed at Shane, I understand now why he wouldn’t want me talking to him. I make my way to the bar instead and sit on a stool while I order a glass of soda.

I’ve only been sitting alone for a few minutes when I feel a warm hand on my back. I turn, expecting and hoping to see Shane, but it’s Sean O’Connor’s face that smiles back at me. I shrug his hand off me.

“Something wrong?” he grins at me. “You were much more friendly before.”

“I don’t like to be touched by people I don’t know,” I say as I scoot back in my seat, looking around the room for Shane

but I don't see him.

“But we know each other now, don't we?” He leers at me as he trails two fingers over the bare skin on my arm and I shudder. How did I not notice how creepy he was before?

I'm about to tell him to go to hell when his hand is forcibly removed from my arm and twisted up his back. I hear the cracking of bone as Sean winces and howls in pain before his head is slammed onto the bar in front of us and he stumbles to the ground with blood pouring from his nose. When I look up again Shane is standing right in front of me with a murderous look in his eyes.

“We're going!”

I blink at him.

“Now!” he barks as he reaches for my hand and pulls me from the stool.

I allow him to walk me out of the crowded bar while everyone stares at us. Nobody says anything and I doubt they would dare after what he just did. When we're outside in the afternoon sun, I wrench my hand from his grip.

“What the hell, Shane?” I snap.

He turns to me, full of anger and venom. “I told you to stay the fuck away from him.”

“I did!” I protest. “He found me.”

“You should never have spoken to him in the first place.”

“Erin introduced me to him. Why does she get to do whatever she wants with no reproach?” I scowl at him.

He grabs my chin in one of his strong hands, squeezing as he bends his face close to mine. “Because I don't give a fuck what Erin does,” he hisses. “I don't care who she talks to, who she smiles at, who she fucks.” He shifts closer to me, pressing his groin into mine until the heat from his body sears against my skin. “But you...” He narrows his eyes at me before dipping his head lower, brushing his lips against my ear and making a shiver skitter along my spine. “I see you talking to another man and I want to rip his tongue out. When you smile

at him, I want to gouge his fucking eyes out. And if anyone touches you, like even brushes against you when you're passing by, it makes me feel so fucking angry that I feel like ripping their head off with my bare hands."

"Shane! I didn't..." I start to plead but he turns away from me.

"Get in the car," he snarls and I do as he orders, rolling my eyes once his back is turned. Once inside the car, I scooch over onto the back seat, shrinking into the corner so I can sit as far away from him as possible. But when he climbs in after me, he follows me, sitting on the seat directly beside me. I bristle at his touch but he seems to take that as a signal to pull me up and onto his lap as he settles back into the seat.

"Shane!" I hiss as I wriggle from his grip, but he wraps his powerful arms around me and holds me in place.

"Stay!" he growls, as though I'm a puppy dog and not a person. I am about to tell him to go to hell when I notice Erin climbing into the car too and I press my lips together. The look of anguish on her face at seeing me wrapped in the arms of the man she still so clearly loves is obvious, if only for a fleeting moment, before she disguises it with an eye roll and a look of disgust.

There is no way I will give her the satisfaction of making a scene here in the car, so I reluctantly settle into Shane's lap, leaning against his broad chest. Some of the tension slips from him as he hugs me tighter. He barks an order to the driver and then he sighs softly before he plants a soft kiss on my shoulder. It's such a tender kiss that it almost makes me forget how mad I am at him.

Almost.

CHAPTER 8

JESSIE

As I take off my make-up in the bathroom, I see Shane's reflection in the mirror. He leans against the doorframe with his arms folded over his chest and his legs crossed at the ankles, wearing just his suit pants and looking as hot as hell, which is pretty fitting considering he is the devil's own spawn.

I avoid making eye contact and he just stands there watching me until I'm done. I don't want to leave this bathroom. I don't want to have to walk past him, or ask him to move out of my way, because I am beyond pissed at him. I feel like taking a plane straight back to New York and crawling into bed with one of his brothers for a bear hug. I blink away the tears at the thought of Conor and the twins and how much I miss them, and wonder why the hell I agreed to come here with their asshole big brother.

"You going to speak to me at all tonight?" he snaps.

"No!"

"Because of what I did to some prick you barely know?" he growls.

I spin around. "You think I give a damn about that jackass?"

"Then what the fuck is wrong with you?" he snarls.

I glare at him. The fact that he doesn't even realize why I'm so upset only makes me more annoyed with him. "You told me to be more like Erin!" I spit the words at him before I turn back to the mirror so he doesn't see the tears in my eyes.

“Jessie!”

I don't respond.

“I'm sorry,” he says with a heavy sigh, making me turn around.

“I don't care,” I reply as I walk towards the door and try to push past him. He doesn't move and I glare up at him.

“This place makes me crazy,” he frowns at me.

“No. It makes you cruel and heartless,” I snap. “Just like your father.”

The shadow falls across his face and I know that's a line I shouldn't have crossed but he crossed one too today. He wraps a hand around my throat, pushing me back into the room until I am pressed against the bathroom counter. “You know nothing about the kind of man my father was.”

“Don't I?” I challenge him. “Didn't he like to take people's insecurities and exploit them? Wasn't he cruel and bitter?”

He swallows hard. “You think that's who I am?”

I blink the tears from my eyes. “No. But that's how you made me feel today.”

I expect him to argue with me but he kisses me instead as he presses me against the countertop. Planting my hands on his chest, I try to push him away but he is undeterred. His hands slide to my waist before he lifts me onto the counter and wraps my legs around his waist. I bite his lip but it only seems to make him more determined as he kisses me so fiercely that I struggle to breathe.

I push at his chest again but he takes hold of my wrists and pins them behind my back as he keeps on tongue-fucking my mouth. I am completely powerless to resist him. Heat rolls through my core and I feel wetness pooling between my thighs as he grinds his cock against me making me whimper shamelessly.

Damn my treacherous body letting me down like this.

When I stop struggling, he releases my wrists and I wrap my arms around his neck, scratching his skin as I pull him closer to me.

“I need to fuck you,” he groans as he unzips his pants and takes out his cock. Then he tugs my panties to the side and slides two fingers deep inside me, making me gasp out loud.

“Shane!” I hiss, reaching between us and squeezing his hard cock. I need him to fuck me too. I need to release some of the anger and frustration that has been building all afternoon.

He curls his fingers inside me, pressing against my G-spot and my legs begin to tremble as I coat him in a rush of slick heat.

“You make me so fucking hard,” he grunts as he slides his fingers out and rams his cock into me instead, pushing me back against the mirror before he sinks his teeth into the tender skin on my neck and sucks hard.

“Jesus, Shane,” I pant as I rake my nails down his back.

He keeps on sucking my neck as he nails me to the wall and my pussy muscles clench around him, drawing him in deeper as though my body can't get enough of him. He drives at the sweet spot deep inside me over and over until he tips me over the edge and I shout his name. That seems to light a fire under him as he fucks me even harder and faster until he finds his own release a few moments later.

As we catch our breath, Shane presses his forehead against mine. “Damn, I love to fuck you,” he pants.

“Is that all you want me for?” I breathe.

“I'm going to pretend you didn't just say that, Jessie,” he growls as he pulls out of me, but he keeps his arms around my waist and presses his body flush against mine. “I'm sorry,” he whispers as he rubs his nose along my jawline.

“You said you wanted me to be more like Erin,” I whisper.

He narrows his eyes at me. “I never said that.”

“Not in those exact words, Shane. Do you have any idea how much it hurt to have you compare me to her like that?”

His Adam's apple bobs as he swallows. "Yes," he nods. "Maybe I said it because I knew it would hurt you."

"You wanted to hurt me?" I whisper. "Why?"

"Because I hate Sean O'Connor and I saw him with you and it made me feel like I was sixteen again with all of this rage inside me."

"But—"

"And," he interrupts me. "What if I really am my father's son, Jessie?"

"No. You're not," I say as I run my hands over his handsome face.

"But what if I am?" he whispers.

"You aren't. Because, despite you being a complete jackass today, you are one of the best men I know. You always put your family first. You take care of everyone before yourself. And even though you're a possessive asshole, I love you."

"What did I do to deserve you, Hacker?" he smiles.

I suck on my lip for a few seconds as though I'm deep in thought. "You must have been an absolute saint in another life." I smile at him.

"I must have been," he mumbles before he starts to plant soft kisses along my throat.

"I haven't forgiven you for being a complete asshole yet, you know?" I say with a sigh.

"I know." He lifts his head. "I'll spend the rest of the night making it up to you."

I flash my eyebrows at him. "Really?"

"Really."

"Can we order every dessert on the room service menu?"

He frowns at me. "You do know you can do that anyway, right?"

"I can?" I whisper.

“Jessie. This is your hotel room too, sweetheart. You can order whatever you want, whenever you want it. You can do whatever you want in here.”

“Really? Like even invite Sean whatshisface for breakfast or something?” I grin at him.

He glares at me and I press my lips together to stop myself from laughing. “Too soon?”

“Much too soon,” he growls before he seals my mouth with one of his incredible kisses.

AFTER HE FUCKED me for a second time, Shane actually did order all eight desserts from the room service menu, and now we are sitting on the bed surrounded by plates of half-eaten cakes, profiteroles and macaroons.

“Oh, God, I am so full,” I groan and he laughs as he wraps an arm around me. I rest my head on his shoulder and sigh contentedly as he twirls a strand of my hair between his fingers.

“Would you really like me to be more like Erin?” I whisper.

“No! Not even a little bit. And I could happily kick my own ass for giving you the slightest indication that I would.” He rolls on top of me, brushing my hair back from my face as he stares down at me, his face full of emotion. “I love you, sweetheart. But if you ever go near Sean O’Connor again, I will give you the spanking of your life and I will make you watch while I slit his throat.”

I chew on my lip, because his possessiveness is so freaking hot. I love that I belong to him. But the irony of what he just said seems completely lost on him. “You have some pretty stark double standards, you know that?”

“And why is that?” he frowns.

“I can’t even talk to a guy you don’t like, yet Erin is allowed to fawn all over you whenever she wants, and when I bring it up you accuse me of acting like a child,” I challenge him.

“That’s completely different,” he snarls.

“Oh really?” I flash my eyebrows at him. “And why is that?”

“Because you are envious and I am possessive. They are two entirely different things.”

I shake my head in frustration. “You’re going to have to explain that one to me, because they seem like the same thing from where I’m standing.”

He laughs, but not his nice one that turns my insides to jelly. “You think I’m jealous of Sean O’Connor?”

I press my lips together.

“I am not jealous of him, sweetheart. I have no fucking worries that he’s going to sweep you off your feet and you’re going to run off into the sunset with him. It doesn’t even cross my mind that you might want to kiss him, or even fuck him.”

“You’re an arrogant asshole,” I snap.

He tilts his head to one side as he stares at me. “I’m arrogant because I know that you love me?”

“I never said that,” I protest. He’s twisting my words. I hate the way he does that.

“But you are saying that. I don’t worry about you with other men, because I trust you.”

I swallow hard. Damn him and his twisted logic. “So why did you just break Sean O’Connor’s arm and face today then?”

“Because he touched you,” he growled. “And you belong to me. Nobody touches what is mine. Nobody touches you but me or my brothers. I am not envious of any man, sweetheart, but I told you how seeing you with another man makes me feel. You would be wise to remember that in future.”

I chew on my lip as he glares at me and the fire starts to build between my thighs.

“But the reason you don’t like being around Erin is because you’re jealous of her,” he goes on.

I open my mouth to respond but I realize that he's right, even though I won't admit it yet. "You think that she's somehow better than you, or that she has something you don't."

I stare up at him, not responding because I have no comeback.

"But she isn't, and she doesn't. If the only reason you didn't like me being around her was because you wanted to scratch her eyes out for looking at me, I wouldn't give a damn. But you hate her being around me because you think I'm going to fall for her or fuck her."

"I don't," I whisper.

"No?" he frowns at me.

I roll my lips together. Damn his insightfulness. "I worry that you're going to realize she is right for you, and I'm not," I admit.

"Fuck, Jessie!" he snaps and I feel like we might be on the verge of another epic fight. But then he looks into my eyes and I see them blazing with fire. "Maybe I don't tell you this often enough, so listen to what I'm about to say and believe that I mean it with every single fiber of my being. I love you. I would die for you. There is not one single fucking thing I would change about you and I am fucking honored to call you mine. But when you bring this shit up about her, you question my loyalty to you. Don't you get that? She could lie next to me naked all night long and I wouldn't fucking touch her."

"Now I *would* scratch her eyes out if she did that." I arch one eyebrow at him and he smiles. "But, I'm sorry, Shane. I never thought of it that way. I do trust you."

"I should fucking hope so," he growls before he kisses me and I forget what we were even talking about.

CHAPTER 9

JESSIE

The following morning, Conor and I are chatting on the laptop when Shane walks out of the bathroom with a white towel wrapped around his waist, sitting right below his perfectly chiseled abs.

“Jessie was telling me about last night,” Conor says with a chuckle as Shane walks over to the bed.

Shane chuckles too. “You’ve gone to the wrong brother looking for sympathy from Conor, sweetheart. He hates Sean O’Connor even more than I do.”

“What?” Conor growls. “Sean O’Connor was the guy you were flirting with?”

“I wasn’t flirting,” I protest.

“She was, Con,” Shane says as he crawls onto the bed, holding himself over me and pressing a kiss between my shoulder blades. “She smiled at him.”

“You smiled at Sean O’Connor?” Con asks me, his eyes narrowed as he leans closer to the screen.

“He told me a funny joke about lawyers.”

Shane continues kissing my back, making me squirm as heat sears between my thighs. “It wasn’t her regular smile, Con. It was that one that makes her eyes twinkle. You know the one?”

“Our smile?” Connor shakes his head and I open my mouth to protest but for a few seconds, I am completely lost for words. “Why do I feel like you two have some kind of

secret code or language that I don't understand?" I eventually ask.

"Because we do," Shane mumbles against my skin.

"So why is her ass not raw?" Conor grumbles.

"Because I was an asshole," Shane replies. "I had some making up of my own to do."

"Yes. He was an asshole," I say with a vigorous nod of my head. "That's what we were talking about, not me smiling at some random dude who I have zero interest in."

"But Shane is always an asshole, Angel. I am far more interested in you smiling at that cunt, O'Connor."

"I didn't know how much you hated him," I whisper as Shane's warm hand slides beneath my tank top and I shiver at his touch.

"Well you will know as soon as you get home, Angel. Because your beautiful ass is going to get the spanking of its life. You'll be sleeping on your front for a week."

"I was just being polite." I offer in a feeble protest because wet heat surges between my thighs at the thought.

"Shane will have to punish you for now, until you get back here."

"You can't punish me now and then when I get home for the same thing. That's not fair!"

"Did our girl just tell us we couldn't do something?" Conor looks behind me and at Shane who stops kissing my back and looks up at his brother on the screen.

"I think she did," he chuckles. "But I gotta say I love our girl talking about getting home and knowing that's with us."

"Hmm," Conor nods.

"But you're right, Con, she needs to be punished." His fingers trail down my back, making me shiver in anticipation and excitement. "What are you thinking?"

I glance at Shane behind me and he licks his lips, but the wicked glint in his eyes makes my entire body tremble.

“For starters, that ass needs to be turned a pretty shade of pink,” Conor says, running a hand over his beard.

“What?” I shake my head.

“Hands? Belt? Something else?” Shane asks, ignoring my question as he starts to take off my top.

“So we’re really doing this?” I ask as Shane continues peeling my tank over my head before pulling my arms through. I wriggle beneath him but he is straddling me now and he is too heavy for me to shift.

Shane tosses my top onto the floor. “Yes,” he growls as he leans down and cups my chin in his hand, tilting my head before he kisses me softly.

“Hands will do fine,” Conor replies.

“Hmm,” Shane mumbles as he rubs one over my ass.

“And then some good old fashioned edging should do the trick. Until I can get my hands on her.”

“What’s edging?” I ask, my mouth hanging open as I look between the two of them.

“Oh, Angel,” Conor growls.

“Orgasm denial,” Shane whispers in my ear before he pushes himself up and hooks his fingers into the band of my underwear and begins to pull them off me. “Let’s get you naked, sweetheart.”

I look up at Conor on the screen as Shane tosses my panties onto the floor.

“Which way do you want her, Con?” Shane asks.

“Facing the head of the bed. Ass in the air,” he orders.

“You heard him. Up,” Shane commands as he taps me on the ass and I push myself onto all fours and maneuver myself into position as he grabs two pillows and slides them beneath my stomach. Once he’s done he takes my hands and lays them

flat on the bed, my arms outstretched above my head and my face pressed against the duvet so I can see Conor on the laptop screen. He licks his lips in anticipation as he watches his brother work.

My thighs tremble as I wait for whatever Shane is about to do to me. I do love his punishments, but I don't know how serious the two of them are about this flirting thing – which I definitely wasn't doing.

“That okay, bro?” Shane asks as I lie there in position. Waiting.

“Perfect!” Conor growls.

“Let's see how red we can turn this ass then,” Shane chuckles to himself before he kneels on the bed behind me.

A few seconds later, I feel the sting of his first slap as it echoes around the hotel bedroom. Then another. And another. Over and over as Conor encourages him from the screen. His spanking is hard but I've certainly had worse from him and the burning sensation on my ass is making the burning need in my pussy grow stronger with each passing second. I squirm on the pillows and Shane chuckles behind me, knowing exactly what he is doing to me. Fiend!

“How wet is she, bro?” Conor growls.

Shane slides two of his thick fingers deep into my pussy and I bite my lip to stifle the groan.

“Soaking,” he says as he pulls them out of me again. “See?”

I realize he must be holding them up for his brother to see as Conor groans in appreciation, then the sound of Shane sucking his fingers clean makes my cheeks flush with heat. “So fucking sweet,” he growls.

“I know. She's always sweeter after a spanking too,” Conor chuckles.

“Hmm,” Shane agrees as he smacks my ass again before sliding his fingers back inside me. Then he finger fucks me while he spans me at the same time and I feel like I'm about

to lose control, but he won't let me. He keeps me teetering on the edge of oblivion.

“Shane?” I plead with him to take pity on me.

He leans over me until I feel his cock pressing against the seam of my ass. “It's Conor's show, sweetheart.”

“No way, Angel,” Conor says in response and I groan in frustration as Shane pulls his fingers out of me and slaps my wet pussy making me cry out in pleasure. *Devil!*

“This ass is fucking beautiful, Con,” he says as he circles his finger over my asshole. “It think we should buy our girl some nice jeweled plugs for it, don't you?”

My pussy clenches at the thought.

“Hmm. If she can learn to behave herself, maybe?” Conor replies.

“Imagine taking her out knowing she was wearing one? Fuck!” Shane hisses as he slides one wet finger inside my ass, right up to his knuckle, making me whimper as he slowly finger fucks me there now. His other hand slides between my folds and he begins rubbing gently on my clit, bringing me to the verge of orgasm again.

“Fuck, you look good getting punished, Jessie,” Conor growls.

I look at the screen to see him stroking his rock hard cock while he watches his brother and me and the sight of him causes a rush of wet heat that makes me shudder. Sensing I am about to fall off the edge, Shane sits back on his heels, stopping his delicious torment and making me groan in frustration.

He rubs his hands over my ass instead.

“Am I fucking her cunt or her ass for you?” he asks his brother.

“Both,” Conor replies and I gasp for breath. I don't know how much more of this I can take. Shane obliges by grabbing hold of my hips, keeping me in place as he drives his cock into my pussy. My walls clench around him and I can't stop the

yelp of pleasure escaping from my throat. Then he slides his thumb into my ass at the same time and I whimper shamelessly.

He fucks me slowly as Conor keeps on urging him on from his office in New York.

I am on the verge of passing out if he doesn't give me some relief soon. I reach down and slide my hands between my thighs but Shane grabs hold of it and plants it back on the bed beside me. "You touch yourself again, sweetheart, and you won't come at all," he warns.

"You're a devil," I groan as he goes back to his punishing steady rhythm.

"Fuck her harder, Shane," Conor groans.

"If I fuck her any harder, she's going to come. So it's up to you, Con. You wanna see our girl come hard all over my cock, or do you want me to keep torturing her for you?"

"Fuck!" Conor groans in frustration as though this is a really difficult decision and it's him being tortured and not me.

"Please, Conor?" I beg as I gasp for breath.

"Oh, Angel. I love the way you beg," he sighs. "But fortunately for you, I love hearing you come even more."

With permission finally given, Shane pulls the pillow from beneath me and presses me flat to the bed with the weight of his body. "Spread those legs wide for me, sweetheart," he growls in my ear and I do as he tells me. Then he rolls his hips, pressing deeper and further into me, hitting that sweet spot that makes stars flicker behind my eyelids. As I think I can't take any more he pulls out and drives back in ever harder than the last time and I come with a rush of wet heat that soaks the duvet beneath us.

"Fuck!" Shane hisses.

"Did you just make her squirt?" Conor groans as his brother keeps on fucking me through my orgasm and the wet sound of him pounding me echoes around the room. With a final thrust, Shane finds his own release too and after he has

emptied himself inside me, he lies down on top of me, panting for breath. As I glance at the screen, I see Conor cleaning himself with paper towels and realize all three of us have now had our happy ending.

Shane presses a kiss against my temple. “Good girl,” he whispers and my pussy contracts. Why the hell do I love him saying that to me?

“You two are devils,” I groan and they both laugh softly.

“Will you ever flirt with another man again though, Angel?” Conor says.

“Hmm?” I chew on my lip, because that was epic.

Shane pushes himself up and smacks my ass. Hard.

“No! I won’t,” I yelp.

“Good,” they both say in unison.

“As much as I’d love to hang around chatting with you two, I need to get some sleep,” Conor says with a yawn.

“And I’ve got plenty of shit to do,” Shane glances at his watch and then jumps off the bed and walks to the laptop. “Catch you later, Con.”

“Later, bro. Love you, Angel.”

“Love you, too,” I say with a smile and then he winks at me before ending the call.

I roll onto my back and Shane sits beside me and brushes my hair back from my face. “You going to be okay here on your own today?”

I sigh dramatically. “I’m sure I’ll survive for one day. I’m going to watch some trashy TV, I think.”

“Don’t leave the suite. Okay?”

“Okay,” I bite on my bottom lip and look up at his handsome face.

“What is it?” he frowns at me.

“Nothing.”

“Jessie!” he snaps.

“Do you not want me to come with you because of what happened yesterday?” I whisper. The thought that I somehow embarrassed him has been eating away at me all morning.

I see his Adam’s apple bob as he swallows and tears prick at my eyes. I bet Erin would never show him up like that. “Hey,” he cups my chin in his hand. “I’m meeting with some people today. It’s delicate. That’s all.”

“And you don’t want me to embarrass you.” I sniff. “I understand.”

“No, sweetheart. You couldn’t embarrass me if you tried, but you do distract me and I need to focus today.”

“If I’m such a distraction why did you bring me here?”

He narrows his eyes at me. “Jessie, don’t.”

“Don’t what?”

“Don’t pick a fight with me when I have to leave, sweetheart.”

“I’m not trying to,” I whisper, but somehow we always seem to be on the verge of a fight. Is that the way things will always be between us?

“Sean O’Connor is a cunt. What happened yesterday was because he acted like one. But regardless of that, I wasn’t planning on taking you with me today anyway. I told you before we left you’d have to spend some time here on your own.”

I place my hand over his. “I know,” I whisper.

“So don’t ever accuse me of being ashamed of you, Jessie Ryan. I would wear your naked ass like a coat if it wouldn’t get us arrested for indecency,” he winks at me and I stifle a giggle.

“Now, I gotta take another shower because I’m covered in your cum,” he says before leaning down and giving me a quick kiss.

CHAPTER 10

SHANE

I open the door to our suite and walk inside to see her lying on the sofa, her legs draped over the end and a cushion under her head as she flips through a magazine. She hasn't heard me come in and she jumps with fright when I lift her legs so I can sit beside her.

"Shane!" she shrieks. "You almost gave me a heart attack!"

"Sorry, sweetheart," I chuckle as I take a seat. "You were lost in your own little world."

"I was reading about this man who married his truck." She arches one eyebrow at me. "His truck! Like he has sex with it and everything."

"With a truck?"

"A truck!" She places the magazine on the floor beside her. "Those things are addictive," she giggles and it makes me smile. She's never had the chance to switch off and relax before and it is fucking beautiful to see her doing it, and especially with me.

"Why are you back so early, anyway?" she asks as she slides her bare foot onto my groin and rubs my cock. I take hold of it, keeping it in place.

"Not to fuck you, as much as I would love to, but we don't have time right now."

"Why?"

“I’m taking you to meet someone.” I smile at her and tap her legs. “Put some shoes on. We need to leave.”

She sits up and reaches for her socks and sneakers beside the sofa. “Who?”

“It’s a surprise.”

She rolls her eyes at me. “Is it business stuff?”

I shake my head.

“Can I have a hint?”

“No.”

AN HOUR LATER, we pull up outside the cottage in the countryside and Jessie peers out of the window. There are wind chimes hanging all around the outside as well as overgrown bushes that hide the house largely from view. It hasn’t changed much since I was a kid. I love this place.

“Come on,” I say as I climb out of the car and Jessie follows suit.

“Whose place is this?” she asks, wide eyed as she looks around at the flowers in huge colorful flowerpots. There is a giant sundial on the middle of the lawn and a fountain a few meters behind it. “I love it,” she breathes.

I take her hand and walk her up the path. I don’t even have a chance to knock on the door before my Aunt Em opens it. She has barely changed either, except her hair is slightly grayer, but she still wears it loose and wavy. She still wears long flowing skirts and dozens of bracelets and I only just realized how much I have missed her.

“Shane!” she says as she steps out and pulls me into a hug. The smell of patchouli and jasmine takes me back to the summers we would spend at this cottage when we were kids. It was my grandmother’s back then. Em inherited it when she died, given that she was the only surviving daughter.

When she releases me, she doesn’t even let me introduce Jessie before she wraps her in her arms too. “And this must be Jessie. Shane has told me so much about you.”

“This is my Aunt Em,” I say as Jessie looks at me over Em’s shoulder with a huge smile on her face.

“Come in,” Em says when she finally lets Jessie go. “Aoife is here too.”

“Who’s Aoife?” Jessie mouths to me as we go inside.

I slide my hand around her waist and press my lips close to her ear. “My cousin.”

We follow Em into her sitting room and are immediately greeted by a tall, dark haired woman in her mid twenties, with a huge pregnant bump, whose smile is even wider than my aunt’s.

“Shane!” she says excitedly. “You haven’t changed at all. From your pictures, I mean.”

“Well, you certainly have. I think you were about one the last time I saw you?”

“Yes,” Em replies. “It was about a year after your mum’s funeral.” She wipes a tear from her eyes. “It was the last time I saw any of you.”

“I know,” I say as I wrap an arm around her shoulder and kiss the top of her head.

“Come on, tough guy,” she sniffs and straightens up. “You can help me make the tea.”

I FOLLOW Em into the kitchen and she fills the kettle and places it on her stove. I recognize it immediately. It’s an old fashioned kind that whistles when the water is boiled and it belonged to my grandmother too. She turns to face me, her hands resting on the countertop either side of her.

“Your Uncle Paul came to see me,” she says, searching my face for a reaction.

“Oh? I didn’t realize he was back yet?”

“It was late last night,” she replies with a slight bob of her head.

I don’t speak. I stand in her kitchen, listening to the sound of the water boiling while neither of us mentions the thing that

is most obviously on both of our minds.

“I told him that I know,” she finally says before letting out a long, slow breath that it seemed like she’d been bottling up for a while. “I told him that you know too.”

“Fuck, Em!” I shake my head in exasperation.

“What else could I do, Shane? He was standing right here, asking me questions about you and the boys.”

“What did he say? Did he confirm it?”

She nods her head.

“Fuck!”

“You haven’t told them yet then?”

“No. There just hasn’t seemed like the right time to do it. Every time I tried to, I just froze, you know? I mean how do you tell someone something like that?”

“I’m sorry that I burdened you with it, Shane.” She wipes a stray tear from her eye. I step closer to her and put my arms around her and she leans against me.

“Don’t be. Someone has to tell them, and it’s better that it comes from me. And now that Paul knows we know,” I sigh, “I need to tell them as soon as possible, but I want to speak to him first.”

The whistling of the kettle pierces the air and she rushes to take it from the heat.

“That makes sense. And what about Jessie? Does she know?” Em asks as she pours water into her old yellow teapot.

“No. It’s not fair to ask her to keep a secret like that.”

“Of course not,” she purses her lips and then looks up as the kitchen door opens and Aoife walks in.

“Do you have any of those ginger biscuits, Mammy?”

“Of course, petal,” Em turns and opens a cupboard. “You feeling queasy again?”

“No. I told Jessie how amazing they are,” she laughs. “So I said we should have some with our tea.”

I roll my eyes. My girl has such a sweet tooth.

“I’ll bring some through,” Em says with a smile and Aoife walks out of the kitchen, leaving us alone again.

“Did Paul leave a contact number, or tell you where he’s staying?” I ask.

“No,” she replies with a shake of her head. “As elusive as he ever was. Does he still have that old place out in Antrim?”

“Not as far as I know. My lawyer told me it was sold off years ago. Did he say what his plans were?”

“Not really. He did say he intended to catch up with you soon, so I expect you’ll be seeing him shortly.”

“Did he tell you why, Em?” I ask, conscious that Aoife or Jessie could walk into the room at any moment.

She looks up at me with tears in her eyes. “He said that he loved her,” she replies with a shrug. “Isn’t that the reason any of us do anything, Shane?”

CHAPTER II

JESSIE

After we've finished our tea and eaten some of Em's homemade ginger biscuits, Aoife and I go into the garden. It is a truly beautiful place. Em has so many wildflowers growing. The wild jasmine smells incredible and she has promised to make me some soaps with it and send them out to New York. Seeing her and Shane together has been so lovely. I see a completely different side of him with her. He is sweet and helpful and gracious, and he rarely curses in front of her.

"How long have you known Shane?" Aoife asks.

"Umm. About nine months now."

"How did you meet?" she asks with a smile.

Hmm. He blew up my old boss's house and then threatened to kill me too, but I persuaded him and his brothers to kidnap me instead. "Through work," I say.

"Oh. Have you always lived in New York?"

"Umm. No. I've moved around a lot."

"Really? I've never left Ireland. Your life sounds so exciting."

Too exciting.

"It just sounds wonderful," she says with a soft sigh.

"Yet your life seems so wonderful to me," I smile at her.

I hadn't heard Shane walking up behind us and he startles me as he slips a hand around my waist. "We should get going

soon, sweetheart.”

“Oh, let me get you that recipe for Irish stew before you go,” Aoife says. “My mammy makes the best, I swear.”

“Thank you,” I say with a smile as I watch her disappear back into the house.

“Did you mean that?” Shane asks when we are alone.

“What?” I frown in confusion.

“That Aoife’s life seems wonderful?”

“Well, yes. Imagine living here and never having to worry about some psychopath trying to murder you. She’s in love with Noel. They’re getting married. They have a lovely baby on the way. Of course it seems wonderful. For someone else, anyway,” I sigh and tears unexpectedly prick my eyes.

Shane slides his other arm around my waist and pulls me closer to him. “I can see you living in a house like this. With a huge garden and six kids running around your feet.”

“You can?” I smile at him.

“Yes.” He brushes a strand of hair from my face. “In another life, maybe I could have been standing right beside you.”

“But not this life?” I ask as my heart feels like it’s about to break. I had never realized how good a normal life could be, and now that I’ve had a glimpse of it, I wonder if it will always make me wonder what if. He knows it too and I sense something shifting between us.

“If this is the life you want, Jessie, I would give that to you,” he swallows.

I blink at him. “You would?”

“If you wanted marriage and babies, you could have that,” he breathes. “With Conor.”

“With Conor?” I frown at him. What the hell is he on about?

“I told you I’ll never get married or have kids.”

“What about the twins?”

“They would never leave each other. They would get over it eventually, if they knew you were happy.”

“And what about Conor? Does he get any say in you marrying us off and becoming a dad to six kids?”

“Are you kidding?” he laughs softly. “He would fucking love it.”

“Are you being serious, Shane? You really think that’s what I want?”

“I’m just saying that you don’t have to give up on that life if that’s what you really want.”

“You think I don’t want to be with you?” I blink a tear away because he is breaking my heart here. “Don’t you want this any more?”

“Of course I do. I love you, sweetheart. More than anything in the world, and that’s why I would never stand in the way of your happiness. I want you to at least think about it.”

“There’s nothing to think about, Shane!” I snap at him but then Aoife and Em are walking over to us and the conversation is over, at least for now.

CHAPTER 12

JESSIE

We spent an incredible evening with Em and Aoife yesterday. They are both so lovely and kind. Em told me so many stories of Shane and Conor when they were young that my sides hurt from laughing so much. She never really got to know the twins after their mom died; Patrick kept her away from his boys and I could see how sad that made her. But I have made them both promise that they will visit us in New York once Aoife's baby is born.

Aoife is marrying her fiancé, Noel, in a few weeks' time and I realized after we got back to the hotel last night that he was the guy who Shane had me look into all those months ago when I first met him. I love that even halfway across the world, he was still looking out for his family.

Shane has gone out to do more business today and I have been alone in the hotel suite all day.

I'm lying in the huge jacuzzi tub when I see the message from him pop up on my cell phone.

I'm sending you a gift. I'll pick you up at 6 x

I grin at the screen. A gift? I wonder what it could be? And we're going out! Shane has been so busy, I've hardly seen anything of Ireland since I got here. Full of excitement, I jump out of the tub, grab a warm fluffy towel from the rail and wrap it around myself. I open the closet, trying to think of what I'm going to wear, until I realize I have no idea where we are going.

I'm about to grab my cell and ask him what I should dress for when there is a knock at the door to the suite. I actually squeal with excitement, like a teenage girl.

Is this my gift?

Peering through the spyhole, I see a woman with black curly hair and bright red lipstick standing outside our room, holding three boxes.

I open the door and she smiles at me. "Mrs. Ryan?"

"Yes," I breathe, still not used to being called that.

"Mr. Ryan asked that I had these personally delivered to you," she says in an accent that I could listen to all day. I think she's French. I stare at her open-mouthed and she laughs softly as she hands over the boxes.

"Thank you," I whisper.

"I hope you enjoy them," she purrs. "I picked them out myself, although he gave me very specific instructions."

"Oh." I blush to the roots of my hair. Just what the hell has that hot devil had her pick out for me?

I wonder if I should tip her, but then realize I have no cash on me. Damn! "I'm sorry. I don't..." I start to say but she holds up her hand to stop me.

"Mr. Ryan has taken care of everything. Have a good evening," she says and then she walks away elegantly in a cloud of sweet perfume. I watch her strut to the elevator in her heels and smile. She's one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen.

I carry the boxes inside. They are pastel shades of pink, lilac and mint green, and have a discreet label embossed in the corner. 'Lady Mademoiselle.'

I place them on the bed and resist the urge to tear open the pretty boxes. I open the first one carefully and find a pair of black patent Louboutin pumps with a six inch heel. They are stunning but I have no idea how I'm going to walk in them.

I open the second box and pull out a black mini-dress. It has long sleeves and a high neckline, but it is obscenely short. The material is beautiful though. It has a soft, almost velvety feel, yet it looks like leather. I brush it over my cheek and sigh softly. It feels like it cost a fortune. I leave the pink box until last. It is the smallest and I already have an idea of what I'm going to find in here. My stomach flutters in anticipation anyway. I open it and unfold the pink tissue that it is so exquisitely wrapped in.

I smile as I see the flimsy black material. He is so predictable. I pull out the bra first and check the size, which of course is right. It's all black lace and is so beautiful I almost want to wear it as outerwear. Next, I take out the matching panties. They are gorgeous too. It's only when I hold them up that I notice they are not ordinary panties. They are crotchless.

My cheeks flush with heat as I think about wearing these out in public, and beneath that tiny dress. But my stomach dances with excitement too, as the prospect of being out in public with Shane Ryan when he has such easy access to my pussy makes the warmth pool in my core.

Checking the time on the clock on the nightstand, I see it's a little after four, which means I have just under two hours to get ready. I put the expensive underwear back in the box and lie on the bed, wondering what other surprises Shane has in store this evening.

AT ONE MINUTE BEFORE SIX, Shane walks into the hotel suite. I am standing waiting for him and he smiles when he sees me in the clothes that he sent.

"Thank you for the outfit," I flutter my eyelashes at him, trying to appear like the confident sex kitten he's had me dress as.

"You're welcome, sweetheart. You look good enough to eat," he growls as he walks towards me. When he reaches me, he drops to one knee, pulling a velvet box out of his pocket. It's clearly far too big to be a ring though, so I know I'm not about to receive a marriage proposal. Still, I can't resist teasing him.

I look down at him and flutter my eyelashes. “Are you proposing to me, Shane Ryan?”

“I’m proposing something, sweetheart,” he says with a wink as he snaps the box open with one hand as his other hand snakes up the inside of my thigh and beneath my dress. I shiver at his touch as I look down at the two rose-gold metallic orbs inside.

“They are beautiful,” I say with a sigh. “But my ears aren’t pierced.” I lick my lips as his fingers trail over my skin.

“They’re not for your ears,” he growls.

“Oh, I know what they are,” I purr. “And *you* are a deviant.”

“Hmm,” he agrees, reaching down to take them from the box. He holds them up and they click together, the small weights inside rolling around.

They are very pretty for a sex toy, and even the silicone retrieval cord has a beautiful rose-gold heart attached to the end. He puts the box on the floor and taps my ankle, indicating that I should lift my foot. I do as he commands and he takes hold of it, planting it on his shoulder before running his warm hand from my ankle and along my calf, causing goosebumps to prickle over my skin. His every movement is so considered and controlled.

I press the heel of my shoe lightly into the spot just beneath his shoulder blade and he narrows his eyes at me in warning as his hand slides beneath my dress again and all the way up between my thighs.

“Ordinarily, these would require some lube,” he says as he pops one into his mouth for a few seconds and sucks. My pussy throbs at the sight of him and my legs tremble.

He looks into my eyes, sucking on the ball as his fingers slide through my pussy and he pushes one into my wet heat, making me shudder and groan at the same time. When he pulls the ball from his mouth and licks his lips, I feel an intense rush of wetness. “But not with you, sweetheart,” he growls as he pushes a second finger inside me and I bear down, grinding

onto them. “Why are you already so wet, Hacker? Have you been playing with yourself all day?”

“No,” I protest. “I’ve just spent the last half an hour getting ready for you take me out, and these panties made me think of...”

He grins at me. “Of what?”

“Of all the things you might do to me,” I whisper as a blush creeps over my neck and cheeks.

“Jessie!” he groans loudly as he slides his fingers out of me. He presses one of the Ben Wa balls against my opening. It is warm from his mouth and I groan loudly as he pushes it easily inside. I feel the weight of it instantly and when he pushes the second one inside me a moment later, I have to reach down and hold onto him to steady myself as my legs almost buckle.

“They feel good?” he asks with a soft chuckle.

“Yes,” I pant. “Are these why you chose the crotchless panties?”

“They’re *one* of the reasons, sweetheart,” he growls, planting a soft kiss on my ankle before setting my foot down on the floor.

He holds onto my hand as my legs are still shaky. “How do they feel?”

“Heavy,” I groan. “Like deliciously heavy. But what if they fall out?” I chew on my lip as Shane jumps to his feet with a grin on his face.

“They won’t,” he assures me.

“How do you know that?” I whisper. “We could be walking through the restaurant and they’ll fall out and roll beneath someone’s table. What if that happens? I would die!”

He slides his hand onto my ass and bends his head close to me, brushing his lips over my ear. “Then make sure they don’t, sweetheart,” he growls before he slaps my ass and straightens up. “Besides,” he reaches for my hand and we head for the door. “I’ve been inside you enough to know that your tight

cunt could hold those balls even if they were made of solid granite.”

I nudge him in the arm and he laughs loudly, and I’m not sure if it’s his laugh, or these damn balls that make my entire body thrum with anticipation.

AS WE WALK along the hallway to the elevator, the balls move inside me, massaging my walls as they jiggle. I squeeze to try and stop them jiggling so much but it doesn’t help, in fact it only seems to make it worse. The weights inside are constantly moving, rolling around and sending waves of pleasure pulsing through my body and the weight of them, just sitting there inside me, is making my pussy throb. Shane brushes the pad of his thumb over my knuckles and I whimper.

“I can feel these things moving,” I whisper.

“That’s kind of the idea, Jessie,” he chuckles.

“I can’t do this. I can’t go a whole evening with these inside me,” I chew on my lip. “I can barely think straight.”

He lifts my hand to his lips and brushes them over my knuckles and I squirm even more. “It’s because you’re walking, sweetheart. They won’t be so obvious when you’re sitting down. We’ll be in the car soon.”

“Okay,” I swallow and take a deep breath. I am going to be nothing more than a puddle on the floor by the time we get to the restaurant.

SHANE KEEPS my hand firmly clasped in his as we walk out of the hotel. “We’re over here,” he says as we walk towards the valet, who is standing in front of the sexiest car I have ever seen in my life. A Lamborghini Sian. The valet hands the keys to us as we reach him.

“Good evening, Mr. Ryan.”

“Did you look after her, Stu?” Shane asks.

“I certainly did, Sir. She’s a beauty.”

Shane looks at me, his eyes roaming over my body. “She sure is.” He licks his lips and I realize he’s not talking about the car. The valet coughs awkwardly and excuses himself.

“Wow!” I say as I step towards the car. “This is beautiful. Is it yours?”

“No. I borrowed it.” He shakes his head as he leans down to open the door for me. “But we can get one for home if you like?”

“Yes!” I squeal. “And are you letting me drive?”

“No,” he says before he kisses me softly. “We drive on the other side of the road over here, sweetheart.” He laughs and I look down and realize it’s the passenger door he just opened and not the driver’s one.

SHANE DRIVES the Lamborghini like he stole it, gunning the engine as hard as he can down the country roads as we head to the restaurant. He was right about the balls. They are less obvious when I’m sitting down. But this car is like one huge tease. Its engine roars so beautifully that it vibrates through my body and whenever Shane’s hand is not on the wheel, it is on my thighs, sliding between them and squeezing as if to remind me he is there. As if I could forget.

By the time we reach the restaurant, I am a trembling mess.

Shane gets out of the car first and walks around to open my door. I take his outstretched hand and step out, pulling down the hem of my incredibly short dress.

“You look beautiful,” he growls as he slides a hand onto my ass and closes the door behind us.

The damn balls start their incessant rolling again when I take a step and I am overwhelmed by a rush of wet heat between my thighs.

“Shane!” I gasp quietly, holding onto his arm with my free hand.

He turns and looks at me, his face full of concern as his eyes roam over my face. But then his concern turns into something else as he realizes why I’m struggling to even breathe.

“Aw, sweetheart, do you need some relief?” he soothes, his voice as smooth as chocolate and a wicked glint in his eyes.

“Yes,” I pant with a nod of my head. “Like, now.”

He bends his head down, dusting his lips over the delicate skin on my neck. “Soon, Jessie,” he murmurs against me and I whimper.

When we reach the restaurant, Shane is greeted by the owner and one of the waiters. He introduces me, and I force a smile as they make polite small talk with us, while my pussy throbs like a Harley Davidson engine.

When we are finally seated, I am pleased to see we’re situated in a booth in a quiet part of the restaurant. Shane slides onto the bench next to me until our thighs are pressed together.

“How’re you doing, Hacker?” he chuckles.

“This isn’t funny, Shane. I need to get these things out of me.”

“Not yet,” he says as he slides his hand between my thighs.

“What are you doing?” I clamp my thighs together. “We’re in the middle of a restaurant.”

“Open,” he narrows his eyes at me.

“But someone might see,” I gasp as tiny waves of pleasure keep rolling over my body.

“Do not make me ask a second time, Jessie!” he warns.

Like the obedient, dripping mess that I am, I spread my thighs apart slightly, allowing him access to my pussy. He takes hold of the silicone cord.

“What are you doing?” I ask again. Surely he’s not going to pull them out here at the table? I was planning on going to the ladies’ room.

“Just a little adjustment,” he flashes his eyebrows at me as he pushes the balls deeper inside, while twisting them slightly and the jolt of pleasure rockets through my pussy, releasing a rush of wet heat.

“Shane!” I hiss as I hold onto his forearm, digging my nails into his suit jacket. “You’re not helping.”

“Breathe, Jessie,” he soothes in my ear. “You’ll be okay now we’re sitting down.”

I take a deep breath and close my eyes and he pulls his hand from beneath my dress. “Hey,” he says and I blink and look at him. “Better now?”

“Yes. A little,” I nod my head as the heat starts to subside.

“Dammit, Hacker,” he laughs and shakes his head.

“What’s so funny?”

“If I had known those things would have you all worked up like this, I’d have used them on you long before now.”

I’m just about to reprimand him when the waiter comes over to take our drinks order. I press my lips and my thighs together as Shane discusses the wine menu and focus on my breathing. By the time the waiter walks away, I feel much more in control.

CHAPTER 13

SHANE

I finish the last bite of my steak and lean back against the bench while Jessie finishes her pasta. Seeing her almost ready to come at the table earlier made me as hard as fucking stone, but it was so much fun watching her squirm. I picked up those balls as an afterthought, thinking they'd be an added element of fun for our evening. I'd had no idea they'd turn her into a trembling mess. I swear I could have kissed that spot on her neck earlier and she'd have come apart at the table. I had considered it too, but making her come would have meant I'd have had to take her out of here and fuck her, and I was hungry. Besides, I had promised her dinner and I always deliver on my promises.

She seemed to have calmed down while we were eating and I figure she's getting used to the sensation of those things rolling around in her pussy. Now that we have almost finished dinner, they won't be staying in there much longer, because I can't wait to get inside her sweet little cunt myself. My cock is twitching in my pants at the thought.

Jessie puts her silverware onto the table and pushes her plate away. "I'm done. If I eat any more I won't be able to move," she declares.

"You want dessert?" I ask.

"Nope," she shakes her head. "Not in this dress," she laughs as she rubs a hand over her stomach. "You?"

"No. Nothing from this menu, anyway."

“Oh?” she purrs as she turns to me brushing her hand over my thigh. “And where is your dessert menu then, Mr. Ryan?”

I lean closer to her, brushing my lips over her ear. Damn! She smells so fucking good. Sweeter than any dessert I’ve ever tasted. “You already know that my dessert is in your panties, sweetheart. So, if you don’t want me to eat it at this table, I suggest you behave yourself.”

“I am behaving.” She bites her lip and my cock throbs.

“Come here.” I reach for her hand.

“I am here,” she whispers.

“Here!” I look down at my lap.

“You want me to sit on your lap here in the restaurant?”

“It’s dark back here. The staff know not to disturb us,” I pull her towards me and she shuffles her body until she is sitting with her legs draped over mine, her feet resting on the bench and her back to the room.

“How is my dessert doing?” I whisper in her ear as I slide my hand between her thighs.

“It’s kind of...” she tilts her head as she considers her reply, “creamy?”

“Damn! Jessie. I’m going to fuck you so hard when we get out of here, sweetheart. My cock is busting to get inside you.”

“So shall we leave?” she arches one eyebrow at me.

“You want to?” I ask as my fingers slide between her folds and I tug gently on the balls.

“Shane!” she groans and shudders on my lap.

“Or you want me to make you come first, sweetheart?” I tug again as I brush the pad of my thumb over her clit, and she wraps her arms around me, pressing her face into my neck. “Your choice?” I growl as I hook my finger into the small heart loop at the end of the retrieval cord and move them in and out of her while I keep toying with her clit.

“God!” she pants. “Make me come, Shane. Please.”

“Good girl.”

I work the balls in and out of her pussy and her juices run out of her, soaking my fingers. I can smell her sweet cum and it makes me desperate to taste her, and while I would happily eat her out in front of these diners, I know she would rather I didn't.

“Shane!” she whimpers, so close to the edge I feel her muscles trembling. My girl has been on the edge of this all night, and I'll be fucked if I'm going to let some metallic balls have the pleasure of feeling her come. I pull them out of her and she groans into my neck in frustration as I stuff them into my jacket pocket.

“It's okay, I've got you,” I whisper in her ear, pulling her tighter to me as I slide two fingers inside her hot cunt. My own balls draw up into my stomach when I do because she feels fucking incredible. “Damn, Jessie. You're fucking soaking, sweetheart,” I groan as her cum runs down my fingers and onto my wrist. “You really liked those balls inside you, huh?”

“Yes,” she groans as she rocks her hips against my hand. “But not as much as your fingers.”

I curl the tips of them inside her, pressing against that spot that makes her shudder and she clings onto me even tighter. I don't even see the waiter approaching our table as I work her and my cock weeps as my girl keeps on whimpering in my ear. “Would you like to see the dessert menu, Sir?” he asks.

Jessie gasps at the sound of his voice but I keep going, and I scowl at him. “I'm kind of fucking busy here.”

“I'm sorry, Mr. Ryan,” he stammers.

“You will be. Don't ever fucking interrupt me again.” He nods before he skulks away and I press my lips against Jessie's ear. “It's okay, he's gone.”

“I don't care,” she groans as she rakes her nails over my chest and back. Her cunt squeezes around my fingers and I push harder. With my free hand, I push her face against my neck because she is about to come. Hard.

“Shane!” she groans loudly and her entire body shudders on my lap as her pussy draws my fingers deeper and her juices coat my whole hand.

“Fuck, sweetheart!” I growl as I brush her hair back from her face. “I am desperate to taste you.” I slide my fingers out of her and suck them into my mouth, cleaning her juices from them while she clings onto me, letting the last of her orgasm roll through her.

“That was...” she pants into my neck, “incredible.”

“I know. Damn, you taste so fucking sweet, I need to get you out of here because I’m about half a minute away from nailing you right here in this booth.”

“Okay,” she nods and I straighten her dress before she climbs off my lap. My suit pants are stained with her cum but I have never been more desperate to get inside a woman as I am right now for her. I want to eat her alive and then I want to fuck her until neither of us can stand. I consider taking her into the restroom but I need to spread her open somewhere and bury my face in her pussy.

CHAPTER 14

JESSIE

We leave the restaurant in a hurry and Shane practically runs us to the car.

“I wish I’d chosen a car with a bigger fucking interior now,” he growls when we’re inside and he looks around the tiny two seater.

“Me too,” I giggle.

“Fuck, sweetheart. I’m gonna die if I don’t fuck you soon,” he growls as he starts the ignition and the engine roars to life. “Let’s get the hell out of here.”

We’ve been driving for a few minutes when Shane turns down a tiny country lane. I assume he knows a short cut to the hotel but when then he pulls over and turns off the engine. Before I can even ask what’s going on, he has unclipped his seatbelt and jumped out of the car. He runs around to the passenger side and opens the door.

“Come on,” he holds out a hand to me.

“What are you doing?” I say as I grab his hand and a thrill of excitement shoots through me.

“If I can’t fuck you in this three million dollar car, sweetheart, then I’m sure as hell gonna fuck you on it.”

I step out into the road. It’s dark and the only light is from the interior of the car and the moon. “What if someone sees us?” I gasp as he pulls me toward the front of the car and pushes me back against the hood.

“I’m beyond caring, Jessie,” he growls as he pulls my dress up until it’s bunched around my waist before he pushes me all the way back. The metal of the car is warm from the engine but goosebumps skitter over my skin.

“Shane! We can’t...” I begin to protest but then he drops to his knees and plants my feet on his shoulders before he wraps his arms around the back of my thighs. My pussy throbs in anticipation as he presses his face against it and inhales deeply. The animalistic grunts he makes vibrate through my body.

“These panties are soaking, Jessie,” he groans. “You’re dripping with cum, sweetheart.”

“Oh God,” I gasp loudly as another release of wet heat flushes between my thighs and Shane begins sucking at my opening as he rubs his nose over my clit and I feel the waves of another orgasm already building. When he runs his tongue the length of my folds, I shudder. But when he sucks my clit into his mouth and pushes a finger inside me at the same time, my hips almost shoot off the car, but he presses on my lower abdomen, holding me in place.

It starts to rain and tiny droplets of water start to pepper my skin but he is undeterred. He increases the pressure and pace until my orgasm tears through my body like he has ignited a keg of gunpowder.

My legs tremble as he licks and sucks every last tremor from me and I moan his name. When he stands, his hands go straight to his belt and zipper and I look up at him. His eyes blaze with fire and he licks his lips which are glistening with my arousal. The rain is falling heavier now, but neither of us care as he pulls his beautiful cock free and edges closer to me.

Lifting my legs, I wrap them around his waist as he presses the tip against my opening. “I have never wanted to fuck anyone as much as I do you right now, Jessie.”

“Please, Shane?” I pant as I reach for him, tugging at the lapels of his suit jacket until he folds over me, pressing his lips against mine as he drives his cock into me. His tongue slides into my mouth as he nails me to the hood of this beautiful car. The rain gets heavier and heavier, until it is dripping from his

hair onto my face and the back of his jacket is saturated, but all we're focused on is the primal need to take as much of each other as we possibly can.

I run my fingers through his hair, pulling at the wet strands as I squeeze my legs tighter around his waist while his hands fist in my hair and he rails into me like we might never get the chance to do this again.

“Your pussy is a magnet for my cock, sweetheart,” he groans into my mouth. “I can't keep the fuck out of you.”

As he keeps on fucking me relentlessly, I tip over the edge again, shouting his name into the darkness as he grinds out his own release.

CHAPTER 15

JESSIE

Shane is sitting up in bed with his hands behind his head when I walk out of the bathroom. We were both soaked through by the time we got back to the hotel an hour ago, and even more so after when we ended up in the shower together fully clothed. Not that our clothes stayed on for long.

I take off my towel, grab one of his t-shirts from the drawer and pull it on before I walk to the bed.

He watches me with a wicked grin on his face. “There are no clothes allowed in bed. You should know that, Jessie. It’s the law here in Ireland.”

“Oh really?” I smile back. “And whose law is that? Ryan’s law?”

“Well, that’s the only one you need to concern yourself with, sweetheart. Now take it off.”

“But I’m cold.”

“That’s what duvets and hot chocolate are for.”

I glance over and see the two mugs of hot chocolate on the nightstand, each with tiny marshmallows floating on top.

“You made hot chocolate?”

“Relax, Hacker. I only poured water onto some powder,” he says with a roll of his eyes. “Now take off the damn t-shirt.”

Knowing this is an argument I’m not going to win, not that I particularly want to, I peel it off over my head and jump into

bed. He wraps an arm around me and pulls the duvet over us both before he hands me a mug.

I wrap my hands around it and take a sip of the hot, frothy liquid. It has quite a kick. “You add your own special ingredient too?” I ask with a sigh as the chocolate and liquor warm my throat.

“Hmm. I might have,” he chuckles.

“Are you trying to get me drunk, Shane Ryan?”

He hugs me tighter to him. “Now why would I want to do that, sweetheart, when I only have to kiss your neck to make you wet?”

I nudge him lightly in the ribs and he chuckles. “You’re an arrogant asshole. Have I ever told you that?”

“Many, many times,” he says before he plants a kiss on the top of my head. “Doesn’t mean I don’t speak the truth though.”

I snuggle into him, sipping my chocolate. He does speak the truth. In fact, he doesn’t even have to kiss my neck. Just the way he looks at me has me a hot trembling mess.

“No sassy comeback?”

“No,” I say with a contended sigh. “Now what are we watching?”

He picks up the remote with his free hand and turns on the TV and *Mamma Mia* is on. “I love this film,” I shriek.

“Fuck no!” he snaps as he lifts the remote to switch over.

“Aw please, Shane. I don’t usually like rom-coms, but this one just does it for me. Please can we watch it?”

He groans loudly. “For fuck’s sake!” He tosses the remote onto the bed, but then he leans back, wrapping his arm tighter around me and resting his cheek on my head. “You owe me big time for this, Hacker.”

“I’ll do anything you want, Sir,” I purr as I snuggle against his chest.

“Behave!” he growls. “Or you won’t get a chance to watch the movie or finish that hot chocolate.”

“And why is that?” I whisper.

“Because your mouth will be otherwise engaged.”

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, I lie in bed, still in an orgasm induced haze as I watch Shane dressing. He is going out for the day and I am once again confined to the hotel room. Not that I haven’t enjoyed a few days of relaxing, but I am easily bored.

“Maybe I’ll go down to the pool today,” I say as I chew on my lip.

“You know I’d rather you didn’t leave the suite,” he frowns at me.

“I know you said that, but I get bored.”

“Call Conor or the twins. I’m sure they’ll keep you busy,” he winks at me.

“Oh, I know. But what about the rest of the time?” I sigh dramatically. “And I have a beautiful pink string bikini that I’ve still not worn.”

Shane glares at me. He is aware I have such a bikini, because he bought it for me. It is indecent bordering on the obscene, and I have no intention of wearing it anywhere other than at the rooftop pool back home in New York.

“You brought that here?” he asks with a frown.

“Hmm?” I screw my face up as though I’m deep in thought. “Actually, I don’t think I packed it.”

He arches one eyebrow at me as he fixes his cufflink. “Do you try and grind my gears on purpose?”

“You know that I do,” I grin at him.

He sits on the bed beside me and grabs my chin in his strong hand, his eyes narrowed as he stares at me. “You looking for another spanking sweetheart?”

“Well the one you gave me the other day was pretty tame. For you anyway.”

“Oh really?”

“Really,” I purr. “You know I can take much more than that.”

“Hmm.” He leans down and gives me a soft kiss on the lips that makes my insides melt like warm butter.

I snake my arms around his neck. “Stay with me today.”

“I would love to, but I can’t, sweetheart,” he replies with a frown as he brushes my hair back from my face. “I’ve still got plenty to do before we go home.”

“Anything I can help with?”

He shakes his head. “Not really. But I appreciate the offer.” He sucks in a breath. “Please stay in the room today. And then tonight, I am all yours. And if you want that pretty ass of yours spanked hard, I am very up for that.”

Heat surges between my thighs at the thought. “With your belt?”

“With anything you want, Hacker,” he growls as he kisses me again.

“Can we go out too? I know you’re going to let me drive that car some time, right?” I bite on my lip, trying to appear as seductive as possible.

“We’ll see,” he growls. “My uncle is in town. I’m hoping to catch up with him today. I’d like for you to meet him. Maybe later?”

“Is he as lovely as your Aunt?”

That makes him laugh out loud. “Lovely is not how I’d describe him, but he is certainly interesting.”

“I like interesting.”

“I’m sure you’ll like him,” he winks at me. “But I’ve got to go.” He untangles himself from me and stands up. Grabbing

his suit jacket from the chair, he shrugs it on. “Behave yourself and I’ll be back as soon as I can.”

“I’ll miss you,” I flutter my eyelashes at him.

He glares at me for a few seconds, those incredible green eyes of his ablaze with fire, then he stalks toward the bed in two strides and pushes me back, lying on top of me with the full weight of his body. He threads his fingers through mine and pins my hands either side of my head before he presses his lips over mine and kisses me so fiercely that my head spins. Our tongues swirl together and I spread my thighs wider so he drops between them. I feel his cock hardening through the duvet. I whimper into his mouth and it sends him into a fervor as he deepens our kiss.

When he finally lets me up for air he stares into my eyes. “I love you,” he whispers.

I blink away a tear. “I love you, too,” I breathe.

“I’ll see you tonight.” Then he kisses my nose and pushes himself off the bed and I watch his fine ass as he heads for the door and walks out without looking back again.

CHAPTER 16

SHANE

I walk through the parking lot of The Peacock Club and look around at the cars parked up outside. From the shiny BMWs to the Audis, it seems like most of Sean O'Connor's men have turned up for this meeting today, as well as the arrogant prick himself. My brothers and I have just bought a chain of these clubs. They are a little different to what we usually deal in, but when I heard they were for sale, my interest was piqued. They cater to a very particular clientele. Sex clubs, I think most people would call them, but from my research I have discovered they are so much more than that. And now my brothers and I own six of them across the world. I can't deny that Jessie influenced my decision, not that she knows about them yet, but I can't wait to take her to one of them some day.

The club is closed during the day, so it's the perfect spot to do a little business while I'm here. The manager opened up for me half an hour ago and has now left to allow me the run of the place undisturbed.

I open the double doors and walk down the hallway. I don't know what I'd expected the place to look like, but it wasn't this. It is tasteful and elegant, with muted colors and chrome and glass. I suppose I'd been expecting leather and red paint. There are huge mirrored doors at the end of the hallway which I assume lead into the main club area. Someone leans against the wall just in front of them. I haven't seen him for twenty-five years and he has a long beard now, but I would still recognize him anywhere. He grins at me as I approach and I smile back. "What the fuck are you doing here?"

He holds out his arms. “It’s good to see you, kid.”

I walk into his embrace. “It’s good to see you too, Pol.”

We hug for a few seconds and I realize how much I’ve missed him. After my mom, my Uncle Paul was my favorite grown up when I was a kid. He taught me how to shoot and how to skin a rabbit. The former skill I have been grateful of, and have perfected over the years. The latter, not so much. “How the fuck did you know I’d be here?” I ask as I step back from him.

“What?” he arches an eyebrow at me. “O’Connor has been telling every fucker who will listen he’s meeting you here today.”

“He never could keep his mouth shut.”

Paul arches an eyebrow at me. “I hear he’s got a busted face and a broken arm.”

“Yeah? Well, he touched what didn’t belong to him.”

“A girl?” Paul chuckles softly.

“My girl.”

Paul nods his head. “She something special, is she?”

“Like you wouldn’t believe.”

“Oh, I can believe it,” he says with a nod and a faraway look in his eyes that makes me wonder who he’s thinking of.

“Where the fuck have you been Pol? I thought you were dead?”

“Here. There. Everywhere.” He shakes his head as though he’s annoyed with himself about something.

“You married? Got any kids?”

“No and no.”

“But there is someone, right?” I ask, thinking of his reaction a few seconds earlier.

“Hmm. There was.”

“Was?”

“Is,” he snaps and I wonder what the story is there because I have definitely pushed some kind of button. “Look, we gonna stand here reminiscing or are we gonna get in there and fuck up Sean O’Connor’s day?”

“And what makes you think I’m going to do that?” I frown at him.

“Well, you’re not handing operations over to him, are you?” he asks, a little more of his Irish accent creeping into his voice the more he talks to me.

“Not a chance in hell.”

“After you then, kid,” he says as he indicates the door.

I pull it open and walk inside the room with my uncle close behind me. There are a dozen men in the room. Sean O’Connor sits in the middle of them, the ringmaster of this particular circus. His face is a mess and his arm is in a sling and I can’t help but smile as I approach him.

“You’re late,” he snarls.

“What can I say? My girl wouldn’t let me get out of bed.”

“I bet,” he snarls. “She looked like a slut.”

I don’t have to act because Paul does it for me, walking straight over to O’Connor and grabbing him by the throat. “Apologize!” he snarls as O’Connor’s men look on. Although, I suppose they are no longer O’Connor’s men. They are mine.

O’Connor’s face is turning blue. He fumbles at his jacket but Paul only squeezes tighter and Sean looks like he’s about to pass out. “Sorry!” he eventually wheezes and Paul releases him.

“Thank you for coming here this morning, gentlemen,” I say as I shove my hands in my pockets and finger the brass knuckles I have in there. I’ll be happily using them on Sean O’Connor’s face if he utters one more word about Jessie. “I won’t keep you long, but I wanted to tell you how things are going to be now that my father is dead.”

Sean snorts and shakes his head.

“You got something to say first?” I snarl.

“Yes.” He pulls a gun out of his jacket and points it at me. “*We* are going to tell *you* how things are going to work around here. Now that your father is dead, the reign of the Ryan family is officially over.”

I narrow my eyes at him. “You think so?”

“I know so,” he spits.

I look beside him at his second-in-command, Cormac Macaulay, who rolls his eyes.

“Can someone kindly escort this piece of shit out of here?” I ask as I look around the room for a willing volunteer. Five men stand up.

“I can, Boss,” one of them says.

Sean stares at them with an open mouth and waves his gun at me again. Cormac stands up and no doubt thinking his right-hand man is leaping to his defense, Sean stands with him.

“I think it’s only right that I do it,” Cormac says.

“What the fuck?” Sean snarls but Cormac has disarmed him and has his arm up his back before he can even finish the sentence.

“Didn’t you know Cormac and I are old friends, Sean?” I frown at him. “I would have thought a man of your intelligence would have figured that out by now.”

“Snake!” Sean spits. “Macaulay, you ungrateful cunt!”

“Yeah, okay,” Cormac chuckles. “Your time is up, Sean, but I’m willing to at least let you walk out of here with a little dignity.”

Sean shrugs Cormac off him and straightens his coat. “Cheeky fucking cunts! Every one of you!” He points at the men seated around the room. “You’ll all fucking regret this!” he hisses and then he storms out of the room.

Once he is gone, I turn back to the assembled men. “As I was saying, here is how things are going to work from now on. I’m going back to New York as soon as my father’s funeral is

over. I don't have time to be back and forth to Ireland every five minutes to check on what you are up to. I trust Cormac, so as far as you're concerned, he speaks for me. I trust that all of you will just keep doing what you're doing. There is no need for anyone to be negatively affected by my father's death. Things will continue as they were, but with Cormac at the helm. Understood?"

"Yes," they all nod their heads and voice their agreement.

"Good. Now clear off," I say and they all stand to leave. "Not you," I say to Cormac and he nods his head and takes a seat again.

"Nicely done," Paul says when there are only the three of us left in the room. "Now how about you fix all of us a nice whiskey from that well stocked bar there?" He nods his head toward it.

"What am I? Your fucking bartender?" I frown at him.

He laughs and shakes his head. "I don't see my nephew for twenty-five years and this is how he treats me." He slides off his suit jacket and hangs it over the back of his chair. "Shall I fetch us a drink then?" He coughs and rubs his chest.

"Sit down, old man," I say with a sigh. "I'll get us a fucking drink."

"Take off your coat if you're staying, lad," Paul says to Cormac. "Makes me uneasy when people wear coats indoors. Like they're hiding something. We're all friends, aren't we?"

Cormac looks at me and I nod my head and take off my jacket too before I walk behind the bar and pour us all a large measure of fine Irish whiskey.

WHEN WE EACH HAVE A DRINK, Paul, Cormac and I raise our glasses in a toast. "To the most evil cunt to have ever walked this earth," Paul says before he downs his. Both Cormac and I nod our agreement but I have never seen such obvious, undisguised hatred for my father from Paul before. I mean I knew that he always hated him, but his venom now is only matched by my own, and I had plenty more reasons to hate my father than our uncle did. Or so I always thought. Now I know

differently and my conversation from two days ago with my Aunt reminds me that I need to speak to him, but it's a conversation we need to have in private.

Cormac and I down our whiskey too and the three of us slam our glasses down onto the table. Paul wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. "I need to go."

I frown at him. "Now?"

"Yeah. Something I have to do." He stands up and puts his jacket back on.

"I need to talk to you about something, Pol."

"Yeah, I know," he nods his head. "Later, though. I want to meet this girl of yours too."

"Then at least leave me your number?" I frown at him.

"Okay," he nods his head and takes his cell out of his pocket before pressing some buttons. My own cell phone vibrates in my pocket.

"Now you got it," he says, still clearly distracted by something.

"Dinner tonight?" I suggest.

"Tonight," he agrees but he is a million miles away.

"Good to meet you Paul," Cormac says as my uncle starts to walk away.

"Yeah. You too, kid. See you later, Shane." He winks at me and then he walks out.

"Seems like he had to be somewhere real fast," Cormac says with a smile.

"Yeah," I frown as I watch him leave. "Slippery fucker. Did he say anything while I was getting drinks?"

"He only asked how long I'd known you, but then I had to take a piss, so we didn't talk long."

I nod my head absent mindedly and then I remember the real reason I am here today. I have known Cormac since we were teenagers, ever since we both started working for my

father. He has always hated Sean O'Connor as much as I have, and he was never my father's biggest fan either. I lost touch with him when we moved to New York, but once I found out Patrick was dying, I reached out to Cormac and he soon proved himself to be the perfect choice to take over here.

"I appreciate you giving me this opportunity, Shane," Cormac adds. "I won't let you down."

"I know."

I SPENT another two hours with Cormac discussing the next steps for our businesses here in Ireland, and I am even more sure now that I have made the right choice in appointing him as the new head of our operations. He is a good businessman, rational and fair, but ruthless when he needs to be. I'm happy to be able to leave this behind and focus on our business in New York.

CHAPTER 17

JESSIE

I sip my tea and stare out the window at the beautiful view. I had a hot video call with the twins earlier and it was so much fun I had to shower after, but now I'm bored. I should have insisted on going with Shane today. I hate being in my own company for too long.

I wonder if his Aunt Em is busy? She said we should visit as soon as we could and I bet she wouldn't mind if I went alone. I could ask Shane if his driver could take me and then he could meet me there later. She and I got along so well. Maybe going without Shane would be a better idea anyway, because she could give me all of the stories from his childhood that he'd probably rather she didn't.

I smile to myself at that thought and look around the room for my cell and frown when I don't see it. I must have left it in the bathroom.

As I stand up, I hear the sound of the door handle and look toward it. The door opens and my heart skips a beat. "You're back early," I shout as I make my way to the bathroom.

He doesn't reply and I turn to look at him.

"Hello Jessica."

It's not Shane.

My feet seem to grow roots, anchoring me to the carpet. My blood turns to ice as it trickles through my veins and my heart stops beating in my chest. Time stands still. I want to run but my body won't let me move.

“How?” I stutter as I stare at the face that has haunted my dreams for ten long years.

He holds up the electronic keycard. “Shane gave me this.”

“He wouldn’t,” I stammer.

“No?” he smiles at me. It is cruel and twisted. It mocks me. He stalks toward me but I still stand frozen to the spot. My bladder suddenly feels like it’s about to burst and I close my eyes, willing my body not to betray me. “You have no idea who Shane Ryan is, Jessica,” he hisses as he steps closer. “He told you he wanted you to meet his Uncle Paul, didn’t he?”

My eyes snap open. “No.” I shake my head. “You’re not him.”

“Oh, I am, little bird,” he hisses as he finally reaches me. He towers over me. His beard is longer and bushier now, no doubt to hide the scars on his neck from when I almost killed him, but those cold, gray eyes are exactly as I remember. He runs a fingertip over my cheek and I shudder at his touch. I want to shrink back from him. I want to kick him in the balls and run, but I am frozen in fear.

“My nephews have been keeping you warm for me until it was safe for me to claim you again.”

I try to swallow but my throat is raw and tight. “No.” I shake my head again as tears start to run down my cheeks. This can’t be happening. This can’t be true. I must have fallen asleep on that huge king-size bed, the one that Shane and I made love on just a few hours ago. The one I was lying on when Mikey and Liam told me how much they loved me.

“Yes, little bird,” he croons as he leans closer to me. The smell of cigarettes clings to his clothes and a wave of nausea almost overwhelms me. “Shane handed me this key himself and told me you’d be ready for me. He’s a good boy, my nephew. All of them are.”

“You’re lying,” I hiss, finally able to move I take a step back from him. There’s a gun here somewhere. I have to find it. Where the hell did Shane put it?

“I would never lie to you, my love.”

At last, adrenaline finally kicks in and it surges through my veins. I lunge for him. “I am not your love!” I screech as I aim for his eyes. But he is still quick. He dodges out of my way and I scratch his neck instead.

“Still my feisty little bird,” he mocks me as he grabs hold of my hands and squeezes my wrists painfully. “I taught you so well.”

“I hate you,” I kick out at him but he steps back. He has a foot and one hundred pounds on me and experience reminds me I am no match for him. Perhaps if I had been prepared? Perhaps if I hadn’t been completely blindsided by his revelations.

“You and I have so much to catch up on,” he chuckles as he twists me around, holding both of my wrists in one hand now, until my back is pressed against his chest and his hot breath is at my ear. “So much.”

I wriggle as I feel him reaching into his pocket.

“You’re all mine now,” he whispers and that is the last thing I hear. I feel a sharp scratch on my neck, and then there is nothing.

CHAPTER 18

SHANE

I check all of my pockets for my keycard but it's not in there. I'm sure I picked it up this morning. I knock on the door instead and wait for Jessie to answer. She doesn't open and I knock louder before I shout.

"Jessie! It's me."

Still nothing. I take my cell out of my pocket. She must be in the shower. Before I can dial her number, one of the hotel maids steps out of the elevator. She smiles at me. "Good evening, Mr. Ryan."

Everyone in this place seems to know my name. "Evening. Could you let me in here?" I nod toward the door. "I forgot my key."

"Of course, Sir," she says as she walks over and swipes her card.

"Thank you." I smile at her and she giggles before I step inside the room.

"Jessie!" I shout again as I look around the suite and head to the bedroom. I walk inside and she's not there either. The bathroom door is open and I don't hear her in there, but I go in and check anyway. Where the fuck is she? My heart starts to race a little but I tell myself that there's a reasonable explanation. She has gone to the spa downstairs. To the pool, like she said she would. Or maybe to the restaurant or the store.

My cell is still in my hand so I dial her number. A second later, her current ringtone, *Like I Can*, plays loudly in the

bathroom and my racing pulse starts to thunder. She would never have gone out without her cell.

I run back into the bathroom and see her phone sitting there, flashing and vibrating while Sam Smith sings at the top of their voice. I end the call and put my cell back into my pocket before picking hers up. She has a missed call from me and one from Conor half an hour ago. I grip it tightly in my hand and walk back out into the suite.

“Jessie!” I shout louder now. I mean, she’s so small she could have fallen asleep under a table or something, right?

“Jessie. Where the fuck are you, sweetheart?” I shout again as I search every inch of the room even though I already know she’s not here. So many emotions flood my senses that I don’t know which one to deal with. Suddenly, I am reminded of that day in New York when we came home to find she’d gone, leaving only a brief note to explain her absence.

I scan the room again, ashamed for even thinking it, but there is no note. My heart sinks as I realize that’s worse. Because if she didn’t leave of her own accord, then someone fucking took her.

Using the phone in the room, I call down to the front desk.

“Good evening, Mr. Ryan,” the desk clerk answers.

“Have you seen Mrs. Ryan today?” I ask, not bothering with formalities as I don’t have the time.

“No, Sir,” she says, “but I’ve only been on shift for a few hours.”

“Can you check the spa for me? Or the restaurant? Basically, every single place in this hotel. I need to know if she’s here,” I snap, unable to contain my anxiety.

“Of course. Hold on for one moment.”

I sit on the sofa with the phone against my ear and my head in my hand, waiting for her to get back to me and tell me that Jessie is down there somewhere. Because that’s still a possibility, right?

The wait feels like forever until she finally comes back to me. “I’m sorry, Mr. Ryan, but Mrs. Ryan isn’t in the hotel.”

“You’re sure?”

“As you’re one of our exclusive guests, I contacted security and they have checked everywhere. She isn’t here. I also checked with my colleague on the desk who’s been on shift all day and he hasn’t seen her leave.”

“You have CCTV though?”

“Of course.”

“Tell your security manager I want to see him at my suite right now,” I snap.

“Of course, Sir.”

I put the phone down and take out my cell again. I dial Conor’s number as I keep searching the room for clues that will lead me to some plausible explanation for her absence. There’s a half empty cup of tea on the table near the window next to the easy chair. Jessie never leaves a cup of tea. She says it’s rude to not finish a drink someone has gone to so much effort to make, even if the effort was only hers. I feel the side of the cup. It’s cold.

“Hey, bro?” Conor answers.

“Hey. Have you spoken to Jessie today?” I ask as I try to keep my voice as calm as possible.

“No. I called her before but she didn’t answer, so I assumed you two were busy.” He chuckles softly and when I don’t laugh too, he stops. “Something wrong?”

“Have the twins spoken to her?”

“Yeah, why?”

“Are they there, Con?”

“Yeah.” I hear an edge creeping into his voice. “I’ll put you on speaker.”

“What’s up?” Mikey asks and the hope and happiness in his voice almost crushes me as I realize I am about to bring

their world crashing down around them all.

“When did you speak to Jessie?”

“About three hours ago.”

“How was she?”

Mikey starts to laugh and Liam answers instead. “She was good, bro.”

“She was more than good by the time we were done with her,” Mikey adds.

I swallow the ball of emotion that is lodged in my throat. “Did she say anything about what she had planned for the rest of the day?”

“She said she was going to have a shower then hang about the room waiting for you to come back. She was pumped about her plan to convince you to let her drive the Sian,” Liam says but the tone of his voice has changed now.

“Why, Shane?” Conor interrupts. “What’s going on? Why aren’t you asking Jessie this?”

I close my eyes, screwing them tightly shut as I try to find the words. But there is only one way to tell them and to break their hearts. “I came back to the room and she’s not here.”

“Maybe she just went out for something?” Mikey says but I hear the panic in his voice.

“Her cell is here. Her purse is here,” I say as I notice it on the floor. Not that Jessie ever takes her purse anywhere. “Everything is here. Her coat. Her things.” I swallow.

“Fuck!” Mikey hisses.

“You know she didn’t walk out on us though, right?” Conor asks.

“Yeah.”

“The Wolf?” Liam says and I hear the panic in his voice.

“Maybe,” I finally admit my greatest fear out loud.

“Fuck, Shane!” Conor snaps and I feel the guilt weighing heavily on me. He was right. She would have been safer with

them. He doesn't push it any further though.

"We'll be on the next flight," Mikey says.

"Yeah," Liam adds.

I let out a long breath. They have all sworn they would never set foot in Ireland again, but I can't do this without them. I am more grateful for them now than I have ever been.

"We'll see you in the morning, bro," Conor says. "But keep us updated, yeah?"

"I will. I'm meeting with the head of security in a few minutes. We'll go through the security feeds. See if there's anything."

"You got anyone else there who can help you out?" Conor asks.

"Pol is here," I say as I'm suddenly grateful for my uncle too. "I'll ask him to help. I don't trust anyone else right now."

"It might be that cunt O'Connor who's taken her?" Conor suggests.

"I'll be looking into him, don't worry," I snarl. He was one of the first people who came to my mind too.

"We've got some flights to organize," Liam chips in. "We'll see you soon, bro."

"I'll make sure there is a car with everything you need waiting at the airport. See you tomorrow," I say and end the call just as there is a knock at the door of the hotel room.

CHAPTER 19

SHANE

I open the door to a tall man with dark hair, a goatee and an anxious expression on his face.

“Mr. Ryan, my name is Marvin George. I’m the director of security here at the hotel.”

“Come on in,” I say to him as I hold the door open.

I note the laptop he is carrying under his arm and he opens it up as soon as he sits down. “I had one of my security guards check the floor as soon as you reported Mrs. Ryan missing,” he says and his Adam’s apple bobs in his throat.

“And?” I snap.

“If you look at the time stamps,” he taps a few keys on the keyboard and an image of the empty hallway outside fills the screen, “there has been an hour of footage wiped from our systems. From every single camera.”

“What?” I frown at him. “I chose this hotel because it was a safe place for my wife to stay, and you’re telling me someone hacked into your security feed and erased it?” I shout at him, even though I know no matter how good your security is, there will always be someone who can hack it. Someone like Jessie.

“I’m sorry, Sir. We are doing everything we can to discover how this happened, but...”

“But nothing!” I snarl at him. “Do you have anything at all that might help me find her?”

“Not yet, but I can assure you I have all of my staff making enquiries.”

“Enquiries?” I run my hands through my hair. “I’m going to need more than fucking enquiries, Marvin!”

“I will do everything in my power to assist you, Sir,” he says as he stands and picks up his laptop.

I nod at him. “See if anyone saw or heard anything suspicious today. No matter how small or insignificant it may seem, I want to know about it.”

“Of course,” he says with a nod. “I’ll leave you to it.”

I watch him walk out of the door and pick up my cell again and dial Paul’s number. It takes him a while to answer and when he does he is out of breath.

“Hey, kid,” he answers.

“Paul, I need your help.”

“Why?”

“My girl. Jessie. She’s disappeared. Someone’s taken her.”

“You sure she didn’t just go out shopping or something? You know what women are like.”

“No, Paul. She is gone. Now are you going to help me find her or not?”

He takes a few moments to answer me. “Of course. You think it was that prick O’Connor?”

“Maybe,” I say, hoping that it is him, because I know where to find him. But if she has been taken by the Wolf, I am worried we might never get her back. “Can you meet me at my hotel?”

“Sure. I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

MY HEART IS in my throat as I close the door to our suite. What if she comes back and I’m not here? I shake my head and walk to the elevator. I’m going to speak to the desk clerk again while I wait for Paul. Someone must have seen her

leaving here today. Maybe Erin even saw something? It's a long shot but I am already clutching at straws here.

A few moments later, I stand outside Erin's room and wait for her to open the door. I doubt she will have any useful information but then right now I don't know what's useful.

The door opens a few seconds later. "Shane?" She looks at me in surprise as she fastens her earring. "I was just getting ready for dinner. Come on in."

I follow her inside and close the door.

"You fancy a drink?" she asks with a smile.

"No," I shake my head. "Have you see Jessie today?"

"No. I've been working all day. Should I have?"

"No, but she's gone missing," I say the words and even though I know they're true, they don't seem real.

Erin stares at me and I swear I see a smirk flicker over her lips.

"Did you just fucking grin at me?" I snarl.

She sighs dramatically. "Oh come on, Shane, it's not like she hasn't walked out on you before."

I cross the room to her in one stride. I have never laid a finger on this woman in anger. Not even when I found out she had been lying to me for years. Not even when she accused my brothers of ruining our engagement. I grab her throat and she blinks up at me in shock as I push her back against the wall.

"She did not *walk out*," I hiss as I squeeze her throat harder. "Somebody fucking took her."

"Shane! You're hurting me," she whimpers.

"Hurting you?" I narrow my eyes at her. "You're lucky I don't snap your fucking neck. I know you don't like her, but she is fucking everything to me. *Everything!* And you fucking smile when I tell you she's missing." I release her from my grip, afraid that I might go too far if I don't let her go now.

Erin rubs at her throat and gasps for breath but I don't have an ounce of sympathy for her. She has made her dislike for Jessie clear from the outset.

"I'm sorry," she mumbles.

"Have you seen anything suspicious at all?"

"No," she says with a shake of her head.

I glare at her and then I walk out of her room, but she shouts to me before I reach the door. "Everything? Really?" she sniffs.

I turn on my heel and look at her. "And then some."

CHAPTER 20

CONOR

I close the safe in Shane's office and walk down the hallway to my brothers' room to find them frantically packing. As soon as we got off the call with Shane, I started to look for flights while they made arrangements for the club and the businesses for the next few days. It was good we all had something practical to focus on because it prevented us from spinning out worrying about what the hell has happened to Jessie. Walking inside Liam and Mikey's bedroom, I toss their passports onto the bed.

"Alejandro's plane is at LAX and it will take at least six hours to get here and refuel."

Liam frowns at me. "That's too long."

"I know, so I got us on a flight that leaves in two hours. Better get your asses moving. The car will be downstairs in fifteen."

"Thanks," they reply in unison. I turn to go to my own room and throw a few things in a bag when Mikey's voice stops me.

"We'll find her, won't we, Con?"

I swallow hard and keep heading for the door because I can't look at them and lie. "Of course we fucking will."

I slam the door behind me and take a deep breath as I press my forehead against the wall. My heart is hammering so hard in my ears that I can barely hear myself think. I feel so helpless being thousands of miles away from Jessie and Shane and powerlessness is a feeling I am unused to and one I do not

fucking like. It brings up far too many bad memories for me. What if we don't get her back? What if the Wolf has already taken her somewhere we can never find her? What if someone else has her and she's already dead? What if she is out there in pain somewhere, wondering where we are?

Breathe in.

Out.

Don't lose it now, Conor. Not when everyone needs you so much.

The door opens and I snap my head up.

"You okay, bro?" Liam looks at me, his eyes narrowed in concern.

"Just taking a breath, kid," I reply.

He puts a hand on my shoulder. "We'll be there in a few hours and then we'll get her back. I know we will."

I nod in agreement even though I don't share his confidence. I will do everything I can to bring her back to us, but what if it's already too late?

CHAPTER 21

JESSIE

My head throbs as I blink in the dim room.
My vision is blurred.

I'm naked.

I shiver from the cold and instinctively pull my arms to my chest to warm myself, but I can't move. Cold metal cuffs bite into the skin on my wrists.

I pull harder but all I hear is the dull clinking of chains.

Where am I?

The Wolf!

He took me. I look around the room but my head is swimming and the fog in my brain is making it hard to think.

He walked into the hotel suite.

He had a key.

Shane gave it to him. That's what he said.

Bile rises in my throat.

Where is he now? The Wolf? Shane?

I close my eyes and try to shift the fog.

It's helping. I seem to be able to think more clearly with my eyes shut. The Wolf was in our hotel suite. He grabbed me and then I woke up here.

No. I woke earlier too. He was talking to me. Telling me how much he loved me. Talking to me about how his nephews

had defiled me. He was disgusted in me. The dull ache in my abdomen reminds me what he did afterwards, though I think I passed out halfway through. He used a condom. I remember that. He said that I was unclean. Disgusting, evil prick! Like he needed protection from me!

I feel a wet sticky substance between my thighs and my cheeks burn with shame. He must have made me climax. Bile surges up again and this time I can't stop it. I retch, managing to turn my head to the side so I at least manage to puke on the bed and not myself.

Icy fingers trail along my calf. Am I imagining this now?

I open my eyes and see his face staring down at me.

He shakes his head. "Well, don't you look a sight," he sneers at me.

"Please!" I croak the word but no sound comes out of my mouth.

"Time to go back to sleep, little bird," he croons as he brushes my hair from my face. I turn my head away from him and then I feel his fingers grip my arm. I buck my whole body, trying to get away from him, but he holds my arm firm in his grasp, his fingertips digging into my soft flesh.

I feel a sharp scratch on my arm.

Then nothing.

CHAPTER 22

SHANE

Paul picked me up outside my hotel eight hours ago and since that time we have been scouring the streets of Belfast looking for Sean O'Connor. We have finally found him at one of his many girlfriends' houses.

It is Paul who goes inside and pulls him out of bed. He drags him naked into the street and throws him at my feet. I look down at him. He was fast asleep in bed with a woman. He crawled away like an injured animal to lick his wounds after our meeting yesterday morning. He didn't take Jessie.

Paul kicks him in the stomach and Sean retches onto the pavement.

"Enough." I put my hand on his arm and he scowls at me. I hate Sean O'Connor as much as anyone, but he won't be able to talk if he's too busy puking.

I crouch down on the floor and glare at him. "Have you seen Jessie?"

"Who?" he blinks at me in what appears to be genuine confusion.

"Jessie. My girl?" I snarl. "The one you couldn't keep your filthy hands off the other day."

"Of course I haven't," he spits.

I grab his head by his hair and tip it back so I can look into his eyes. "Are you fucking lying to me?"

"What would I want with your whore?" he hisses.

I take his head and smash it onto the pavement and he cries out in pain. When I look up, Paul has pulled out a gun and has it aimed at Sean's head.

“What the fuck are you doing, Pol?” I frown at him. “We're in the middle of the fucking street. Kids live around here.”

“He took your girl,” he snarls at me, “and then he called her a whore.”

I put my hand on his forearm, forcing it down so he lowers his weapon. “He didn't take her.”

“Then who did?”

“It's a long story. Come on. Let's go.”

I walk toward the car and he follows me. The sun is coming up and I feel completely lost and hopeless. My brothers' plane will be landing soon and I only hope that their arrival will spark something in me that gives us a new lead to chase.

The hotel's security has been entirely useless and nobody seems to have seen or heard anything. How a grown woman can just disappear from a hotel suite without a trace is beyond me.

“We will find your Jessica,” Paul says as he falls into step beside me.

The name slices through me like ice, sending a shiver down my spine. For once in my life I am grateful to my cold hearted bastard of a father, whose cruelty taught me nerves of steel. Despite my insides churning and my heart racing, I don't miss a beat.

“Yeah.”

We stop next to the car and Paul pulls at his collar as he steps closer to me. It's then that I see the scratch on his neck. I've been so distracted looking for Sean, I forgot to look for the Wolf. “You been fighting with some cats, Pol?” I grind the words out with a smile while my insides boil with rage.

He runs his finger over it and the hint of a smile plays on his lips. “Not exactly,” he murmurs.

My fists clench at my sides as my heart races in my chest. My cell phone vibrating in my pocket is a welcome interruption. Glancing at the screen, I see it’s Conor calling.

“I have to take this,” I say to Paul as I step away from the car and speak to my brother.

CHAPTER 23

CONOR

By the time we land at Belfast airport almost eleven hours later it's the early hours of the morning, local time. I turn on my cell as soon as we land and call Shane who takes longer than expected to answer.

"Hey," he breathes.

"You found her yet?"

"No," he says and my heart sinks in my chest. I shake my head at Liam and Mikey who sit watching my face for clues. "It's a shame Liam couldn't make it, but he needs his rest, and I suppose someone needs to look after things back home."

I frown as I turn to Liam sitting beside me. He's right here and Shane knows that he boarded this plane with me. What the fuck is going on?

I press a finger to my lips indicating he should stay quiet before I answer. "Yeah, a damn shame."

"I'm heading back to the hotel with Paul. Can you and Mikey come straight there and we can plan our next move?"

"Of course we will. See you in an hour, bro."

I end the call and put my cell back into my pocket.

"What was that about?" Liam asks.

"For some reason, Shane wanted whoever he was with to think that you stayed back home," I say to Liam.

"Why?" he frowns at me.

“Because then you’re our secret weapon,” Mikey suggests. “If nobody knows you’re here then...” he shrugs. He doesn’t need to finish the sentence for us to know what he means. An invisible man is an asset.

“You know who he was with?” Liam asks.

“No. Except for Paul, I think.”

“Uncle Paul?” Mikey asks.

“Yeah. Shane said he was going to ask him to help. But I wonder who else was with them?”

“I’m sure we’ll find out soon,” Liam says. “So, what shall I do? Stay in the car?”

I nod. “In the car and out of sight. I’ll fill you in on the plan as soon as I know what it is.”

“Maybe he knows something that he couldn’t say?” Liam offers, his face full of hope and I feel a flicker of it too.

“I certainly fucking hope so.”

CHAPTER 24

SHANE

I slip my cell into my pocket and turn back to Paul who is hovering close by. I wonder how much of my conversation with Conor he just heard. It's taking every ounce of willpower I have not to tie that fucker up right now and torture the truth from him. But he never caved under torture when he was in the army or after he left, and I can't risk him dying before I find out the truth. Besides, I have a plan now, and thankfully Conor knows me so well he responded exactly how I'd hoped he would.

"Now that your brothers are here, I'm going to head back to my hotel and get some sleep," Paul says with a fake yawn.

"What? You haven't seen them for twenty-five years. You don't want to even say hello? Not even to Mikey?" I balk at the thought of him and Mikey meeting again, but I swallow it down and look him in the eye.

"I'm not as young as I used to be, kid. I need some sleep. I'll see them later."

"Sleep? Come on, Paul. This is my world we're talking about here, and we don't have a hope of finding her without you." I try flattery instead and the roll of his eyes tells me it is working more efficiently than tugging on his heartstrings – because of course, he doesn't have one.

"Just a few more hours? Help me fill my brothers in on what we've done so far and then you can get some sleep. We can all get some and start again tonight," I lie.

"Fine," he says with a sigh.

“Two hours and then I’m gone.”

“That’s all I’m asking for.”

I HAVE JUST HANDED Paul a mug of coffee when the door to my hotel suite opens and Mikey and Conor rush inside. They both run to me and despite the fact they must be both as pissed as hell that I lost our girl, they wrap their huge arms around me.

“You got any leads at all?” Conor asks as he takes a step back and looks at me full of anxiety and concern.

“No,” I look over at Paul and my brothers turn to him, too.

“Hello, boys,” he says with a half smile as he makes his way over to us.

“Paul?” Conor holds out his hand to shake it. He remembers our uncle but Mikey won’t. He was still a baby when Paul moved away.

Paul shakes Conor’s outstretched hand. “It’s good to see you, kid,” he says but his eyes are on Mikey who frowns at this man he doesn’t know, but whose history is so very tied to his own. “And to see you again, Michael. It’s a shame your brother couldn’t make it.”

Mikey frowns at him and I silently urge him not to give the game away.

“He wasn’t up to the journey,” he answers without pause and I could hug him. “This family reunion is all well and good but where the fuck is our girl?” He turns back to me.

“We haven’t found her yet.” I rub my hand over my jaw. “I’m fucking exhausted, boys. I can’t even think straight.” I sigh and shake my head.

“Then tell us what you do know,” Conor snaps.

“Look, Shane,” Paul downs his coffee and places the mug on the table. “You should probably get some sleep and we can pick this up again later. I’ll leave you to fill your brothers in, but I really need to get back to my hotel.”

I nod at him. “Yeah. Thanks for your help, Paul.” The words stick in my throat.

“I’ll call you later and see if there’s anything else I can do. Okay?” he offers.

“Yeah,” I nod and then he says his goodbyes to Conor and Mikey before walking out of the room.

My brothers and I watch him leave and as soon as the door is closed I take a deep breath. “Where is Liam?”

“In the car outside. What’s going on?” Conor asks.

“I’ll tell you as soon as I’ve spoken to him,” I say as I take my cell out of my pocket and dial Liam’s number.

“Hey, bro?” he answers.

“Hey, kid. You see that grey Range Rover across the street?”

“Yeah?”

“In about two minutes our Uncle Paul is going to get into it. You can’t miss him. He’s six four and has a beard. I need you to follow him.”

“Okay. Is this about Jessie?”

“Yes. Don’t let him see you. Follow him and call us when he stops. Okay?”

“Okay. Fuck! He’s on his way outside.”

“Call me as soon as you have anything, Liam. We’ll be right behind you as soon as you give us the nod. Okay?”

“Yeah,” he says and then ends the call.

“Why is Liam following Paul?” Mikey asks me but Conor stares at me with a look of horror on his face that makes me think he has already figured out the reason why.

I can’t even believe these words are about to come from my mouth because it is too fucking crazy to be true, but it also makes perfect sense. “Because Paul is the Wolf.”

CHAPTER 25

MIKEY

“**W**hat the *fuck*?” I ask as I stare at my oldest brother with my mouth hanging open, because I’m pretty sure I must have misheard him.

“It’s him,” Shane says, shaking his head as though he doesn’t even believe what he’s saying himself.

“No way. He can’t be,” I insist. I mean I don’t remember him from when I was a kid, but Conor and Shane always speak fondly of him. He left Ireland shortly after our mom died, but before that, he was our uncle. He taught Shane and Conor how to shoot. He was an expert marksman in the army.

“Fuck! How do you know?” Conor asks, seemingly more ready to believe this than I am.

“He has a scratch on his neck that wasn’t there when I saw him yesterday afternoon.”

“A scratch?” I interrupt him.

He glares at me and I stop talking.

“He got it in the space of a couple of hours. The same couple of hours during which Jessie was taken.”

“Still, Shane...” Conor frowns at him.

“And he called her Jessica,” he says and I blink at him as realization dawns on me. Our own fucking uncle? The Wolf?

“Fuck!” Conor hisses. “You never mentioned that’s her real name?”

“No. Why would I? Jessica is like a different person to me. I only know Jessie.”

“But it’s short for Jessica. Maybe he assumed?” I say even though I know I’m clutching at straws. He fits the bill in every other way. A hired assassin, able to disappear without a trace and hide in the shadows.

“And my key card was missing when I got back here yesterday.”

“What?” Conor frowns.

“I thought I must have left it behind, but there’s only one here and I assume Jessie didn’t take hers with her. He was the only person who got close enough to me to take it.”

“Why did you just let him walk out of here then?” I ask, suddenly the thought that we just let the Wolf leave here and go back to do who the fuck knows what to our girl, hits me.

“Because he’s the fucking Wolf, Mikey,” Shane snaps. “You think he would give her up if he thought we were onto him? He would die rather than let us find her. Did you not listen to anything Jessie told you about him?”

“Yes!” I snap as I walk toward him. “Did *you*? Because you knew she was terrified of him and you still left her here on her own. You let him walk into this room and fucking take her. And now our girl is out there somewhere living her worst fucking nightmare and who knows if we will ever fucking get her back!” All the anger and frustration I’ve been holding onto for the past fourteen hours comes tumbling out of me as I advance on Shane.

It’s Conor who stops me in my tracks. “Hey!” he snaps. “We need to focus on finding Jessie right now.”

I glare at Shane who hangs his head as though he can’t even bear to look at me and now I just feel like shit because how the fuck was he supposed to know our own uncle was such a fucking monster?

“So what do we do when Liam calls?” I ask instead.

“Shane?” Conor says when he doesn’t reply. “I need you on your fucking A game here, so get your head out of your ass and tell me what the fuck our next step is?”

Shane looks up at us both and I’m relieved to see his usual look of certainty and control back on his face. “We wait and see where Paul goes and if he stays there or leaves again. It depends on what Liam tells us.”

“So we just wait?” I ask.

“For now.”

So we all sit down and wait for news from Liam, each of us wrestling with our own emotions alone, because to start talking about our fears and our anger would make it all that more real and for now we have to stay focused on finding Jessie. If I think too much about what she might be going through right now, I won’t be able to function, let alone outsmart the Wolf.

CHAPTER 26

LIAM

I follow the beat up Range Rover for about eight miles before it stops outside an old farmhouse in Antrim. I park up a few hundred yards down the road as he walks inside the house. Lights go on in the downstairs windows and my heart races as I wonder if Jessie is in there.

I dial Shane's number and a few seconds later, his voice fills the car.

"Liam?" is all he says.

"I followed him to an old house in Antrim."

"What? He still has that place? Erin told me he sold it years ago."

"Well, he's just walked in there now. Shall I go in after him?"

"No. Just wait and see what he does next."

"But she could be in there, Shane."

"I know, but she might not be, and if you go in then you completely blow our cover and we might never find her."

"I hate sitting here thinking that she could just be a few yards away. Wondering what he might be doing to her, Shane," I say as emotion wells up in my throat. I am so fucking angry I could tear Paul's head clean off his shoulders with my bare hands, but I am also terrified. I haven't been this scared of losing someone since the Russians took Conor two years ago.

“I know, kid. We’ll drive out there now, and then at least one of us can follow him if he leaves. And you can check the house.”

As I’m talking to Shane the light goes off again and I freeze. I watch as the front door opens a few seconds later. “Hang on. He’s leaving.”

“Already?”

“Yeah. He’s got a gas bottle with him.”

“A gas bottle?”

“Yeah. Like the kind we use for a barbecue.”

“Fuck!”

“Do I follow him or do I go inside the house?” I ask as my heart starts racing in my chest.

“Fuck! What does your gut say, kid?” he asks me.

“I think she’s in there, Shane.”

“Wait for him to leave then and go check. If he’s taking a gas bottle to be filled he’ll come back.”

“Okay,” I breathe.

“Be careful,” he warns.

“I will.”

“And be prepared for anything,” he adds.

“I will,” I swallow hard. I have no idea what state Jessie is going to be in when I go in there and I have no idea how I’ll deal with my emotions when I see her, because the thought of anyone touching her, of anyone hurting her, makes my insides burn with fury and guilt that I wasn’t able to protect her. But I know in my gut that she’s inside that house, and I’m not leaving without her.

My car is parked out of view beneath some trees down the road. I shrink down in my seat as Paul walks to his car and I wait until I hear him drive off before I look up again.

As soon as his taillights disappear out of view, I drive a little up the road and turn into his driveway. This car was

dropped off at the airport by an associate of Shane's and it has a Glock in the glove compartment as well as a small knife. I tuck both of them into my jeans before I jump out of the car.

The lock is easy enough for me to pick and I'm inside the house within two minutes. I walk along the hallway. It's cold and dark and I have to stop myself from calling her name just in case there is anyone else here too. I check each room as I pass but there is no sign of Jessie or anyone else.

The whole place is dusty, like it hasn't been lived in for years, however there are signs of recent occupancy in the kitchen. As I walk into the room, I see two doors. One leading into the yard out back and another I assume is a basement. It has a huge steel bolt on it and my heart lurches in my chest when I see it, because why the fuck would you need to lock your basement door on the inside? Taking out my cell, I turn on my phone's flashlight as I draw back the huge bolt. It screeches like old steel does and I wince as I look behind me to see if anyone has come running, but I'm still alone.

The light from my phone is the only thing illuminating the room as I step onto the dark basement steps. "Jessie!" I whisper.

There is no response. I shine the light down, sweeping it across the room. It is a small concrete room with no furniture except for one single bed in the middle. My phone almost drops from my hand as the light sweeps over it and she is lying there. Naked and alone and chained to the bed.

Blood thunders in my ears as I take the stairs two at a time, trying to get to her as quickly as possible. "Jessie! I'm here baby," I call but she doesn't move.

There is no flicker of life from her. I place my hand on her arm and she is cold to the touch and for one heart stopping moment I think she's gone and that sick cunt has killed her. I move the metal cuff up her wrist as I feel for her pulse and I almost sink to the floor with relief when I feel one. He's only drugged her. I glance over her body, looking for any signs of injury. Her thighs are peppered with fingertip bruises and she has a cut on her mouth. I brush my fingertips over the dried

blood on her lips and my heart aches like there is a gaping wound in the middle of my chest. The rage that I've been feeling since I found out she'd been taken threatens to overwhelm me and I have to take deep breaths, sucking in lungfuls of air to so that I can calm my racing pulse and focus on what I need to do. I can't let myself think about what that sick fuck has been doing to her because it will break me and I need to be stronger for her than I ever have right now.

I lift her hand and the clinking of a chain tells me that the metal bracelet on her wrist is chained to the bed. Her feet are chained too. Fuck! I need to move fast.

The ones on her feet are a simple lock and pin mechanism and I remove them quickly, but her hands are a different matter. My heart races as I look around the room for something to help me. I can hardly think straight. What if he comes back here? What if I can't get her out of here before he does?

The car. There are bolt cutters in the car. I saw them when I put our luggage in.

"I'll be right back," I tell her even though she can't hear me. I run to the car faster than I have ever run anywhere in my life. I almost trip over my own feet coming back down the stairs. Resting my phone on the bed to shine its light where I need it, I cut the chains on her wrists, freeing her but leaving the metal bracelets in place for now. I can remove them when I get her to safety.

Shrugging off my jacket, I wrap her in it before I lift her into my arms. As I lean over her, I see the used condom on the floor beside the bed and bile burns the back of my throat. Sick fucking cunt! I will make him feel pain like he has never known when I finally get my hands on him.

She's like a rag doll when I lift her. Completely limp and almost weightless and I don't remember her being this light. "Hang on, Jessie. I'll get you home soon, baby." I choke back the tears as I whisper in her ear, then run up the steps and out of the house. Placing her in the passenger seat of the car, I

jump in the other side and lock the doors before I start the engine and get us the hell out of here.

We're half a mile along the road when I see Paul's car approaching from the opposite direction. For a split second, I contemplate running him off the road and putting a bullet in his head, but it would be too merciful for him, and more importantly, I need to get Jessie back to safety as quickly as possible. With that in mind, I dial Shane's number.

"Liam?" he snaps when he answers. "Have you got her?"

"Yes," I reply and I hear the collective sigh of relief from my three brothers and realize I'm on speaker phone.

"How is she?" Conor asks.

"She's unconscious. The bastard drugged her," I say, trying to keep my emotions in check as I glance at her in the seat beside me.

"Fuck!" Mikey hisses.

"Get her back here as soon as you can."

"I know you have friends at that hotel, Shane, but I think if I walk through the lobby with her in the state she's in, the cops will be called on us within five seconds."

"What do you mean the state she's in?"

"Well, she's unconscious. She's naked. And she has bruises on her thighs and face." I swallow hard and focus on the road ahead. Please don't make me think about what that evil cunt has done to her.

"You remember the house in Carrickfergus?" he asks.

"Yeah?" I frown. I thought he'd sold that place. He had it built a few years before we left Ireland. He always intended to live in the countryside one day.

"Take her there. We'll meet you."

"You still have that place?"

"Yeah," he clears his throat. "We'll see you there, Liam."

"I'll be there as soon as I can."

CHAPTER 27

SHANE

Conor, Mikey and I stand on the driveway of the house in Carrickfergus waiting for Liam to bring our girl home. I could have dropped to my knees with relief when he told me that he had her, but then he told me about the state she was in and the rush of rage and the guilt I felt almost floored me for real. I was hoping that Paul hadn't had time to hurt her, but I was fooling myself thinking it wouldn't be the first thing that sick fuck would do. Knowing that it's my fault she's had to go through that makes me feel physically sick. I've never wanted to hurt anyone so much as I want to hurt Paul right now. I know some pretty sick and twisted ways of causing people pain, but all of them would be too merciful for him.

I look over at my brothers and anger and worry is etched onto their faces too. I never told them my suspicion about what Paul has done to her, only the state Liam found her in, and I'm sure like me they have come to the same conclusion. If I don't say it aloud – that our own uncle raped her – then maybe it won't be true.

We all look at each other with relief when Liam's car turns into the driveway. Conor pulls the passenger door open as soon as the car rolls to a stop and takes Jessie into his arms. She's still unconscious and he cradles her limp body to his chest and carries her straight into the house.

I don't get a good look at her, but I do notice her lip is bleeding and she is only covered by Liam's coat. I shove my hands into my pockets to stop myself from pummeling the

gravel driveway to relieve some of the rage that is thundering around my body.

Liam jumps out of the car and jogs toward me. “She’s still out,” he says as he watches Conor carrying her into the house with Mikey on his heels.

“I know. We’ll check her over and see if we need to call a doctor. You did good, kid.”

He nods and his eyes brim with tears. “That cunt raped her, Shane.”

“I know,” I swallow before I wrap my arms around him. It hurts so fucking much to think about. But Liam has said it and now I know it’s true. I will make Paul Ryan pay for this if it takes every second of the rest of my life to do it. “But she’s safe now, and we’ll make him pay. I promise you.”

He looks up at me, his eyes red and full of a trust in me that I don’t deserve. I push down all of the emotion that is desperate to spill out of me. Now is not the time. “Come on. Let’s go make sure she’s okay,” I say, and then we follow our brothers into the house.

We have prepared the largest bedroom with the en suite for her and Conor has laid Jessie down on the bed. Her hair is stark against the white cotton sheets. He’s pulled Liam’s coat over her to cover her. I can hardly bring myself to look at her when I think about how badly I have let her down. I feel so much anger and guilt and pain and I don’t know which one to process first.

“You think we should call a doctor?” Conor asks.

I walk to the bed and sit beside her. Lifting her hand in mine, her skin is warm to the touch after the heat of Liam’s car and her pulse is strong. The cut on her lip has stopped bleeding. I open Liam’s jacket and see the bruises on the tops of her thighs and rage threatens to spill out of me, but I swallow it down. There will be time for that soon enough.

“I think she’s just knocked out. Let’s give her a few hours to wake up and see how she is. You all okay with that?” I look

around the room at the three grief-stricken faces of my brothers.

They all nod their agreement.

“You think we should dress her?” Mikey asks, his voice cracking with emotion.

“No,” Conor snaps. “She’s unconscious. He already violated her. We should let her come round first. Who knows how she’s going to react when she wakes up? We have no idea what he’s done or what he’s told her.”

That he might have filled her head with lies about our role in this is eating away at me too. What if she thinks that I led him to her? I can’t even begin to deal with the guilt and the anger of it, so I focus on what I can do. “Okay,” I nod. I’d prefer to put a t-shirt on her so that she is at least dressed in something familiar when she wakes up, but it’s clearly something Conor feels strongly about and I let it go.

“Let’s get those cuffs off her at least. Then we can leave Liam’s coat around her and pull the covers over her,” I suggest. “We’re going to need some supplies for when she wakes up. There’s no food or anything in this place.”

“I’m not leaving her,” Conor snaps.

“Nor me,” Mikey adds and Liam nods his agreement.

I look around the room at the three of them. None of us wants to leave her. I have always tried to be selfless when it came to my brothers, but I can’t now. I need this. “I can’t not be here when she wakes up. I need her to know that I didn’t hand her over to him,” I say, the words sticking in my throat so hard I almost choke on them. I feel like I’m going to break down if they make me argue with them about this.

Silence fills the room as they all stare at me. I know that each of my brothers is in as much turmoil as I am. Each of us is battling to keep a lid on our emotions because she needs us to be clear-headed right now. They all want to be by her side and make sure she is okay. They want vengeance as much as I do, but none of them have the guilt of being the one who allowed the Wolf to take her from right under his nose.

“Okay,” Liam says eventually as he taps Mikey on the arm. “We’ll go. Come on. We can be there and back in an hour.”

Mikey stares at me and there must be something on my face that makes him agree too, because he stands up and walks out of the room with his twin.

“What if she thinks that I handed her to him, Con? What if she thinks I knew all along who the Wolf was?” I choke on my words because the thought that she might have been lying in that cold room all alone, or even worse when that twisted fuck was raping her, thinking that I had let it happen, makes me feel like I can’t breathe. If I never get the chance to do anything else in my life ever again, I need her to know that I would die to protect her.

“She won’t,” he says with a frown.

“He had my fucking room key!”

“She won’t think that, Shane. She knows you wouldn’t do that to her.”

I pull up a chair and sit beside her bed while he removes the cuffs from her wrists with the bolt cutters. I wish that I could believe him.

CONOR and I sit watching her for almost an hour before she finally starts to stir. I edge forward in my seat and my heart hammers in my chest as I wait for her to wake up.

Her eyelids flicker open and the first thing I see in them is sheer terror. She turns her head and looks directly at me. The fear that still lingers in them breaks me.

“Jessie,” Conor says softly. “You’re safe, Angel.”

“Where is he?” she says, her voice hoarse as she looks around the room like a frightened rabbit trapped in the paws of a lion.

“He’s not here,” he reaches forward and takes her hand but she pulls it from him.

“It’s just me and Shane,” he adds.

“Shane?” she looks back to me. The confusion and the fear in her eyes almost rips out my heart. Then the tears start running down her face and I bow my head because this is all my fucking fault.

Conor is up off his chair and sitting on the bed beside her. He takes her hand again and this time she lets him.

“He came for me,” she whispers. “He said he’s your uncle.”

“He is our uncle, Jessie. But we had no idea he was the Wolf,” Conor says.

“Did you know?” she directs her question to me and that she would even ask hurts more than I can stand.

“No.”

She stares at me and I can’t tell whether she believes me or not. I figure she’s still feeling the effects of whatever drugs Paul gave her because her expression is almost blank now and completely unreadable. “What happened? How did you find me?”

“Shane realized who the Wolf was after he took you. He had Liam follow him and he found you at that farmhouse and brought you back.”

“Liam is here?” the light flickers in her eyes at the mention of his name.

“Yes. And Mikey. They’ve just gone out for some supplies. They’ll be back soon,” Conor replies.

“And you’re here,” she frowns as she reaches out and touches his face. “Or am I dreaming?”

“No. I’m here, Angel,” he whispers. “I’m never leaving your side again.”

She smiles at him. I watch the two of them together. I am relieved that she is safe and that she seems okay, at least physically, but I am hurt that it’s Conor she still turns to, and that it was the thought of the twins that made her come back from whatever hell she was just in.

CHAPTER 28

CONOR

Jessie lifts the covers and looks down at herself. She is still wearing Liam's coat and nothing else. I couldn't bear to have one of us dress her earlier. Even though any of us would have treated her with nothing but love and respect, it just didn't feel right to be touching her while she was unconscious. Not after what he did to her.

My heart is breaking as I think about what she has been through in the past twenty-four hours. The next time I see my uncle, I will burn his cock off with a blow torch before I crush every bone in his body, and I will let my girl watch while I do it.

"I need to shower," she croaks, snapping me from my murderous thoughts. I swear if it wasn't for the fact that she needed us to be strong for her now, me and my brothers would have fucking lost it.

"Of course, Angel. I'll help you." I'm not sure if she'll want to be touched but she allows me to lift her from the bed and carry her to the bathroom. Setting her down on her feet, I keep my hands on her waist as she wobbles unsteadily on her feet. She holds onto my forearms as she steadies herself. "I'm fine now," she whispers and I leave her for a second to turn on the shower.

"Hotter," she instructs me and I turn the dial to increase the temperature until steam fills the room.

She walks in, still shaky on her feet and I follow close behind her. The heat from the shower is fierce even though

I'm in my shirt and jeans. She turns to me, as though she hadn't expected me to still be here, but there's not a chance in hell I'm leaving her side. She looks up at me and I see the moment she breaks. Her eyelids flicker and she falls forward, straight into my arms. I wrap them around her as she presses her face against my chest and starts to sob like I've never seen her before. Her entire body shudders with the strength of her tears and I feel completely powerless to help her as we stand beneath the scalding water.

I rest my chin on her head and squeeze her tight to me as sobs convulse her body. Her fingers rake down my back, catching on the soaking material of my shirt as she sags against me. I kiss her head and brush the wet hair from her face and just hold her until my clothes are drenched.

When she finally looks up at me, her beautiful blue eyes lock on mine. "Thank you," she whispers.

"Any time, Angel," I say as I reach behind her and take the bottle of soap from the shelf. Keeping my arms around her, I squeeze some into my hands and create a lather before I start to work it over her back. She squirms as my hands slide over her waist and the faintest hint of a smile plays on her lips. She is so ticklish.

"Your clothes are soaking," she whispers as she takes a small step back from me.

"So?" I reply with a shrug as my hands slide over her hips and onto her stomach and she looks down at them as they skim her lower abdomen.

"Is this okay?" I ask, suddenly aware that she might prefer to do this herself. She might not want my hands on her after what my cunt of an uncle has done.

"Yes," she replies with a nod of her head and my soapy hand slides between her thighs as I clean her there. She holds onto me, one hand on my shoulder and one on my forearm as her fingernails dig into my skin through my clothes.

"You sure?" I breathe against her hair.

“Yes. I need you to wash him off me, Conor,” she gasps as she looks up into my eyes.

“I will, Angel,” I say as my other hand continues washing the rest of her body.

“Not like that,” she sucks in a shaky breath. “I need you to take it away. From everywhere.” She sobs loudly and I realize what she’s asking me to do.

“Jessie!”

“Please, Conor? I can’t let him be the last one to…” She blinks at me, unable to finish her sentence. I push back her wet hair. If any of my brothers walk in here and catch me fucking her after what she just went through, they might just lose their shit. And how can I do that after what she just went through?

“Can’t you do that now? After what he did?” she asks and my heart breaks in two.

“It’s not that, Angel.”

“Then what is it?” She blinks at me, her huge blue eyes pleading with me.

I look down at the bruises on her thighs and the rage inside me feels like it might burst out of my chest. The thought of him touching her, of him putting his hands on any part of her, makes me want to rip out his throat with my bare hands. Knowing that he hurt her there makes me feel an anger like I have never experienced before, but none of that changes a damn thing about the way I feel about her. “I don’t want to hurt you.”

“You won’t, Conor. You couldn’t.”

I stare at her and despite what she’s been through, having her naked, soapy body pressed against me makes my cock stiffen. I pull back a few inches. It would kill me if she thought that’s all I’m here for.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to,” she whispers.

“Of course I do, Angel,” I frown at her. “My cock is already hard just from touching you, but are you sure that’s what you want?”

“I need this, Conor,” she pleads with me. “Please?”

“I’ll always give you whatever you need, you know that, but you’re hurt, Angel.”

“I’m not. I’m okay. And this is the only way to get rid of him.” She looks down at the floor and I cup her chin and lift her head back up so I can look in her eyes.

“Are you sure this is what you need?”

She snakes her hands around my neck and pulls me closer in response. My lips brush hers softly at first until she parts them and I slide my tongue inside. I push her back against the tiled walls and her hands fumble with my belt and zipper until she’s able to reach inside and squeeze my stiff cock in her palm.

“Jessie!” I groan into her mouth as my hand slides over her breast and stomach until I reach the apex of her thighs. She parts them slightly, giving me all the permission I need. Sliding my fingers between her folds makes her whimper into my mouth as I deepen our kiss. But then I hesitate and my hand stills. I have no idea how she wants this.

“Conor,” she groans as she tugs on my hair and I realize I need to stop overthinking this. She is my girl and she is the same one who left from New York a few days earlier. I know exactly how she likes to be fucked.

I circle two fingers over her clit and she grinds her mound against my palm. When I slide a finger inside her a moment later, she wrenches her mouth from mine and gasps loudly.

“Open wide for me,” I growl and she obeys without hesitation, allowing me to slide a second inside her.

“Conor!” she hisses, pulling me towards her until our foreheads are pressed together.

“You like that, Angel?”

“Uh-huh,” she nods as she clings to my neck. “But I need more.”

“Fuck, Jessie!” I hiss as I work fingers faster inside her and brush her clit with my thumb knuckle. Her walls squeeze

me, drawing me in tighter as I bring her to the edge quickly. Just before she tips over, I pull my fingers out of her and she groans.

“I want you on my cock, Angel,” I growl, sliding my hands to her ass and lifting her until she can wrap her legs around my waist.

She shivers as I edge the tip inside her. “This what you want?”

“Yes.” She bites her lip and I drive myself inside her and she grips me so hard it feels like she’ll never let me go.

“Damn, Jessie, you feel so fucking good, Angel,” I hiss as I rail into her, nailing her to the wall with each thrust. “I can’t get far enough inside you.”

“Harder!” she hisses.

“Yeah?” I growl before I suck on the tender skin on her neck.

“Yes!” she whimpers.

I go harder and she shudders in my arms. “Conor!” she moans and the sound of my name on her lips makes my balls tighten. I am so close to losing it inside her, but she teeters on the edge. I roll my hips, trying to get deeper inside her and hit that sweet spot that makes her thighs tremble, but something’s holding her back.

I wrap one hand around her throat, pressing her head back against the wall as I stare into her eyes. “You gonna come for me, Angel?” I growl.

“I want to,” she breathes.

“So tell me what I need to do to get you there.”

“You’re being too gentle. I’m not made of glass.”

“Fuck, Jessie. I can’t...” I shake my head. I’m nailing this girl into oblivion here.

“You’re holding back,” she breathes. “I can feel it.”

“You think?” I grunt, trying to stop myself from coming as her sweet pussy squeezes me for dear life.

“I know.”

I release my grip on her throat and plant my hands either side of her head on the wall. “You’d better hold on,” I growl and she wraps her legs tighter around me. “You ready?”

“Yes,” she pants.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

I pull out of her almost all the way before I drive back into her with everything I have.

“Conor,” she groans so loudly I’m sure my brothers must have heard in the next room, but I’m past caring. I rail into her again and she drags her fingernails down my back.

“Your pussy loves my cock, Angel,” I grunt. “You’re squeezing me so hard. You’re going to come for me. Now,” I order her and she nods her head as she bites down on her lip. I thrust into her again and she shifts a few inches up the wall as she clenches around me and finally lets go, shouting my name when she comes. A few more thrusts has me finding my own release and I spurt hot and heavy inside her.

When she stops trembling, I lower her legs to the floor. She looks up at me. “I love you,” she whispers.

“I love you, too, Angel.”

WHEN I WALK BACK into the bedroom ten minutes later, Shane is there. His eyes are burning into me. There is no way he didn’t just hear our girl coming for me.

“You two okay?” he asks with an arch of one eyebrow.

I clear my throat. Why do I feel like such a fucking deviant? “Yeah.” I nod.

“Don’t look so fucking worried, Con,” he says with a shake of his head. “You gave her what she needed.”

“I know.” I run my hands through my hair. So, why the fuck does he look so disappointed in me?

“I’m going to check on the boys,” he says before he shoves his hands in his pockets and walks out of the room and it’s then that I realize it’s not me he’s disappointed in but himself. I shake my head and watch him leave. I should never have been so hard on him when Jessie was taken. He beats himself up enough without me adding to his worries.

Jessie walks out of the bathroom a few seconds later and wraps her arms around my waist. “Thank you,” she says as she lays her head against my chest.

“You never have to thank me for that, Angel.” I rub my hands over her back and she snuggles into me.

CHAPTER 29

JESSIE

After my shower with Conor, I put on some fresh clothes and go into the den where all of the brothers are waiting. Liam and Mikey rush over to hug me as soon as they see me and I hold onto them both for so long, I get cramp in my arm. When I finally let go, Conor hands me a mug of hot, sweet tea and I sit on the sofa.

“You ready to talk about what happened, baby?” Liam asks softly as he takes a seat beside me and takes hold of my free hand. Mikey sits on the other side of me while Shane and Conor sit in the armchairs opposite.

“I was in the hotel suite waiting for Shane to come back and he just walked in. The Wolf. He told me that he was your Uncle Paul. He had Shane’s key. He said that you had given it to him.” I look at Shane and his face is full of guilt and anger and I wish I could take it away for him.

“You know that I didn’t though, Jessie?” he frowns at me.

“Of course I do.”

He nods and leans back in his chair and I continue telling them what happened. It’s so hazy that I’m still piecing it together for myself. “I saw him and I just froze. I wanted to run. I wanted to find the gun but my legs wouldn’t work.” A tear runs down my cheek. “I’ve waited so long to confront him and when he was standing right there in front of me, I was paralyzed.”

“That’s completely understandable, Red,” Mikey brushes the tear from my cheek with his fingertips.

“I just couldn’t believe he was standing there, you know? And when he told me he was your uncle, I couldn’t even process what was happening.”

The four of them keep watching me and I wonder if they are waiting for me to have some sort of breakdown, but that’s not about to happen. What happened in the past twenty-four hours is nothing to what the Wolf has put me through before, and if that didn’t break me, then this won’t either.

“What happened after that? How did he get you out of there without anyone noticing?” Conor asks.

“I don’t know,” I shake my head. “There was a struggle and then the last thing I remember from the hotel room is that everything went black. He must have drugged me.”

“Yeah,” Liam nods his agreement.

“And then I don’t remember much at all. I woke up a couple of times in that basement. It was dark and I was cold but I was so out of it. I remember words or things he said but they’re not always in order. I remember parts of what he did, but I think I was out for most of it,” I shudder and Liam squeezes my hand. I don’t need to say out loud what he did. They saw the bruises on my thighs. I was naked for Christ’s sake. I would hate if it made them see me differently though. I am not a victim. I am a survivor.

“Tell me about him,” I say as I take a sip of my tea. I feel like knowing more about him will help me to defeat him. He is not a wolf, he is a man. And I refuse to call him the Wolf any longer. “Tell me about Paul Ryan.”

The three brothers look to Shane who rubs a hand over his jaw. “He left Ireland when I was thirteen, not long after our mum died.”

“And before that?”

“He was in the army. Special Forces. We never saw much of him as kids, but...” he swallows.

“But what?”

“When we did, he was... he was our uncle. He taught me and Conor to shoot a rifle and how to skin an animal. He was damaged, yeah, but he was...” He shakes his head. “I can’t fathom how he went from that man I knew to the one who did that to you.”

“Why did he leave?”

Shane’s face pales but it is Conor who answers. “Patrick Ryan drove everyone away eventually. He and Paul had a love-hate relationship – but mostly it was just hate.”

“And you never heard from him again?” I ask with a frown.

“Not until a few months ago,” Shane replies. “He was a hired gun and we knew he’d worked for some of the most dangerous people all over the world. We assumed he was dead.”

“But he got in touch recently?”

“Yeah. I thought it was because his brother was dying, but now I wonder if it was because he’d found out where you were,” Shane replies.

“Is there anything else I should know about him?”

“I don’t even remember him,” Mikey says with a shake of his head.

“Evil cunt!” Liam spits. “Just like his brother.” He looks at me and squeezes my hand again. “He’s our uncle, Jessie. How the fuck?”

“I don’t know. It’s so hard to fathom,” I admit.

“Can you ever see us the same way, Red?” Mikey asks.

“What?” I blink at him. Here I was worried that they would see me differently and not even considering the repercussions for them of discovering who their uncle is. “I see you exactly the same as I always have.” I put my mug on the coffee table and take hold of his hand. “You are nothing like your uncle.”

“I love you,” Mikey whispers and lifts my hands to his face, brushing his lips over my knuckles.

“I love you, too.”

CHAPTER 30

JESSIE

I lie on the sofa, with my head on Liam's lap and my legs over Mikey's. It is late now and these boys have looked after me all day long. Bringing me my favorite snacks. Watching my favorite movies with me. Conor even read me some Tolstoy earlier. They are all so sweet. But Mikey's hand has been on my leg for the past half hour and he has been rubbing it up and down my calf. I have never known him to touch me for so long without it leading to something more. I watch his strong fingers gliding over my skin and I am willing him to slide them higher, but he hasn't even ventured past my knee. Our relationships are about so much more than sex, but that is a huge part of it. I need to know that nothing has changed between us. This is what I need to feel like me again.

I shift my hips slightly, so that Mikey's hand slides up to my knee. He looks at me and arches one eyebrow, as though he's been waiting for permission to go further. His hand slides up my thigh and his fingertips trail softly over my bruises.

"You okay there, baby?" Liam asks as he notices me fidgeting.

I reach up and curl a strand of his hair between my fingertips. "No," I breathe.

He narrows his eyes at me. "You need something?"

"Yes. You right here," I touch my lips with my fingertips, the same way he did when he was recovering back in New York a few weeks ago and he was desperate for us to be intimate again.

He leans down and seals his lips over mine, slipping his tongue inside my mouth until I feel a familiar fluttering in my abdomen. I let my legs fall open as he kisses me and Mikey responds by sliding his hand further up the inside of my thigh. When he reaches the top, he traces a fingertip along my panties and I moan into Liam's mouth.

"You sure you want this, Red?" he asks.

"Yes," I mumble as I reach for his hand and pull him closer.

He tugs my panties to one side and slowly slides one finger inside me, making me groan into Liam's mouth.

"Such a beautiful pussy, Red," he growls as he gently pumps his finger in and out of me. The wet sound of my arousal is loud in the quiet room. "Always ready for us, too. You're such a good girl."

Liam chuckles softly as he lifts his lips from mine. "You wet for us, baby?" He arches one eyebrow at me.

"Why don't you find out?" I offer.

"Fuck," he hisses as his hand slides down my body. He pulls my panties further to the side as he slides a finger in me too, along with his brother's.

"Oh, she feels so fucking good," Mikey hisses.

"She sure does," Liam agrees and I lift my hips to meet their synchronized finger fucking. Having both of them inside me at the same time is so damn hot and I moan softly as they work in perfect unison.

But then Mikey stops. "I want to eat you out, Red," he groans. "Right here in front of all my brothers. You okay with that?"

Okay with it? There is nothing I want more right now. "Yes," I pant as I look up at him.

He hooks his fingers into the band of my panties and starts to peel them down my legs while Liam keeps on dipping his finger in and out of my wet opening.

Mikey takes off my panties and tosses them onto the floor before he lies down on the long sofa. He clamps his hands around the backs of my thighs, pulling me closer to him until my pussy is inches from his face. Liam takes that as his cue to withdraw his finger and he begins circling my clit instead while Mikey presses his tongue against me and starts to suck at my juices. Waves of pleasure roll through my body as they work me so expertly.

“You remember the first night we fucked you, baby? Just like this?” Liam asks as he dusts his lips over my cheek.

“Yes,” I groan as a rush of wet heat sears between my thighs. How could I forget it? It was almost exactly like this, except that it was Liam with his tongue on me while Mikey worked his magic fingers.

“Conor and Shane watched us that night too,” Liam chuckles.

“Shane didn’t,” I gasp as I look over at the two of them who are sitting watching us intently. Conor is clearly enjoying the show and he rubs his cock through his sweatpants, but Shane glares at us, his jaw working. He has been quiet all day and he has avoided being alone with me at all. I know that could be about so many things, but I need to know that he still sees me the same way, too. This past week with him, before the Wolf turned up at least, has been incredible with him and if we’ve lost any of that, it will break my heart.

“He’ll watch tonight, too, won’t you, bro?” Liam asks and Shane sucks in a deep breath, but he doesn’t leave.

Liam tilts my head toward him, sealing my mouth with a kiss as he presses harder on my clit and Mikey keeps on sucking and nibbling at my tender flesh.

“You taste so fucking sweet, Red,” he groans. “I could come just from eating your pussy.”

I wrench my lips from Liam’s as my orgasm hits me unexpectedly and I moan both of their names as they coax me through to the other side.

As soon as my legs stop trembling, Mikey pulls me up and lifts me into his arms. “Time for bed, Red,” he says with a nod to Liam who stands too.

“Boys!” Shane warns and I feel a rush of love for him. I know the twins would never push me for anything I wasn’t one hundred percent okay with, but I love that he’s so protective of me.

“We know, bro,” Liam says.

“All we want to do is get naked with you and kiss every inch of you, Red. No fucking. Okay?”

“Okay,” I smile as I wrap my arms around his neck and he carries me to bed, with Liam close behind us.

CHAPTER 31

SHANE

I sit outside on one of the lounge chairs on the decking and sip my whiskey. The house is in darkness and the only light is from the full moon. I look out into the black night, wondering if he's watching. Thinking about him and what he did to her makes me feel so much rage it's like I can't breathe. All this time the man who was haunting her nightmares was our own uncle. How fucked up is that?

My mum was always a spiritual woman. She was born and raised a Catholic, but she believed in a different kind of God and heaven than the one the priest used to lecture us about every Sunday. She believed in reincarnation and souls being bound together for eternities. I used to listen to her stories about witchcraft and fate, but I never believed in them. But maybe she was right. For some reason, Jessie was bound to us long before we even met her. Maybe it was always meant to be that she would be ours. Maybe Paul and Patrick Ryan were truly put on this earth to test us all, and to bring us all together?

I glance down at my empty glass and shake my head. Surely I've had far too much to drink if I'm entertaining such ridiculous notions. There is something about a full moon that brings out my mother's side of the family in me. Our Aunt Em is a card-carrying Pagan and has always been a believer in all things mystical too.

My thoughts drift to Jessie again. I heard her and Conor in the shower earlier, and for the first time in my life I was jealous of my little brother. Knowing that he was the only one

who could give her what she needed sliced through my heart like a blade. She has been polite to me since we got her back, but she can barely stand to look at me. I watched Mikey and Liam with her earlier and it made me as hard as iron. They are so relaxed with her. Their relationship is easy in a way that mine and hers will never be. I thought our time here in Ireland would make us stronger, but I fucked it up completely, and now I wonder if she will ever look at me the same way again.

The sound of the sliding door behind me makes my head snap around. I am on high alert having taken my eye off the ball once already and I will never let it happen again. She must have turned on a light and it illuminates her silhouette as she walks toward me with a blanket wrapped around her shoulders.

“What are you doing out here?” she asks with a frown as she reaches me.

“Drinking.” I hold up my now empty glass as proof.

“You should never drink alone, Shane Ryan,” she says with a tilt of her head. “So scooch up.”

“What?”

“It’s so chilly out here. I don’t want to sit on one of those cold ass chairs. So scoot.”

These lounge chairs aren’t built for two, but I shuffle over as much as I can and she squeezes in beside me. Lying on her side with her leg draped over mine, she wraps an arm and half the blanket around me and presses her head against my chest. I look down at her and frown because this doesn’t seem like she’s pissed at me, but if she’s not, then she fucking should be.

“That moon is beautiful,” she says with a soft sigh that I feel in my groin.

“Sure is.”

“It reminds me of that night by the lake. Do you remember?”

How could I forget it. It was the night I finally admitted my feelings for her. It was the night she promised she would

never leave us. I suppose we've both made promises that we couldn't keep. I promised her she would be safe with me. I swore that I would never let him hurt her, yet I handed her straight to him. "Of course I do. It seems like a lifetime ago."

"I think about it all the time."

"Really?"

"Yes. I think you should build that place out on the lake as soon as we get back."

"You do?" I look down at her.

"Hmm. So we can have a place just like this when we need to get away from the city."

I wrap my arms around her and we sit in silence for a while.

"Why have you been avoiding me?" she whispers.

"I haven't been avoiding you," I lie.

"Well it certainly feels like it. Does what he did bother you?"

I look down at her with a scowl on my face. "Of course it fucking bothers me, Jessie. I hate what that evil fucker did to you."

"I don't mean like that," she stammers. "I mean...when I was with your brothers earlier, I was hoping you might..."

Fuck! She thinks that I don't want her. I don't even know what to say in response to that but she fills the silence with another question.

"Why were you drinking out here alone?"

"I just wanted some time to think."

"About?"

"About everything."

"Are you okay?" She looks up at me with those beautiful blue eyes and my heart almost bursts out of my chest. After everything she's been through, everything I let happen to her, she asks if I'm okay.

“No,” I say. The whiskey must be some kind of truth serum because I should tell her everything is fine and send her back to bed.

“Shane,” she says with a sigh as she rests her warm hand on my cheek. “Please don’t blame yourself for what happened.”

“I should never have let him anywhere near you. He got to you because of me and that’s a fact, Jessie. There is no escaping that.”

“No!” She shifts her position so she can look into my eyes. “He got to me because that is what he does. You didn’t even know who he was. How could you have predicted that?”

“I made you a promise that he would never hurt you again!” I snarl at her although the only person I am angry with right now is myself.

“And I love that you made that promise, Shane, but don’t you see it’s one that you can never keep.” She shakes her head. “Nobody can.”

“I can! I should have.”

“No matter how much we love someone, we can never stop them being hurt. We can’t protect people from hurt and pain, as much as we want to. You have to accept that or you’re going to drive yourself crazy trying to keep everyone safe when it’s an impossible task.”

“Don’t, Jessie! I *can* keep you all safe. I *will*.” I feel the wave of emotion crashing over me and I suck in a deep breath. The cool night air fills my lungs but it does little to calm my racing heart. This isn’t just about Jessie anymore. This is about every single time Patrick or Paul Ryan hurt someone I love. I sit up and she sits with me, awkwardly perched on my lap now.

“It’s not your job to keep everyone safe, Shane,” she whispers as she takes my hand in hers. “You are not responsible for your father or your uncle.”

“I should have saved her, Jessie. My mother. I tried to...” I shake my head and stare out into the night as I recall the night

my father murdered our mother. I heard him beating her. I heard her crying for help. Liam and Mikey were only one year old when he came home drunker than usual and spoiling to cause some real pain. I'd protected them first, taking them and Conor to a neighbor's house before going back to our own. My mom could usually talk him round after a while, once he had beaten her black and blue first, but this night he just kept on going. I banged on that door so hard my knuckles were bleeding as I listened to her begging for mercy. Now I know why he never stopped that night, although it's a secret I wish I'd never learned. When she finally fell silent, my heart broke into a million pieces and it never truly healed, although it had started to with Jessie's help. And now I have let her down too.

"You did everything you could, Shane. I know what it's like to watch the people you love in pain and not be able to do anything about it," she sniffs as a tear rolls down her cheek.

I brush it away with the pad of my thumb. I forget sometimes how much she has endured. She watched her entire family slaughtered in front of her eyes by my evil cunt of an uncle, but she is still so full of compassion and kindness. She is damaged just like my brothers and me, but she's still the best person I have ever met. Perhaps my mother was right. Some stories are truly written in the stars.

"I'm sorry for everything he did to you," I say.

"I know, but it is not your apology to make. If you let anything your father or your uncle did close you off from happiness and love, then they have won. You're capable of such incredible things, Shane. Your love is an amazing gift. Please don't let them take it from you, or me."

"You think I could ever stop loving you, Jessie Ryan?" I frown at her as I cup her cheek in my hand.

"I hope not," she smiles at me. "Because I am completely head over heels for you."

"Head over heels?" I arch an eyebrow at her.

"Yes. I told you, I love you more than candy."

“Yes you did,” I smile as I lie back, pulling her with me so that she is lying on top of me now and I have my arms wrapped tightly around her.

We lie in silence for a while and I listen to the sound of her soft breathing. “How are you really holding up, sweetheart?”

“I’m okay,” she whispers.

“Okay isn’t really an answer,” I frown.

“Isn’t it?”

“Well it’s neither a feeling or a state of being, so it tells me nothing really, does it?”

She sighs softly and presses her cheek against my chest. “Isn’t ‘okay’ a catchall for when you don’t really know the answer? I feel so many things, Shane.”

“So break it down for me.”

She is quiet for a few seconds before she responds. “Right here, I feel happy and safe. Protected,” she whispers.

“Right here in the house?”

“Right here in your arms,” she breathes.

I have to close my eyes and take a deep breath because this girl just straight up put her hand inside my chest and punched me in the fucking heart. If I had any last line of defense against her then she just tore right through it. She has defeated me. Right here in the grounds of this beautiful house in Carrickfergus, I gave her the very last sliver of my soul.

I kiss her head and breathe in the scent of her hair. If I speak right now, if I try to tell her how much I love her, then she’ll know that she has completely fucking broken me.

“But I also feel scared, Shane. Terrified in fact. Not that he will come for me now, but that he’ll do it in two, four or even twelve years’ time, when I let myself feel happy or relaxed. When I’ve stopped thinking about him every minute of every day. I might be walking to the grocery store to pick up something for dinner, or be in a restaurant with you and your brothers and go to the restroom alone, or I might just be

walking down the street, and he'll take me. And then I'll be gone," she whispers and her entire body shudders.

I want to tell her that I will never let that happen, but we just spoke about making promises we can't deliver on.

"I would tear the world apart to find you, sweetheart," I tell her instead because that is a promise I can keep.

"I know," she whispers. "Now, are we sleeping out here under the stars tonight then, or are you going to take me to bed?"

My cock twitches at the way she says that and I'm grateful for the distraction. But she yawns as she nestles her head against my chest and I remember it's the middle of the night and she has been through so much in the past thirty-six hours.

"We'll stay here a little longer." I dust my lips over her hair and she sighs contentedly.

"Okay, but I might fall asleep right here."

"Then I'll carry you to bed if you do, sweetheart. And to address your earlier question, seeing you with my brothers still makes me as hard as iron and I still want to fuck you as much as I always have." I kiss her again and pull the blanket all the way over her as I wrap my arms tighter around her body.

"Devil," she chuckles softly and the sound makes me smile.

HALF AN HOUR later she is fast asleep in my arms as I carry her to my bed. Crawling in beside her, I pull her to me and she mumbles my name.

"It's okay, sweetheart. Go back to sleep," I whisper in her ear and she smiles sleepily as she wraps an arm around my neck.

We lie in the darkness. I listen to her soft, steady breathing as her heart beats against my own and I have never felt more at peace in my entire life. I only wish that it could last. But my uncle is still out there and I know there will be no lasting peace for any of us until he takes his last breath.

CHAPTER 32

JESSIE

I watch my four handsome men eating their breakfasts and my heart flutters in my chest. How is it that one person gets to be lucky enough to deserve the four of them? I swear one day I'm going to wake up and this will all be a dream that I've concocted in order to survive my time with the Wolf. Perhaps one day I'll wake up and still be in his fortress in the hills.

Thoughts of Paul Ryan make my heart flutter for an entirely different reason and I know it's only a matter of time before he makes his move. I have no idea when or where, but the one thing I am sure about is that we need to act first.

"When is the funeral?" Mikey asks, snapping me from my own thoughts and reminding me why Shane and I came to Ireland in the first place.

"Wednesday," Shane replies before taking a gulp of his coffee.

"So only four more days before we can go home?" Liam adds.

"Yep," Shane nods his head.

"Home?" I interrupt them.

"Yes," Conor frowns at me.

"But we can't go back to New York while Paul is still here."

"We've got more resources in New York," Shane says as he places his mug on the table.

“Yeah. We’re kind of sitting ducks here,” Mikey says, earning him a withering glance from Conor and Shane. As though I didn’t already know that. It’s been three days since they rescued me from the Wolf and during that time they have been incredibly attentive and loving, doing their best to distract me from the fact that their uncle is out there somewhere waiting to pick me off.

“I agree, which is why I think we need to find him before he finds me.”

“We’re trying to find him, sweetheart, believe me, but it’s not that easy.”

“I know that. Unfortunately, he won’t be found unless he wants to be and I can’t sit around waiting for that to happen,” I say and the anxiety that is building in the pit of my stomach makes my voice go up at least a few octaves.

“None of us want that to happen, Angel,” Conor says as he places a reassuring hand on my shoulder.

“So we only have one choice then,” I swallow hard because I know they are not going to like this suggestion.

Shane narrows his eyes at me. “And what’s that?”

“I reach out to him...”

“Fuck no!” Conor snarls.

“Not a fucking chance in hell,” Shane agrees while Mikey and Liam scowl and me and nod their agreement.

“It’s the only way.”

“It’s not happening, Red,” Mikey snaps and my heart sinks, because I thought at least he and Liam might hear me out.

“But there’s no other way to draw him out. If we don’t do this now then who knows when we might get the chance again? I can’t go through my life wondering when he’s going to come for me.”

“He will never lay another hand on you, Jessie!” Liam frowns at me.

I only wish I could believe that. “Please just hear me out?” I plead but I am met with four serious faces.

“Anything could happen to you, Jessie,” Conor snaps.

“You are not putting yourself at risk like that,” Shane adds and it is clear that the subject is no longer up for discussion. I lean back in my chair and glare at the four of them. I could continue arguing with them but I know there is no point. They have made it abundantly clear that they’re not interested in what I have to say, despite the fact this is my life we’re talking about. I blink back the tears. I know it’s coming from a place of love, but they don’t understand how it feels to live a life in constant fear.

“You think he’ll go to the funeral?” Liam asks.

“Not if he has an ounce of sense,” Shane snaps.

“I think we should all go,” Conor adds.

“All?” Mikey frowns at him.

“We’re here now,” Conor replies with a shrug. “We can’t let Shane and Jessie go on their own and I’m happy for the opportunity to spit on his grave.”

“You still want to go, Jessie?” Shane asks.

“Oh, so my opinion counts now, does it?” I snap.

Shane stands quickly and pushes his chair back, making me jump. He leans his face close to mine. “Don’t,” he snarls and then he walks out of the room leaving his three brothers looking at me like I just poked the bear.

I know what I have to do, whether they are on board or not.

“Sorry,” I say quietly to them and Conor wraps an arm around me.

“There is no way we could let you put yourself in danger like that, Angel,” he says softly.

“I know.”

I LIE IN BED, sandwiched between my sleeping giants, Liam and Mikey. This is my safe place. I feel so protected and content when I am with the brothers. The deep ache in my chest almost takes my breath away, because I know this cannot last. Paul Ryan is out there. He has been watching me for who knows how long. He will always be watching. Waiting to make his move. Waiting for the perfect moment to strike. And next time, he won't make a single mistake.

I blink away a tear and it rolls down my cheek. I can't go on living the rest of my life wondering when he is going to take me. I can't continue living in my past. I will not spend another day being afraid. Paul Ryan has taken enough of my life away from me. He has my past, but he won't have my future. I know without a doubt that the brothers won't change their minds and consider my plan to lure their uncle back to me while we still have a chance. I know he's still in Ireland. I feel him. I'm as connected to him as I am to his nephews now.

I untangle myself from Mikey's arm and slip quietly out of the bed. He groans and rolls over and I freeze. "Red!" he mumbles, but then he drifts back to sleep.

I pull on my clothes and sneakers. This has to end tonight. It is the only way for me to be free. When the Wolf found me at the hotel, I was unprepared. I was paralyzed with fear. But now I know who he is. He's just a man. Paul Ryan is no longer an elusive phantom who plagues my nightmares, but a living, breathing human being.

I take the Glock from the nightstand and then with a final look at Liam and Mikey, I sneak out of the bedroom. They will wake shortly and notice I'm gone, I have no doubt. In fact, I'm kind of counting on it. I have no desire to do this alone.

I grab the keys to the Land Rover and take the red lipstick from my purse before scrawling a note on the window beside the front door. It's time to take control of my own destiny.

THE RAIN IS heavy against the window pane as I drive through the country roads of Ireland. I doubt that Paul will be at the house already, not if he has any fear of his nephews anyway. But I have no doubt he will be watching. My heart is beating

in my chest like a jackhammer as I pull up outside the old stone farmhouse. There is no car outside but there is a faint light coming from the window, as though someone has a lantern or a torch. Is he in there? Waiting for me.

I take a deep breath and step out of the car. With the gun in my hand, I approach the front door.

The house is empty when I walk inside but the flashing red light in the hallway tells me there's a camera here and he'll be watching. I look up to it.

"I'm here. What are you waiting for?" I challenge him.

I sit on the staircase and wait for him. I expect he'll be here soon. This is it. One way or another, only one of us will walk out of this house alive.

CHAPTER 33

SHANE

“Shane! Conor!”

The sound of my brothers’ shouting wakes me with a jolt. Instinctively, I grab for my gun and jump out of bed. I almost crash into Mikey as he comes running into the room.

“What?” I scowl at him.

“She’s gone!” he says and my world stops turning.

“What do you mean? Gone?” I shout. She was in bed with him and Liam, so what the fuck is he talking about?

“I woke up and she wasn’t there. Her clothes and shoes aren’t there, either. She’s gone,” he stammers, his face full of anxiety and concern.

“She left a note,” Conor pops his head inside the door and I look up at him. My insides fucking sink through my knees. *Not another fucking note.*

“What kind of note?” I snarl.

“Come see,” he walks out of the room and Mikey and I follow him to the front door of the house. Sure enough, in bright red lipstick, she has scrawled us a note.

Find my iPhone

I feel a rush of relief, anger, frustration and fear all at the same time. “She’s gone to find him,” I snarl.

“Jessie!” Conor sighs and shakes his head while Mikey and Liam stare at the two of us, waiting for answers.

“I will tan her fucking ass when we get hold of her,” I snarl. This woman is going to give me a fucking heart attack, or at least turn me gray before I hit forty.

“Someone pull up that fucking tracking app,” I snap as I head back into the house. “And let’s go find her.”

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, we are driving as fast as the car will take us towards Paul’s house in Antrim where, according to the *Find my iPhone* app, Jessie is. I am so pissed at her for taking off and putting herself in danger, but my anger is far eclipsed by my fear that he is going to hurt her or that we won’t make it in time and they will disappear.

“We should have listened to her plan,” Mikey says with a sigh from the back seat. “We should have known she’d pull something like this.”

“How the fuck did she sneak away from you both?” Conor snaps.

“I don’t know,” Liam shakes his head and leans back against the seat and my heart breaks for him. Jessie Ryan is a law unto herself. She is the most stubborn woman I have ever met in my life. She is fiercely independent and way smarter than any man in this car. She might submit to us in bed, but she makes her own choices in every other aspect of her life.

“Now isn’t the time for finger pointing,” I say to Conor. “We all know Jessie does what Jessie wants to do. Maybe we should have listened to her.”

“You for real?” Conor snaps.

“Well, we wouldn’t be hurtling through Antrim at ninety miles an hour looking for her right now if we had, would we?”

He glares at the road ahead instead of answering me and I know that he is as consumed by his anger and worry as I am.

“Well, just so we’re clear, are we all okay with shooting Uncle Paul in the head?” Mikey asks and I bristle at him calling him that. If I told them the truth now, would it help or hinder the situation?

“A bullet in the head is too good for the cunt!” Liam spits.

Hinder! This is not the right time to be revealing long buried secrets. Maybe we can even get through this whole thing without them discovering the truth, because I'm not sure it's something they would want to know. There's a reason they say ignorance is bliss, right?

CHAPTER 34

JESSIE

I stare at the front door waiting for Paul Ryan's arrival. This has been such a long time coming and I am ready for it. For him.

It's a sound from the back of the house that startles me. Of course he wouldn't walk through the front door like a man. Sneaking in where he won't be seen is entirely fitting for him. I walk through the hallway to the kitchen and see the basement door is ajar and the light is on. It bathes the kitchen in a soft amber glow that makes the old farmhouse look almost homely.

"Are you hiding from me?" I call. "Surely you're not afraid?"

His laugh echoes up the basement steps and it makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end.

"Afraid of you, little bird. Never," he hisses.

I walk closer to the steps and peer into the basement. He stands out of sight but I see his shadow on the wall. "After all these years, you're still hiding in the dark. Why don't you come up here and face me?"

"I'm standing in the light, Jessica. Come down here and see for yourself."

I take a deep breath. I know this must be a trap, but I want answers and he is the only man left to give me any. I can't go on living half a life.

I walk down the stairs, with my gun pointed straight at his head. He places his hand over his heart as though he is deeply

wounded by the fact I'd love nothing more than to shoot him in the face. "Is this what we have come to, Jessica?"

"You must know I want you dead?" I arch an eyebrow at him. "This time I'll make sure to finish the job."

He rubs a hand over his throat, his fingers curling through his thick beard as he glares at me. "Hmm. That was a nasty scratch."

"How did you survive?"

He starts to laugh as he takes a step toward me. "I have survived far worse than that before. You think that you have the power to kill me? I am the Wolf!"

"You are Paul Ryan. A man who pretends to be something more is still just a man."

I point the gun as he takes another step and he looks above my head. I look up too and see the red spot on the door above me. That's when I notice the small black box in his hand. "I have them all over this room, Jessica." He holds up the box and shows me his finger over a silver button. "You'll be dead before you can squeeze off a round. As soon as your rescuers come for you, they will walk straight in here and meet their deaths. It seems everyone around you meets a similar fate, doesn't it? Perhaps you are cursed?"

"Fuck you!" I hiss.

"Hmm. We'll get to that later," he leers at me and the bile rushes up from my stomach and burns my throat.

"Why did you take me?" I ask as I walk further down the steps. I'd take my chances with dropping him before he has a chance to press that button, but I still want answers before I kill him.

"What?"

"Why? Why didn't you kill me like you were supposed to?"

He frowns at me. "I saved your life."

“No. You chose not to kill me but kidnapped and tortured me instead. Risking everything you had built. Why?”

“I risked nothing,” he spits. “Money and houses and things are not everything.”

“I know. But your reputation. Your livelihood. Why did you give all that up?”

“For you, Jessica.”

“No,” I shake my head. “You didn’t even know me. Tell me why.”

“I didn’t have to know you to see that you were special. Alexei didn’t deserve you. Your parents could not protect you. I could. I did.” He beats his own chest with pride as though he actually believes that. “My nephews think they are powerful men, but they couldn’t protect you either.”

At the mention of his nephews my heart breaks a little inside. I wonder if they’ve noticed I’m gone yet.

“I wasn’t yours to take,” I say, my voice cracking.

“But you have always been mine. As soon as I saw you I knew that you were made for me. We are bound together. Why do you think it was my nephews who found you? So that they could bring you back to me.” He looks at me with such a strange look of anguish on his face that I think he actually believes some of that bullshit.

“You’re crazy. One hundred percent deluded.”

“You know that we belong together. I was your first love. Your first everything. That has connected us beyond anything else ever could. I taught you how to experience true pleasure.”

I feel anger bubbling beneath my skin, threatening to burst out of me at any moment. It took me a long time to deal with the shame of what he did to me. Of how he could manipulate my body into climaxing, which he used as justification for his sick and twisted torture. “You raped me, you fucking maniac!” I spit at him. “I enjoyed nothing of what we did. Nothing.”

I stare at him and feel so much venom that it seeps from every pore in my body. The sound of the door breaking down

and footsteps can be heard above us and my heart sinks. I can't believe I have lured the men I love to their deaths. I can't believe I thought I could beat him after all this time.

"Oh, here are my boys now," he says with a cruel smile. "Call to them, Jessica. Tell them where you are."

"Fuck you!" I spit and he laughs. I could tell them to go away, but nothing I say is going to stop them coming in here.

A moment later, Liam comes running into the room with his three brothers close behind him.

"Stop!" I shout, my voice cracking with fear. "He has the whole place rigged."

Shane grabs hold of Liam's collar to stop him walking toward me and the four of them freeze as they stare at me.

"He's got sniper rifles set up all around the room. He has the controller in his hand," I nod to Paul and he holds up the small black box in his hand.

"That's right," he says with a grin.

"He's bluffing," Mikey snaps.

"He's not," I shake my head. "They're trained on the door there where you are. He showed me."

Shane turns to his uncle. "You knew she'd come here. You set this up?"

"Yep."

"What the fuck do you want?" he snarls.

"What I've always wanted. My Jessica back," he smiles.

"She is not your Jessica!" Shane hisses.

"Oh, but she is!" Paul snarls. "You think there isn't a single inch of her body that I didn't claim long before you lot got your filthy hands on her? Who do you think it was who taught her what she really likes?" He licks his lips and I feel the bile rise in my stomach again as they have to listen to this. "I know the many ways to make her scream. In pain and pleasure!"

I press my lips together as I try to drown out his sick ramblings and think of a way out of this.

“You think telling us how you raped and tortured our girl will end well for you?” Conor growls.

“Your girl!” Paul laughs loudly. “Did she tell you that she didn’t enjoy it? Did she tell you how hard I can make her come for me. She has the sweetest cream,” he croons and the bile burns the back of my throat now but I swallow it down.

I keep my gun trained on him as I look between him and the brothers.

“You will never touch her again!” Conor snarls.

“Volk!” *Wolf!* I shout, using the name his ego will respond to. “Just let them go,” I plead with him.

He looks at me and shakes his head. “You know I can’t do that. I can’t risk them telling anyone who I really am. I can’t be worrying about them coming looking for us.”

“They won’t,” I insist.

“The fuck we won’t!” Mikey snaps and I suck in a breath. How the hell are we all going to get out of this alive?

Shane raises his gun and points it at his uncle too.

“Careful now,” Paul chuckles. “There’s a gun trained on Jessica too.”

“You’re lying,” Shane snaps.

“Nope,” he shakes his head. “If I can’t have her, then I’m certainly not letting you have her.”

“You’re a fucking psychopath,” Shane snarls at him.

“Me?” Paul shakes his head. “You’re the one who’s been lying to her. Manipulating her into believing that you loved her, when you were working for me all along. Isn’t that right, Shane?”

Shane’s frown deepens. “What the fuck?”

“Come on, now. You know it’s true. Do your brothers know too?”

“You’re lying!” Shane snaps.

“But we both know you’re the liar in here, Shane. Do your brothers know about the other little secret you’ve been keeping from them?” he cackles.

Conor, Liam and Mikey look to Shane now and suddenly I see the way out. I have no idea what Paul is rambling about, but he is a deluded maniac, and I can work with that.

“I will put a bullet in your head if you speak another word,” Shane hisses.

“Try it. And at least two of your brothers will die along with her if you do. Because I can push this button quicker than you can fire off a single round.”

“What secret?” Liam asks and I see the color drain from Shane’s face. Damn! He really does have a secret.

“He’s lying,” Shane repeats.

“You know that I’m not,” Paul glares at him. “Tell them, Shane. Tell them what you’ve been hiding from them all these years. Or shall I tell them the real reason their daddy hated their guts?”

“Fuck you!” Shane spits but his brothers look between him and Paul.

I look between them too, wondering what the hell is going on here.

“Why did he hate us, Shane?” Mikey asks.

“It’s not the time!”

“It fucking is,” Liam barks and Shane shakes his head in annoyance.

“Go on, tell them who their real daddy is, Shane!” Paul chuckles.

“What?” Conor blinks in confusion. “What the fuck is he talking about, Shane?”

They are not going to let this go and I watch the perverse satisfaction on Paul’s face as he watches the unbreakable bond

of the Ryan brothers fracturing before his eyes.

“He’s talking about the twins.” Shane’s Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows hard. “Patrick wasn’t their real father.”

“So who is?” Mikey asks.

“He is,” Shane looks up at Paul who is grinning maniacally at them.

“Surprise, boys!” he shouts. “Daddy’s home!”

“Fuck, no!” Mikey shouts as Liam puts his head in his hands. “Why the fuck... Shane...?” He keeps asking half questions as the revelation ripples through them like a current of electricity that is threatening to spark and cause a fire.

“Why the fuck didn’t you tell us?” Liam snarls at him.

I look back at Paul and the smile on his face makes my heart twist in agony. I turn my body slightly and point my gun at Shane. “What else have you lied about, Shane?”

He blinks at me in shock as he stares down the barrel of the gun. “Nothing, Jessie.”

“Why the hell would I believe you now?”

“Jessie!” he frowns.

“You knew who the Wolf was all along! You’ve been planning to hand me over to him all this time.”

“No,” he shakes his head as Conor, Liam and Mikey look at him with suspicion now. The seed has been planted and it is growing at a dangerous speed.

“Why would we be here if we were going to do that?” he shakes his head.

“I don’t think your brothers knew,” I look between him and Paul. “I think you two have been planning this all along, but now you’ve decided you don’t want to give me up after all.”

“Yes,” Paul agrees while Shane stares at me.

Paul still has the remote held up in his hand, his finger hovering over the button and I realize if he is going to buy

this, I am going to have to lay my heart wide open. I need to speak my truth because it is the only thing that is going to convince him.

I point my gun at Shane and I look into his eyes. My hand trembles but my voice doesn't.

"I despise you! I hate you more than I have ever hated anyone in my life." I hear his brothers' gasps at the venom in my voice, but I block them out and keep my eyes fixed on Shane. "I know that you think that I love you, but you are deluded. I could never love you. You make me sick. My skin crawls when you are anywhere near me. When I think about the times you have touched my body, I want to tear off my own skin!" The tears are running down my face now as I spit out all of the hatred and venom that I have been storing for years.

"If you ever touch me again, I would die from the agony of having to endure it. You disgust me!" I shriek and he just stares at me and takes it all.

But then I see it, from the corner of my eye, what I've been waiting for. Paul drops his hand to his side as he enjoys the show. Me turning on his nephews is what his delusional mind had been hoping for. I hate guns, but I have a perfect fucking aim.

I spin and squeeze the trigger and Paul Ryan drops to the floor before he even had time to realize that I'd moved. My only regret is that he didn't see it coming. The remote he was holding clatters to the floor and I walk over to his body. He took a bullet straight between the eyes, but I have tried to kill this ghost before. This time, there will be no doubt in my mind that he is gone. I unload the remaining five bullets into his body, which jerks as each sliver of metal tears through it. And with each shot fired, the tears fall down my face faster and harder. When the chamber is empty, I keep pulling the trigger as I stare at his lifeless body, until I feel strong arms around me.

"He's gone, sweetheart," Shane whispers in my ear.

I turn in his arms and cling to him. “I wasn’t talking to you,” I sob.

“I know,” he soothes as he hugs me tightly to him. “I know.”

AFTER CONOR CHECKS I’m okay, reprimands me for sneaking out of bed, and then hugs me tighter than I have ever been hugged before, he and Shane tell me to go with the twins while they stay behind to take care of things, which I know is code for disposing of Paul’s dead body. Seemingly unable to even look at their oldest brother after recent revelations, the twins don’t argue and together the three of us walk out to the Audi they drove here in, leaving the beat up Land Rover for Shane and Conor.

Liam sits in the back with me with an arm wrapped around me as Mikey drives us back to the house. We’re all quiet. There is so much to say that it seems like there is no good place to start.

“You think he always knew?” Mikey eventually breaks the silence.

“If he did, then he’s not the man I thought he was,” Liam replies with a sigh.

“How could he not tell us?” Mikey slams his hands down on the wheel of the car.

“I don’t know. I think of all the conversations we had about how much Patrick hated us and he never once told us why.”

“You think it’s even true?” Mikey asks.

“I don’t know. Shane said it was, didn’t he?”

“But if it is, then…” Mikey doesn’t finish his sentence.

“I know,” Liam looks down at me with tears in his eyes. “I’m sorry, Jessie.”

“Don’t even!” I say as I look away and snuggle against his chest. “Let’s talk about all of this when we all get back to the house. There is no use in speculating and driving yourselves crazy until then.” For now, I just want to sit in this car next to

Liam's warm body and cherish this feeling of being safe and loved before we deal with the fact that the man who has made my life a living hell could be the father of two of the men I love more than anything in this world.

“Hmm,” Liam agrees and Mikey turns up the radio and we listen to it for the rest of the way home.

CHAPTER 35

CONOR

I wipe a bead of sweat from my forehead before it rolls into my eyes making them sting even more. It's only early morning but the July sun is already beating down on us, and chopping up a dead body with an axe isn't as easy as it sounds.

"Fuck!" Shane hisses as a splatter of congealed flesh and blood hits his t-shirt.

I grin at him. "I told you to take that off." I look down at my bare chest which is covered in blood too.

"All right, Rambo. Let's just get this over with so we can get cleaned up and back to the house."

"There are showers at this new club we got, yeah?"

"Yep," he nods as he wipes his brow and stands straight, wielding an axe in his hand like the grim reaper wields his scythe.

With a final blow, I chop through the last part of Paul's leg, detaching his foot, and he lies before us in over half a dozen pieces. Now all we have to do is feed them to Farmer Murphy's feral pigs. Jack Murphy has been offering this service for as long as I can remember. There is nothing his pigs won't eat. He charges a small fortune for the privilege, however, out of respect for our dearly departed father, who was his best customer over the years, he has given us this one for free. He asks no questions and has no idea it's our uncle his swine are about to feast on.

As soon as we got Paul's body out of his house, Shane torched the place. Nothing but bad memories there. Then we called Jack Murphy in the middle of the night and drove straight here. We have both been focused on getting the job done as quickly as possible and have barely spoken other than to discuss the task at hand. Both of us are avoiding any mention of the two huge issues that are waiting for us when we get back to the house. The fact that Jessie snuck out of the goddamn house and could have gotten herself killed, and our uncle claiming to be Liam and Mikey's father. But as we get closer to the finish line, the air becomes thicker with the tension of all the things we're not saying.

"It's a pity he wasn't alive while we were doing this," Shane snarls as he tosses our uncle's arm into the pig pen.

"Sure is. Cunt!" I snarl as I toss his foot in after. Smelling the fresh meat, the pigs squeal up a frenzy and we throw in the remainder of Paul's body parts, saving the head for the last. Shane picks it up by his hair, and then kicks it into the pen like a football.

AFTER SHOWERING in The Peacock Club and changing into fresh clothes, we're on our way back to the house. Back to Jessie and our brothers. Shane is driving, anything to keep his mind occupied, but I can't bear the tension any longer.

"So. when did you find out about the twins?"

"About a week before Alexei took Liam."

I understand why it was hard to tell the twins, especially if he didn't even know if it was true, but it hurts that he didn't trust me. We have never kept any secrets from each other, at least that's what I'd always thought. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"How could I, Con? I hated knowing. Why the fuck would I want to put you in that position, too?"

"You should have told all of us," I say with a sigh.

"You think?" he snaps.

I turn and look out of the window.

“I know I should,” he says. “I wish I had, Con. But I had no fucking idea things were going to pan out like this. If I had...”

“Yeah, well nobody could have predicted this.”

“I should have,” he sighs deeply.

“What? How?” I frown at him.

“It all makes perfect sense now. We knew Paul was a hired gun.”

“Yeah, but there are hundreds of them all over the world. The Wolf wasn’t just any hired gun.”

“We didn’t hear from him for years and then he resurfaces just as Jessie came into our lives?”

“Yeah, because his cunt of a brother was dying? At least that’s what he said, and maybe it was because of that? You couldn’t have known this was going to happen, Shane.”

“So why do I feel like I’ve let everyone down?” he says and I hear the words sticking in his throat. He puts so much fucking pressure on himself.

“You haven’t let anyone down.”

He doesn’t respond, he simply stares at the road ahead.

“You think it’s true? Was he their dad?”

“He told Em it was true. He saw her a few days ago and he told her all about it. How he and our mom had been in love. How he wanted us all to go on the run together after the twins were born, but she wouldn’t put us kids at risk and have us living on the run. Then when she died, apparently he wanted to take the twins and leave but Patrick wouldn’t have it. He almost killed him and that was when Paul left and didn’t look back.”

“Fuck!” I breathe as I lean back in my seat. That is some information to digest. Our mom and our Uncle Paul? It doesn’t make sense to me. She was terrified of our dad, she would never have risked her own life, never mind our lives, like that.

“You think his version of events is true?”

“Who knows what that sadistic prick was capable of? But that’s what he told Em and that’s what I’ll be telling the twins,” he frowns at me.

“Of course,” I agree. There’s an alternative version of events that I can’t help thinking about because we both know our uncle doesn’t particularly care about consent, but perhaps he was a different man back then? Maybe he really did love our mom? She was so excited when she found out she was having twin boys; I can’t imagine that they were conceived in anything other than love.

“And what about our little runaway?” I ask.

“I feel like putting her on a leash,” he snaps.

“Now that could be very interesting,” I chuckle and I see the hint of a smile on his face.

“She will give me a heart attack one of these days.”

“Yup. She did get the job done though.”

“She could have gotten herself killed,” he sighs.

“I know. But she didn’t. She’s safe. We’re all okay and the Wolf is gone.”

“If something had happened to her though...”

“But it didn’t, and you’ll drive yourself crazy thinking otherwise. You’ll also drive yourself crazy trying to control Jessie Ryan. She’s a law unto herself and the sooner we realize that I think the easier our lives will be.”

“What are you saying?” he frowns at me.

“I’m saying that just because she’s submissive when it comes to fucking, it doesn’t mean that goes for any other area of her life. She’s one of the most stubbornly independent people I’ve ever met. She looked after herself for ten years. She survived things most people wouldn’t.”

“I know that, but that’s why I want to protect her from anything like that again.”

“I do too, and I’m not saying we shouldn’t protect her. Of course we should, but she doesn’t *need* our protection and

that's the difference, Shane."

"You're losing me, Con," he frowns.

"Us thinking we know best for her ended up with her sneaking out in the middle of the night and almost getting us all killed. I think you were right earlier, we should have listened to her ideas instead of shutting her down. That's all I'm saying. If it was Liam or Mikey we would have listened, wouldn't we? Even if we thought it was completely stupid we would have heard them out and probably gone along with it too."

"Yeah," Shane admits.

"So, I'm saying is that Jessie is as strong as any of us, and we can say she's one of us, but we don't always treat her like that, is all."

Shane is quiet for a few moments, digesting what I've just said. It's hard for me to admit too. "But if I didn't have different rules for her, when would I get to punish her for breaking them?" he asks with a wicked grin on his face.

"Oh, I'm not saying she's not going to get her ass spanked for last night or that we shouldn't impose all kinds of rules for her to break," I grin back. "But the big stuff? We need to let her have a voice so she doesn't pull any stupid shit like she did last night."

"You're probably right," he admits with a sigh. "What the fuck am I gonna say to them all, Con?"

"The truth, bro. That's all they need."

CHAPTER 36

MIKEY

I can't stop looking at the clock as I wait for my two older brothers to get home. A part of me almost wants them to stay away a little longer, because then I can pretend that my world wasn't just completely ripped apart. I can imagine that Paul Ryan was lying when he said that he was our father and that, even worse, Shane knew, because otherwise how can the man who I respect more than anyone in this world, the man who raised us, have kept that from us? How could he have let us go through life thinking that our own father despised us?

Jessie is curled up on the sofa with Liam watching a movie while I pace the house looking for a better distraction. She is my perfect distraction, but I can hardly bear to look at her right now. To think that the man responsible for inflicting so much pain and misery on her – the man who did all of those awful things to her – might be my father, makes me feel sick to my stomach. Will she ever look at us the same way again? I spent most of my life wishing that I wasn't Patrick Ryan's son. How fucking ironic that now I wish for no other father but him.

The sound of the front door opening makes us all look up as Shane and Conor walk into the room. We all stare at them as they walk over and take a seat.

"Is he definitely dead?" Jessie whispers.

"Well, his head is no longer attached to his body, Angel," Conor replies with a wink and she nods.

Shane sucks in a deep breath as he looks around the room at the four of us. "Sit down, Mikey," he says and as much as I

feel like telling him to go to hell, I take a seat beside Jessie.

We all look to him. “I know that I owe all of you an explanation and an apology.”

“Too right you fucking do,” I can’t help but snap and he scowls at me in a way that reminds me of being an unruly teenager and I sit back and shut my mouth just like I used to back then.

“Is it true, Shane?” Liam asks.

“I believe so,” Shane replies with a nod and me and my twin look at each other. I don’t need him to speak to know that we are both thinking the same things. Jessie takes one of each of our hands in hers and squeezes as we all stare at Shane.

“I only found out a few weeks ago before Alexei took Liam,” he says.

“How?” Liam snaps.

“Aunt Em called me. When Patrick couldn’t get in touch with any of us, his nurse kept contacting Em, saying he needed to speak to someone and unburden himself of something. Eventually Em agreed and he told her that our mom and Paul had an affair and that he wasn’t your biological father,” he looks to me and Liam.

“I don’t understand,” I frown. “There is no way Patrick Ryan would have stood for that.”

“And he didn’t. He didn’t know at the time, although he suspected something. But when he did find out...”

“That was why he killed her?” Liam says what I’m thinking.

“It seems so,” Shane nods.

“Because of us?” Liam adds.

“No!” Shane barks. “Because he was an evil cunt!”

“Is that why Paul left too?” Conor asks. “Did he know?”

“Yeah.”

“So, he knew and he just left us with that evil fucker?” I snarl. “So, he hated us just as much as Patrick? This just gets fucking better and better.” I pull my hand from Jessie’s and stand up, going back to pacing the floor.

“No. Paul told Aunt Em that he wanted to take you with him, but Patrick would have none of it. His ego wouldn’t let people find out that his wife cheated on him with his own brother, so he gave Paul an ultimatum. Leave or he would meet the same fate as our mom.”

“So, the coward just left!” Liam spat.

“Well, I think we’ve all learned that Paul and Patrick Ryan were both as sick and twisted as each other.”

“So you didn’t know until a few weeks ago?” Liam asks.

“Of course not. You think I would have let you grow up thinking our father hated you both for no reason? I mean he hated us all, but...”

“It explains his particular cruelty to the twins,” Conor finishes for him.

Liam pushes himself up off the sofa too. “You should have told us, Shane!” he barks.

“I know,” Shane holds his hands up in surrender.

I look at Conor, Shane and Jessie staring at me and my twin. Are they looking at us differently now, or am I imagining it? I can’t think straight. This is too much to deal with for one person. Our dad was an evil psychopath who had an affair with our mom, left us to save his own skin, and then kidnapped, raped and tortured the woman that we love. *What the actual fuck!*

“I need to get out of here,” I say as I head for the door.

“Me too,” Liam agrees as he follows me.

“Mikey! Liam! Where are you going?” Jessie asks.

“Let them go,” Shane says to her and I scowl at him. Is he saying that because he wants rid of us now? Or because he knows that some space away from them is what we need? My

head knows it's the latter, but I am pissed as hell at him, so right now, my wounded ego chooses to believe the former.

“I will never fucking forgive you for keeping this from us!” I snarl at him. “Never!”

“Mikey!” he frowns at me but I turn my back on him and head for the front door.

“I did what I thought was best,” he shouts after us.

“You don't get to decide what's best for us, Shane!” Liam snarls at him. “You're not our fucking father so stop acting like you are.”

CHAPTER 37

JESSIE

I sit on the sofa and watch helplessly as the twins walk out of the house. I trust that Shane knows that this is what they need so I don't try and stop them. It feels like someone has dropped a hand grenade into our happy little family. I can imagine the turmoil that they're in right now. I know what it's like to have a bombshell like that dropped on you, but I can't imagine the hurt they are feeling knowing Shane kept it from them. He's always honest with his brothers, but he's their protector, too. I don't agree with his decision not to tell them as soon as he found out, but I completely see why he did what he did. I can appreciate the untenable position he felt he was in.

"Don't think that my fuck up lets you off the hook, Jessie," he suddenly growls in my direction and I turn to look at him. He is glaring at me in that way that turns my insides to jelly.

"What?" I blink at him.

"Sneaking out of here in the middle of the night to walk into the Wolf's trap. Do you have any idea how fucking stupid and reckless that was?"

"Yes," I breathe.

"You do?" he frowns at me. "So why the fuck did you do it? Have we not had enough of you walking out on us with nothing more than a note to last a lifetime?"

"Shane!" Conor shoots him a warning look.

I swallow the ball of emotion in my throat. Hadn't we agreed we'd never bring that up again? Yet the first chance he

gets, he uses it against me.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that,” he shakes his head. “I’m just so fucking angry at you, Jessie. What if the twins hadn’t noticed you were missing for hours? What if he’d taken you? What if we’d lost you?”

“I did consider all of that, Shane.”

“But you went anyway?” he snaps.

I look to Conor for some support but he shakes his head at me, too. “I’m with Shane on this, Angel. I’ve no idea what you were thinking pulling a stunt like that.”

“No, you wouldn’t.” I sit back and fold my arms across my chest.

“And just what the hell is that supposed to mean?” Shane frowns at me.

I lean forward. “Have you ever known what it was truly like to feel fear every second of every single day? And I don’t mean when you were a kid and you were scared of your dad. I mean as an adult, when you are independent and capable and strong.”

They both blink at me and I go on because they have no clue how it has felt to live my life.

“To know that no matter how strong you are, how tough you become, how good you are at firing a gun, or hacking a computer, or bench-pressing your own body weight, that it doesn’t matter, because there will always be some man who is bigger and stronger than you are, no matter how hard you work. And to not know whether that man is out there, watching you, waiting for you to make one little mistake before he pounces, so that no matter what you’re doing, popping to the grocery store for milk, getting your hair blown out, or just walking down the street to go home, you never ever feel completely safe? Have you ever felt that?”

“No.” They answer in unison.

“I have lived that every second of every day for the past ten years. I was not prepared to let him get away and have to

go through that again. So I did what I had to do.” I’m shouting now and tears are rolling down my face but I can’t stop. The emotions of the past few days are pouring out of me and I can’t do a damn thing to stop them. “I would rather die than live the rest of my life afraid like that. So, yes I thought long and hard about what I was doing, and the only regret I have is that I put you all in danger. But if you are waiting for me to apologize for making a decision about my own goddamn life, then you will be waiting a long fucking time!” I shriek the last part before pushing myself to my feet and walking out of the room with tears streaming down my face. They didn’t deserve that, but the man I am really angry at is dead, so they’ll have to do.

I’M LYING on my bed when the door opens and Conor walks into the room.

“Hey,” I say as I wipe the tears from my cheeks.

He arches one eyebrow at me. “You feeling better?”

“I’m sorry I unloaded on you both like that,” I sniff.

He sits down on the bed beside me and places his warm hand over mine. “You’ve been through a lot, Angel, but you were wrong when you said we don’t know how it feels to live in fear.”

“I was?” I frown at him. He and his brothers are the fiercest men I know. Who could they possibly be afraid of?

“It might be a different kind of fear, but we felt the Wolf’s shadow over your life as much as you did. Did you not think that we were terrified he would come for you just as much as you were?”

I open my mouth to speak but he narrows his eyes at me. “Physical pain we can endure, Jessie. All of us have had more than our fair share of it. But losing you is our single greatest fear. You don’t get to be so reckless with your own life when you mean so much to other people, don’t you get that?”

“I do,” I nod at him. “But you wouldn’t listen to me. Whenever I suggested anything that involved me, you and Shane shut me down. I felt like I had no other choice.”

“We should have listened to you, Angel,” he admits.

“I’m sorry I snuck out,” I say, despite me being adamant that I wouldn’t apologize for that just fifteen minutes earlier.

He smiles at me. “I know.”

CHAPTER 38

CONOR

“Will you lie here with me?” Jessie asks as I sit and stare at her. She is so fucking beautiful and I can’t believe that we almost lost her. How can I resist her? Besides, none of us got much sleep last night with her escapades. I crawl onto the bed and wrap my arms around her and she buries her head against my chest. “Is Shane going to punish me for sneaking out?” she breathes.

“No,” I brush her hair back from her face. “Shane is dealing with his own demons right now. He’s angrier at himself than he is at you.”

“You’re not angry with him, are you?” she asks as she looks up and stares into my eyes.

“No. I understand why he didn’t tell anyone, but I can see why Liam and Mikey are so pissed at him.”

“I’m glad he still has you in his corner,” she sighs as she snuggles against me again.

“If you ever put yourself in danger like that again, you won’t have to worry about Shane punishing you, because I’ll do it myself,” I warn her and she shivers in my arms and it’s not from fear. Fuck me, this woman terrifies me. Ever since that night in New York when I spanked her ass with Shane’s belt I have been thinking about exploring that side of myself with her. It’s not something I’ve wanted to do before because we have something much deeper than that. What’s been stopping me most is the fact that she is capable of handling so much pain that I’m truly worried that I’d go too far and hurt

her. I'm not sure I can wait much longer, though, because she has a dark side too and I know that going there with her would be fucking incredible.

THE TWO OF us must have fallen asleep because it's getting dark when we wake. Jessie rubs her eyes and looks at me. "You think the twins are back yet?"

"I doubt it."

"You think Shane's okay?" She bites her bottom lip and I have to stop myself from biting it too.

"Why don't you go and check on him and I'll wait up for the twins?" I plant a kiss on her forehead and then climb out of bed.

"You sure you don't want me to wait up with you?"

"No. Go get some sleep, and try and make sure Shane gets some too, okay?"

"I will." She gives me one of her beautiful smiles and I wonder how this woman just went through what she did and still radiates so much goodness.

CHAPTER 39

SHANE

I lie in bed staring at the ceiling and listening to my heartbeat pounding in my ears. I feel like every single person in this house is pissed at me. I took all of my anger out on Jessie and as much as I'm entitled to feel angry after what she did, I could've handled it a little better.

I'm worried about Liam and Mikey. I should have told them as soon as I found out but I wasn't lying when I said I didn't know how to. I didn't even know if it was the truth until Paul confirmed it himself. How the fuck was I supposed to blow their world apart on the ramblings of a dying man?

The door to my room creaks open, allowing a sliver of light from the hallway to illuminate the darkness. I see her silhouette slipping into the darkness and suck in a deep breath. If she's here to tell me what an asshole I am, I think my heart might just give out. I can't take any more anger directed at me right now. For over thirty years I have taken so much of it. My father's rage. Our mother's secrets. The guilt of not being able to protect them all. And I would do it all again for each and every one of them. Tomorrow I will stand in front of them and beg my brothers' forgiveness if I have to, but right now I am tired of it all.

"Are you awake?" she whispers as she tiptoes toward the bed.

"As if I could sleep," I reply with a sigh that vibrates through my bones.

When she reaches the bed, she lifts the duvet and slips beneath it, pressing her warm body against me. Her soft skin feels so good against mine and I wrap my arms around her, pulling her close and burying my face in her hair.

She responds in kind, wrapping her legs and arms around me like a koala and squeezing me tight. “I love you,” she whispers and that is my complete fucking undoing.

I don’t know what to do with the emotion that wells up in my chest and threatens to spill out of me, so I do what I know best, going to the place with her that I feel most comfortable. The place where I’m in complete control.

I roll over, flipping her onto her back and pinning her wrists above her head with one hand while I tug at her panties with the other. The fabric pulls taut against her skin as I stretch it, digging into her soft flesh. She lifts her ass off the bed, allowing me to pull them off more easily and as soon as they’re down to her knees she wriggles them off herself. I settle between her thighs and my cock hardens as it presses against her pussy.

“I need you,” I growl.

“I’m right here,” she whispers before I lean down and crash my lips against hers, kissing her so hard she gasps into my mouth making my cock throb. She spreads her legs wider and I roll my hips against her and her sweet juices slick my cock. I shift position until I’m nudging at her opening and she groans softly into my mouth.

This is the first time we have been together like this since he took her and I’m suddenly overcome with a primal urge to reclaim her for my own, and it scares the hell out of me. I pull back from her and she blinks up at me.

“Shane, please don’t,” she whispers as tears form in her eyes.

Fuck! Am I hurting her? “We don’t have to...”

“No,” she interrupts me. “I want you to stop thinking about what he did.”

I suck in a breath. How do I not think about that? And how do I tell her that it makes me want to fuck her so hard, I am the only man she'll feel inside her until the end of time? "I don't want to hurt you."

"You won't, so stop treating me like I'm fragile. Like I'm damaged." A sob catches in her throat and it slices a welt across my heart that she would think for even one second that I see her like that.

"You are neither of those things, sweetheart."

"So show me. Prove to me that nothing has changed between us."

"Jessie," I groan. "I can't hold back with you. Not tonight."

"So, don't. I need you too, Shane," she pleads.

She is so fucking sweet. I don't deserve her, but I'll take her anyway. I drive into her, forcing her a few inches up the bed and her pussy grips my cock so tightly it's a struggle to pull myself out of her again, but I do, only to drive into her even harder. I wrap my free hand around her throat and squeeze gently.

"Shane!" she gasps as she wrenches her lips from mine, blinking up at me with those incredible blue eyes and it only makes me want to fuck her harder. I rail into her, my anger and my guilt dissipating with every single thrust. She is everything I need.

"I love you, Jessie," I groan before I seal my mouth over hers again.

I PRESS my forehead against hers, our breathing fast and hard and our bodies beaded with perspiration. I brush her damp hair back from her face and she smiles up at me. Despite what I just did to her – all of the anger and guilt I just poured into her – she fucking smiles at me.

"I'm sorry I said those things to you earlier," she whispers.

"It's been a tough day for everyone, sweetheart. I could have handled it better."

“Did Shane Ryan just admit he was wrong?” She smiles at me and it makes my heart beat faster.

“No,” I scowl at her. “I was completely right, but I could have dealt with it differently is all I said.”

She bites on her lip, that smart mouth of hers ready for a comeback any second, so I don’t let her. “When he took you, I thought I was going to lose my mind, Jessie. For real. Thinking about you out there alone and afraid and not knowing where you were almost drove me insane. That you would put us all through that again...”

“I’m sorry,” she whispers as her eyes fill with tears.

“I’m not trying to make you feel bad, sweetheart.” I brush her hair back from her face. “I just want you to understand how much the thought of losing you terrifies me.”

“I know.”

I close my eyes as the memory of feeling so helpless comes flooding back to me.

“Shane?” She reaches up and trails her fingertips over my cheek until I look at her again.

“When I realized it was Paul who’d taken you, the thought that you might think I’d known, and that I’d betrayed you...” I can’t finish the sentence because the words stick in my throat.

“I didn’t think that. Not even for a second.”

I smile as I kiss her forehead and roll onto my back. She turns on her side and lays her head on my chest, running her fingertips over my abdomen.

“I love this tattoo,” she whispers.

I look down at the one she is tracing. It is a Celtic cross with a Gaelic phrase wrapped around it. Each of my brothers have one too. “It means ‘Always Remember.’”

“I know,” she whispers. “I googled it. It’s beautiful.”

“We should get you one, too,” I laugh, only half-joking.

“I don’t like needles,” she says with a shiver. “But you’re welcome to get one of my face or something?”

“Your face?”

“Yes,” she giggles.

“And where on my person would I get such a work of art?”

“Hmm?” she chews on her lip. “Your ass?”

I laugh out loud at that and she does too before she falls quiet again.

“You know what I realized in that horrible basement this morning?”

“What’s that, sweetheart?”

“How much faith you have in me,” she breathes.

“You did?”

“Yes. I don’t know if I could have said those things I did to Conor or the twins without breaking their hearts, even if it was only for a few moments, but I knew that you would get it. Even though I was looking at you, I knew that you would understand who I was really saying those things to.”

I press a kiss on her forehead. There was a second when she called me a liar that I worried she was starting to believe my uncle’s bullshit, but when she spoke of hatred and disgust, I realized that wasn’t for me. I have experienced the love of this incredible woman and I know that it’s true as sure as I know that grass is green.

“That means so much to me after everything we’ve been through, Shane,” she whispers.

I close my eyes and pull her tighter. “It means a lot to me too, sweetheart.”

CHAPTER 40

JESSIE

I lie in Shane's arms, listening to the sound of his heartbeat. It usually soothes me, but now my mind races with questions and not enough answers. I wonder where the twins are and when they'll come home. I hope they can forgive Shane for keeping the truth from them so we can get back to our happy little unit. But mostly I think about the ghost of the Wolf. Even though he's gone, he still haunts me.

"Tell me what's going on in that beautiful head of yours, sweetheart," Shane says as he brushes the hair from my face.

I shrug. "Today has been so... I don't even know how to put it into words."

"I know it has," he presses a soft kiss on my forehead. "But there's something else going on in there. Tell me what it is."

I look up into his beautiful green eyes. "Does anything that Paul said... Does it change the way you see me?"

"No." He frowns at me. "Why would it?"

"I don't know. I just... Those things he said ... about me and him."

He cups my chin with his hand, tilting my face up towards his. "I already knew what he did to you, sweetheart. And even if I didn't, why would that change anything between you and me?"

"Well, because it was him who taught me to enjoy pain. And that's kind of fucked up. And also, that's kind of our

thing.”

He narrows his eyes at me. “I think he taught you to endure pain, not enjoy it, Jessie. The fact that he provoked a reaction in your body afterwards is purely physiological and is nothing you should feel any guilt about. There is a fine line between pleasure and pain, sweetheart. Just because you endure a lot of pain, doesn’t mean you enjoy it. I don’t think that you do.”

“But I do, don’t I? With you?” I breathe.

He shakes his head. “What the Wolf did to you. What was that?”

“Pain,” I whisper.

“And with me. What do you feel? Even when I make it hurt?”

“Just pleasure,” I breathe.

He winks at me and the breath catches in my throat. He’s quiet for a while and then he turns to me.

“You never did give me an answer to my proposal, Jessie.”

“You mean your plan to marry me off to Conor and give you a whole tribe of nieces and nephews?”

“Yes.”

“But then I’d have to live without you.”

“I’d still be in your life, sweetheart. Just not like this.”

I blink away a tear that falls from the corner of my eye. “Is that what you want?” I whisper.

“I want you to be happy.”

I arch an eyebrow at him. “That’s not what I asked you.”

“I will never love anyone the way that I love you, Jessie Ryan,” he breathes.

“Does that mean we’re written in the stars?” I smile at him.

“Forever.”

“You still haven’t answered my question, Shane.”

“Because you already know the answer, sweetheart. But I’d do anything to make you happy and you know that too. I want to make sure you don’t turn around in thirty years’ time and wish you’d made different choices. I want you to have options.”

“I love you,” I whisper.

“I know,” he growls before he rolls on top of me, sealing my mouth with a kiss and I melt into him, forgetting all about the drama of our lives, if only for a little while.

CHAPTER 41

CONOR

The sound of the front door opening wakes me and I look up to see my two younger brothers falling through it. Drunken assholes.

“Shhh!” one of them giggles as they make their way into the room.

“Did you two drive in that state?” I snap at them as they stumble over to the sofa.

“No!” Liam shakes his head while Mikey giggles. “We got a taxi-tab!”

Fuck me! “Get to bed, you pair of fucking buffoons.”

“Con, I don’t feel well,” Liam suddenly groans as he falls onto the sofa. Mikey stumbles and I catch him in my arms. The alcohol fumes almost knock me on my ass. “Have you two been drinking tequila?”

“Yesh,” Mikey says with a nod.

“For fuck’s sake!” I say with a sigh as I lower him onto the sofa.

They slide against each other as their eyes roll in their heads. I haven’t seen them this drunk since they were teenagers. “I am not wiping up any of your puke tonight,” I snap as I cover them with the huge fleece blanket from the back of the sofa.

“Conor!” Liam groans sleepily. “I feel sick!”

“Well that’s what you get for drinking your body weight in tequila, numb-nuts.”

“Numb-nuts,” Mikey giggles before he passes out.

I sit on the armchair and run a hand over my face. I’m sorry I waited up for them now. Now I’ve got to sit here and make sure they don’t choke on their own puke. I feel like I’m the only one keeping a lid on shit here. I’ve hardly had any time with my girl. I’m constantly fighting fires. I wonder if this is what Shane feels like all the time?

IT’S light by the time the twins wake up. Liam groans loudly as he pushes Mikey off him.

“Fuck!” Mikey hisses as he rubs his eyes and sits up. “What time is it?”

“Seven a.m.!” I say.

“What time did we get home?” Liam asks.

“About one.”

“How did we get home?” Mikey blinks at me.

I arch one eyebrow at them. “In a caxi-tab, apparently.”

“I’m going to bed,” Liam sighs as he goes to stand up.

I frown at them. “Not just yet.”

“It’s too early for a deep and meaningful, Con,” Mikey groans as he stands up too.

“Sit your asses down before I put you down. Now!” I snap and they both blink at me but they do as they’re told.

“What?” Liam sniffs.

“I get that you two are upset. I get that yesterday was fucked up and you’ve got a lot on your plate. But you do not get to walk out of here and not answer your phones and have everyone worrying about you.”

“Sorry,” Liam grumbles.

“Not like Shane even gives a fuck! He’s not here waiting for us, is he?” Mikey snaps and the lid on my temper blows off.

“What the fuck did you just say?” I snarl.

I see his Adam’s apple bob as he swallows, but that kid must still be juiced on tequila, because he glares at me. “You heard me. He’s in bed with Jessie while he’s so worried about us?”

I stand up and step toward them. “Yes, they are in bed after I told them I’d wait up for you. Because guess what, assholes, they’ve had a pretty shit couple of days too! Do you have any idea how bad Shane feels?”

Liam snorts. “He should have thought about that before he lied to us.”

I suck in a deep breath as I try to stop myself from shaking them. “Yes, he fucked up. He should have told you a couple of weeks ago, but we were all kind of busy, weren’t we? And I don’t care how much he fucked up, he has done nothing but look after you two your whole goddamn lives. He gave up everything for us. He fucking raised you both from babies. You think he didn’t have shit he wanted to do when he was younger without three kids to look after? He never wanted to leave Ireland. He had plans. You know why he built this house? So he could live here in peace. Maybe get married and have some kids. But after what happened to you both, he put all of it on hold. He took us to New York and he built us all a new life, so don’t you ever let me catch you saying he doesn’t give a fuck *ever* again!”

I walk away from them before I go on and say something I might regret. I get that my little brothers are angry and annoyed, but they take Shane’s loyalty to them for granted. He has always looked out for all of us and never asked for anything in return.

“Con!” Liam shouts after me.

“I don’t want to hear it. I’m going to bed!” I walk through to the hallway where our bedrooms are. My hand curls over the door handle to my own room, but I look across at Shane’s instead. I am so fucking tired from sitting up and watching Liam and Mikey to make sure they didn’t die from alcohol poisoning, but I want to fall asleep next to her.

I open the door and walk inside the dark room. She is on her side, curled up next to Shane. They both look so peaceful, I turn around to walk out again.

“You okay, Con?” Shane asks. I should have known he wouldn’t be in a deep sleep.

“The twins are back,” I say quietly so I don’t wake Jessie.

“I heard them falling through the door a few hours ago,” he says with a soft sigh.

“Oh.”

“You want something else?”

“I’m tired,” I reply as I walk to the bed and look at her.

“Then get in,” Shane nods toward the empty space on the other side of Jessie. It’s not like him to share a bed with anyone but her, but right now it feels like the whole equilibrium of our family unit is off and I imagine that he is feeling it as much as the twins. I walk around the bed and climb in beside her, pressing my body against hers. She wiggles her bare ass against me and my cock twitches in my shorts. Shane shoots me a look that reminds me I was invited in here to sleep but I can’t help grinning at him. She’s so fucking sexy, I know he wouldn’t take much convincing if I woke her up right now and suggested we both fuck her, but I’m exhausted. I wrap my arm around her waist and kiss her shoulder instead.

“Conor,” she mumbles sleepily.

“Shh. Go back to sleep, Angel.”

“Okay,” she sighs as she shifts her body slightly so she is nestled perfectly between Shane and me. Then I fall asleep with her perfect ass against my groin.

CHAPTER 42

LIAM

After our epic binge drinking session last night, it's late afternoon by the time Mikey and I finally roll out of bed. I got up for some water about midday and the house was quiet, so I suspect Jessie and my brothers slept most of the day away too. I think we could all sleep for a week after the drama of the last few days.

I'm still reeling from having my ass handed to me by Conor earlier. I don't want to face him. I don't want to face Shane either, but most of all I don't want to face Jessie. Learning that my real father was the man responsible for hurting her in so many ways has completely overwhelmed me. It's all I can think about. How can things ever be the same between us again?

But I can't stay in this room forever and after a quick shower, I head into the living area with Mikey following close behind me.

"Hey." Jessie looks up and smiles at us as we walk in.

"Hey, Red," Mikey replies but I avoid her gaze and sit on the armchair while Mikey hovers by the bookshelves. The tension in the room is suddenly thick and I can feel everybody's eyes on me. Standing up, I decided I'd be better off back in my room, but as I'm walking out, Jessie springs up from the sofa and stops me in my tracks.

"Liam. Where are you going?"

"Back to bed," I snap with my head down.

"You want something to eat?"

“No,” I shake my head, still unable to look at her beautiful face.

“Liam?” she whispers. “Why won’t you look at me?”

I hear a sob catch in her throat and it breaks my heart so much that I’m forced to look up. “How can you look at me and not see him, Jessie?” I drop my head again quickly, scared to look into her eyes in case I see something in them that I can’t stand. She’s too good of a person to make me feel bad about who my real father is, but she can’t hide the truth from me. I can read her so well, and it’s something that I’ve always loved about our connection, but now I wish for blissful ignorance. She places her warm hands on my cheeks and tilts my head so I can’t avoid looking at her.

“I look at you and see you, Liam. The same man I saw yesterday. The same man who I’m completely in love with.”

“But he’s our dad, Jessie. The man who did all of that fucked up shit to you, is my fucking dad!”

“Hey! My biological father was a madman who had my whole family slaughtered, including his own twin brother. But I am who I am because of my dad – the man who raised me – and not that murderous psychopath. Just like you are who you are because of the man who raised you.” She glances over at Shane and smiles. “And even though you’re pissed at him right now, you know that he did a pretty good job with you and Mikey.”

“I hate that he caused you so much pain,” I say. I have a physical ache in my chest when I think about what that sadistic cunt did to her. It was rough enough when I thought he was our uncle, but that my own father was capable of it... Not that Patrick Ryan was much better.

“And I hate that he’s causing you some now. Please, don’t let this come between you and me, Liam. That would be the true pain. It would break my heart,” she says as a fat tear rolls down her cheek. What the fuck I ever did to deserve her devotion, I’ll never know.

“I will never let it come between us, Jessie,” I say as I wipe the tear from her face.

“Good,” she whispers as she leans up on her tiptoes and seals her lips over mine. I wrap my arms around her as she slips her tongue into my mouth and I melt into her, kissing so fiercely that I feel like I might run out of breath.

“Bedroom!” she breathes as she breaks our kiss for a second and what can I do but obey her as she kisses me again and I walk backwards toward our bedroom. As we pass Mikey, she reaches out and grabs hold of his hand too.

MIKEY CLOSES the door behind us and the three of us stand beside the bed. Jessie peels her top off over her head.

“Are you boys planning on keeping your clothes on?” she asks with a grin and a pop of one eyebrow.

“Fuck, no!” Mikey chuckles as he starts to unbutton his jeans. I undress too until all three of us are naked.

“What’s going on in that deviant mind of yours, Red?” Mikey asks.

“I want both of you right now,” she breathes as she reaches for us.

“You’ve always got both of us,” I whisper against her ear as I step up beside her, pressing my body against her back.

“Yeah, Red,” Mikey agrees as he presses against her front until she is sandwiched between us. She wraps her arms around Mikey’s neck and pulls him to her for a kiss as I press soft kisses against her neck that make her squirm. My hand slides between her and Mikey until I find her slick folds. I can’t help groaning as she grinds against my hand. “You’re always so wet for us, baby.”

“How does she feel, bro?” Mikey breathes as he breaks their kiss.

“She’s fucking soaking,” I groan. “I can smell how ready you are for us, baby. You make me so fucking hard.”

She gasps as I press my cock against her ass and push a finger deep inside her pussy.

“What do you want, Red?” Mikey hisses.

“I want both of you to fuck me right now!” she groans as she releases a rush of slick heat onto my finger.

I look up at my twin and he nods his head. We don’t need to speak to know what the other is thinking. And I have wanted to do this with her for a long time.

“Get her onto the bed,” I say and Mikey guides her to the bed before pushing her to lie down.

We both look down at her. She is the most beautiful fucking thing I have ever seen in my life. I want all of her. Her body, heart and soul. I need to know that she still trusts us, and that things are no different now that she knows who we truly are. She can tell me that things haven’t changed but I need to feel it from her.

“Are you going to tell me what’s going on in those devious minds of yours?” she breathes.

“You trust us, baby?” I ask.

She doesn’t miss a beat. “Yes.”

“You up for something a little different, Red?” Mikey grins as he crawls onto the bed beside her.

“With you two? Always!” She smiles at us both and my cock throbs in appreciation.

“We’re gonna have to get her super wet,” Mikey says to me with a flash of one eyebrow.

“What are you two planning?” she asks with a frown as I crawl onto the bed. I run my hands up her calves to her knees and spread her legs wide until her beautiful pink pussy is on full display.

“Oh don’t worry. You’re going to love it, baby,” I chuckle as I bend my head low and lick her folds while Mikey kisses her. She whimpers when I nudge her clit with my tongue and it sends all of the blood rushing straight to my cock. When my tongue is joined by Mikey’s fingers, she shudders and bucks so hard that I have to press on her thighs to hold her down as her orgasm reverberates through her entire body.

“Oh, God,” she hisses as her juices run from her opening.

“She ready yet, bro?” Mikey chuckles as he looks down at me.

“One more should do it,” I grin up at him. “Want to switch?”

“Hell, yeah,” he grins back at me and we swap places.

Jessie looks up at me through hooded eyes as she recovers from her climax. “You okay, baby?”

“Yes,” she pants and I assume Mikey has just done something incredible with his tongue because her eyes roll back in her head and she hisses his name. Not one to miss out on the action, I squeeze her breasts and tug on her nipples and her eyes open again and lock on mine.

“Liam,” she whimpers.

“You want my fingers with Mikey’s mouth?”

She nods her head as she bites on her lip and I slide my hand down her body until I find the slick, swollen bud of flesh and circle it with my fingers.

“Stop biting that lip,” I order and her mouth drops open allowing me to dip my head and slide my tongue inside there instead. My cock twitches against her hipbone as I press my body against hers. I love how submissive she is when we fuck.

“You feel how hard I am for you?” I growl as I break our kiss.

“Yes,” she gasps as Mikey and I bring her to the edge of another climax. I feel my twin’s tongue brush my fingers as he eats her pussy as I keep toying with her clit and it makes me even harder. I love sharing her with him. I cannot fucking wait to take her together. The sooner we make her come again, the better.

I press harder on her clit and she moans. I listen to Mikey’s soft groans and know that he is as eager as I am to make her come again so that we can fuck her.

CHAPTER 43

JESSIE

My head spins as I pant for breath. Liam smiles down at me while Mikey crawls up the bed, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand as he does.

“You okay, Red?” he grins at me.

I nod, unable to speak. These men do things to my body that I had never imagined possible.

“You wanna top or bottom?” Mikey looks at his twin.

“I’ll top from the bottom,” Liam chuckles as he lies down on the bed.

“The fuck you will,” Mikey laughs and I wonder what the hell these two have in store for me. “Come here, baby.” Liam takes my hand and pulls me to straddle him. He holds his cock in his hand and I lower myself onto it.

“Fuck, you feel so good,” he hisses as I sink low onto him, allowing him to stretch me wide open.

“She ready, bro?” Mikey asks as he gets in position behind me.

“Yep,” Liam replies as he reaches up and places his hands on my face. “Come here.” He pulls me down so I’m lying on his chest and kisses me softly. “You know we’d never hurt you, right?”

“Yes,” I breathe. “But we’ve done this before.”

“Not this, baby,” he shakes his head and then he winks at me. “Just relax.”

Telling me to relax has the opposite affect and my entire body tenses involuntarily.

“Jessie,” Liam whispers as he brushes my hair from my face before he pulls me in for another kiss. This time it is deep and full of passion and longing. His tongue dances against mine and I feel my body melting into his as Mikey’s hands run over my back and ass before he grabs hold of my hip with one hand. Then his cock is nudging at me, but not at my ass where I expected. He presses it against my pussy opening and I edge forward instinctively but he and his brother hold me in place.

“I won’t hurt you, Red,” Mikey says as he pushes the tip inside me, along with Liam’s cock.

I wrench my lips from Liam’s as I suck in a breath. I suppose I did ask them both to fuck me, but I hadn’t expected this. My pussy stretches wider than it ever has as he pushes deeper and the slight burning gives way to pleasure as both of their cocks throb against my pussy walls.

“You okay?” Liam asks as he cups my face in his hands.

“Yes,” I grind out the word as my body gets used to the sensation of being so full.

“Breathe, Red,” Mikey soothes in my ear as he leans over me. “Let me inside you.”

I nod and take deep breaths to steady my breathing and my heart, which feels like it’s about to burst right out of my chest.

Liam stays still while his brother pushes further inside me and I listen to the sound of their soft grunts and groans as they hold off from fucking me the way I know they are desperate to. The knowledge that I have them in the palm of my hand makes me feel powerful beyond measure. I push back slightly, allowing Mikey to edge in a little more and both he and Liam groan loudly when I do.

“Your pussy loves this, baby,” Liam hisses. “Because you are squeezing me so tight, I could come just lying here like this.”

“You feel *so* good,” I groan as they stretch me even further.

“Wait until we start moving,” Mikey chuckles. “Tell us when you’re ready.”

I lie still, my pussy walls contracting as it gets used to the feeling of both of them inside me together. “I’m ready.”

“Oh, fuck!” Mikey hisses as he holds onto my hips and starts to fuck me slowly. Liam remains still while his brother finds a rhythm and I moan so loudly that I know Conor and Shane must have heard me.

Waves of pleasure roll through my body as Mikey’s cock goes further into me with each thrust and Liam’s throbs inside my pussy. My walls clench around them, pulling them in deeper even though I’m not sure how I’ll stretch to accommodate that because I know that neither of them are all the way in yet.

Liam pulls my face to his and kisses me again as he thrusts into me. He swallows my groan as his own rumbles through his chest. Then Mikey is lying on top of me, peppering kisses over my back as his hand slides between us and he begins to rub my clit while the two of them fuck me slowly. The pressure in my center feels overwhelming and I whimper as I move my hips, riding both of them as I chase the release I so desperately need.

“I’m going to come,” Liam hisses as he breaks our kiss and drives into me harder. Mikey responds by pulling out of me and I groan at the loss of fullness, but he pushes his cum-drenched cock into my ass instead making me lose all control. My entire body shudders as my climax tears through my body and I release a torrent of wet heat that soaks the three of us.

“Fuck, did you just squirt for us, Red?” Mikey growls as he thrusts his cock into my ass.

“I...” I shake my head and lie down on Liam’s chest. He wraps his arms around me and plants a kiss on my head as his twin goes on fucking me.

“Fuck, Red!” Mikey growls as he holds onto my hips and drives into me as Liam squeezes me tighter to him.

“Mikey,” I groan as the last waves of my huge orgasm roll through me but they don’t stop. They build to another crescendo and I suck in a deep breath as I bury my face in Liam’s neck.

“You gonna come again, baby?” Liam chuckles.

I shake my head. “I can’t.”

“Let’s see about that.” He burrows his hand between our slick bodies and begins to rub my clit. As if I could take any more, Mikey slides two thick fingers deep into my pussy and presses on my G-spot and I cry out as stars flicker behind my eyelids and I come harder than I ever have in my life. I gasp for air as every nerve ending in my body sparks with electricity. Mikey bites down on my neck as he grinds out his own release and I continue quivering between the two of them, feeling so much pleasure that it borders on too much. These men bring me to the very edge of my limits before gently easing me back down as they rub their warm hands over my body and pepper me with kisses.

Tears roll down my face as the last tremors vibrate through me and Liam holds me tight while Mikey pulls out of me and rolls onto his back.

“Fuck, Red, that was intense,” he breathes.

“Hmm,” Liam agrees as he tilts my chin so he can look in my eyes. It takes me a moment to focus on him. “You okay?”

“Yes. Intense,” is all I can say.

He chuckles softly and the sound vibrates through his body and into mine as I lie on top of him, completely spent and entirely boneless.

“We are definitely gonna have to change these sheets,” Mikey winks at me as he reaches out and takes my hand.

CHAPTER 44

MIKEY

After Jessie, Liam, and I took a shower, I left them in the bedroom and came to the kitchen to make a start on some late supper. I'm not sure any of us have eaten a decent meal at a regular meal time in days, and being in the kitchen is one of my favorite ways to de-stress and clear my head. The past few hours with Jessie have certainly helped. After the initial shock wore off, I wasn't as worried as Liam was about her changing toward us because of who our father was. Of all people, Jessie gets that we are not defined by our biology, but it was still a relief to know that she trusts us the same way she always has, and what we all just did proved that beyond any words she could have spoken.

I rummage in the refrigerator for some fresh tomatoes and when I hear footsteps behind me I sigh inwardly. I've not spoken to Conor since this morning when he tore Liam and me a new one, and Shane... I don't know what the fuck I'm going to say to him when I see him next. I pray this is Liam or Jessie coming in here but when I turn around it's my oldest brother standing in front of me.

Shane checks his watch. "You're cooking?"

"Yeah," I shrug. "What doesn't get eaten will keep."

"Oh," he stares at me, his hands shoved in his pockets and his jaw working.

I stare back as I close the refrigerator door, tomatoes in my hand and a dishcloth over my shoulder, but not a single word on my tongue.

Like divine intervention, someone opens the door and we both look away to see Liam sauntering in with a smile on his face. It disappears when he sees Shane and then the three of us stand there looking at each other in awkward silence, until Shane finally breaks the tension.

“Let’s have this out right now, boys,” he says as he walks to the kitchen table and takes a seat, indicating that we should do the same. We follow obediently, still conditioned to do whatever our big brother tells us.

I open my mouth to speak, expecting that he’ll be wanting an apology from us both, but he starts talking before I can get a word out.

“I’m sorry that I kept this from you both,” he says with a heavy sigh. “Em told me just a few days before you were taken.” He nods to Liam. “And I’ll be honest, I had no fucking idea what to say to you both.”

“But...” Liam starts but Shane glares at him and he closes his mouth.

“I know that is no excuse for not telling you sooner. But every time I wanted to, something else happened. I was planning on telling you after this trip. I wanted to see if Paul knew. I didn’t even know if Patrick was telling the truth or whether it was his way of trying to absolve himself of any blame for being such a shitty father to you both. Easing his conscience or something.”

“I’ve never known you not have the right words for anything in my life, Shane,” I tell him with a frown.

“Are you calling me a liar?” he glares back.

“No, but I don’t buy your whole you didn’t know what to say bit, is all.”

“It’s not that I didn’t know what to say.” He shakes his head. “I didn’t know how to tell you and not tear your fucking worlds apart. Can’t you see that?”

“That’s not the only reason though,” Liam adds and I turn and look at my twin.

“No,” Shane swallows hard and looks at him.

“You knew I’d blame myself for him killing mum?” Liam whispers.

Shane nods in response and Liam turns to me. My twin and I are like mirror images of each other, but we are so very different. I sometimes forget how deeply Liam feels. The traumas of our childhood taught him to turn inward and look to himself for answers — and more often than not, blame — while I am more practical and deal with things head on. I use humor and my stubborn desire to prove Patrick Ryan wrong to process the shit we went through. And that was exactly what Liam did. He blamed himself. Then he questioned how everyone else would view him because Paul Ryan was our father and not Patrick, whereas for me, we simply swapped one monster for another. For me, it explained why Patrick Ryan hated our guts, and in that it has given me some peace, but for Liam it has only brought more insecurities and doubts.

“You must know that none of it was our fault, right?” I say as I place my hand on the back of Liam’s neck.

“Yeah,” he nods and while his head does know that, his heart will take a while to catch up.

Liam turns back to Shane. “I told you once that there was nothing you could do that would make me turn my back on you.”

Shane’s Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows and I feel my muscles tense as the emotion in Liam somehow spills over into me. The air in this room is so thick with tension, I could cut it with a knife.

“You are the only dad we’ve ever had.” Liam wipes a tear from his cheek and I feel like goddamn crying myself now. “And I’m sorry I was an asshole to you. You didn’t deserve that.”

“Yeah. Me too,” I add quietly. Liam is right. Conor has always looked out for us, too. He is the best big brother anyone could ask for, but this man right here is our father. He has protected and provided for us from the moment we were

born, and how can we be pissed at him for still wanting to do that?

“I kinda deserved it,” Shane says and a tear rolls down his face and I almost lose my shit. I have never seen him cry my whole life.

The sound of Jessie and Conor laughing breaks the tension as they walk through the door. They stop when they see us.

“Everything okay?” Conor asks with a frown.

Shane looks to me and Liam.

“Yeah. Perfect,” Liam replies.

“Glad to hear it,” Conor winks at us and I’m grateful he’s no longer pissed at us because he’s a scary motherfucker, and I hate him not being on my side.

“Are you cooking?” Jessie asks as she glances at the chopped onions on the side and the fresh minced beef.

“Yes,” I stand up and walk over to her. “I’m making a chili.”

“Oh, I love your chili,” she beams at me as she takes a seat on a stool at the kitchen island.

“Nice. I’m starving,” Conor agrees as he sits beside her.

“So am I after that workout,” I wink at Jessie.

“It was pretty impressive,” she laughs and blushes at the same time.

“What exactly were you three up to?” Conor growls at he leans down and nips her bare shoulder.

“Hmm?” She purses her lips together. Us boys have a rule that we don’t talk about what we do in private with her. It kind of feels disrespectful, but Jessie is entitled to tell them anything she wants. “It was something different. New.” She blushes further.

“New?” Shane walks over to her now, his interest well and truly piqued. “Now you have to tell us what the fuck you all

did, sweetheart.” He smiles as he sits beside her and she is sandwiched between him and Conor.

“They both...” She closes her eyes and shakes her head as her cheeks burn with heat and I can’t help but laugh.

“At the same time,” Liam adds for her.

“But we always do that?” Conor frowns.

Jessie opens her eyes and looks at me, silently pleading with me to put her out of her misery and tell them so she doesn’t have to say the words. “Not in the same place though, bro.” I wink at him and watch with a grin as he and Shane realize what we mean.

Shane turns to her. “They both fucked your pussy at the same time?” he whispers, but loud enough for us all to hear.

“Yes,” she chews on her lip.

“Fuck!” Conor hisses.

“What was it like?” Shane frowns in bemusement, as though he has never considered this as an option before. And I suppose he hasn’t. He’s not as used to sharing as Liam and I are.

“Amazing!” she whispers.

“Fucking epic!” I add.

“Uh-huh,” Liam agrees.

“It’s not something I could do a lot though, if you know what I mean. I need some recovery time,” she purrs and my cock twitches in my sweatpants.

“Fuck, Angel, do you have to make me constantly hard?” Conor groans.

“Like how much recovery time?” Shane frowns at her.

“To do that again? Like a week or two, maybe?”

“And how about for just regular stuff?”

“I’d say nothing involving this whole region,” she waves a hand over her groin, “for at least four days.”

“Four days?” Conor snaps. “Fuck that!”

“You put our girl out of action for *four days*?” Shane glares at me and Liam and I see Jessie’s shoulders shaking as she laughs silently.

“She’s fucking with you.” I grin at him and he turns to her.

“Are you?”

“Of course I am,” she chuckles. “I’ll be fine tomorrow. Just nothing more tonight, okay?”

“Fine,” Shane says before kissing her temple, but Conor sighs deeply and shakes his head. Jessie wraps her arms around his neck and whispers something in his ear that I don’t hear, but it makes him laugh out loud. Then he kisses her too and she sits at the kitchen island with a huge goofy grin on her face and my older brothers looking at her like they might eat her if I don’t get this chili made soon.

CHAPTER 45

SHANE

We all sit around the dining table having devoured second helpings of Mikey's chili, which I had almost forgotten tasted so good.

"It's a good thing Jessie is already out of action for the night," Mikey laughs as he pats his flat stomach. "Because I don't know about you all, but I am fit to bursting and I can barely breathe, let alone do anything more fun."

Liam nods and groans his agreement.

Conor is sitting beside her and he wraps an arm around her shoulder. "Well, neither of you are getting your filthy little mitts anywhere near our girl tonight anyway, because she is spending the night in my room."

"Yes I am," she smiles and rests her head on his shoulder. "I need some TLC."

Conor kisses her forehead softly.

My cell is on the table and it starts to vibrate as Erin's name and number flashes on the screen and I frown. Why the hell is she calling me after ten at night?

"Hello," I answer, feeling Jessie's eyes burning into me.

"Shane," she purrs. "I have the final papers for your father's estate here. We should really get them signed as soon as possible so that everything can be tied up before the funeral on Wednesday, and then we can head back to New York immediately after."

"Fine. I'll call round to your firm's offices tomorrow."

“Actually, I have to fly to London tomorrow and I won’t be back until the morning of the funeral. It would be best if we could get these signed now.”

I sigh and run a hand over my jaw. “Where shall I meet you?”

“I’m still at the hotel.”

“The hotel? I’ll meet you there in an hour.”

“Good. I’ll see you soon.”

I end the call and put my cell on the table as four pairs of eyes stare at me. “You’re meeting Erin in a hotel?” Mikey arches an eyebrow at me.

I look at Jessie when I answer him. “I need to sign some papers for her.”

“Can’t it wait until morning?” Conor asks.

My eyes stay fixed on Jessie’s and hers on mine. “No. She has to fly to London first thing apparently. I’d better get going so I can do this and get back here.”

“Drive safely,” she says and for once, I can’t read her at all. She is either completely okay with this or being sarcastic.

I push my chair back and stand up. “Come here.” I hold out my hand to her and she takes it. I pull her up from her chair and wrap my arms around her waist. “It’s just business. I’ll be back soon.”

“I know,” she says before pushing up onto her tiptoes and kissing me softly. I kiss her back, wrapping her hair around my fist and tilting her head to the perfect angle so I can tongue-fuck her mouth. Her soft moans make my cock hard and I have to pull back from her and look down at her beautiful face. I dust my knuckles over her cheek.

“I’ll be back in two hours.”

“I know,” she says and I think she has finally learned to trust me where Erin is concerned.

“Good girl,” I whisper in her ear and then with a final squeeze of her ass, I walk out of the kitchen.

AN HOUR LATER, I am standing at the door to Erin's hotel room waiting for her to answer. I'm almost expecting her to come to the door in a negligee or some lace underwear complete with stockings and suspenders, but she wouldn't do that. She's never been that obvious.

A few seconds later, she opens the door and confirms that I no longer know her at all. She is wearing a barely there piece of pale pink silk fabric that skims her ass. Her hard nipples are clearly visible and I could kick myself for even giving them a cursory glance.

"Shane," she breathes. "Thank you for coming over so late."

"Seemed like I didn't have much choice," I say as she opens the door and I step inside. Does she really think this is going to work? One last desperate ploy to win me over?

"I have the papers here." She glides over to the small table near the window and indicates the small manila folder.

I sit at the chair and open the folder, scanning the contract before I sign it. It relates to the sale of our family home and also the house in Carrickfergus where we are currently staying. It is the last home we have in Ireland and it's time to let it go.

"Would you like a drink?" Erin asks as she holds up the bottle of Jameson Black label. It's half empty and I wonder how much of it she has drank already this evening.

"No thanks," I shake my head.

"Not even one to commiserate?" she pouts.

"Commiserate?"

"That was going to be our house, Shane. Remember?" She sniffs and a tear rolls down her cheek.

I do remember. "That was a long time ago, Erin. Things have changed."

"If we hadn't gone to New York, if we hadn't had to get away because of your brothers, do you think we would have made it?"

I look at her. I did love her once although it felt like a different kind of love to what I feel with Jessie. It was safe and familiar. The love I have for Jessie is fire and fury, but she is home to me in a way that Erin never was. I held onto a piece of Ireland because in my heart it still felt like my home, but now my home is wherever Jessie Ryan is.

“We might have stayed together,” I tell her honestly, “but we wouldn’t have been happy.”

“What?”

“We never really made each other happy, Erin.”

“We did,” she insists. “Don’t try and rewrite our history, Shane. Just because you’ve found a whore who’ll let all your brothers fuck her...”

I push my chair back and stand so quickly that she flinches, but she has nothing to fear from me; I would never lay a hand on her ever again. I lean down and sign the papers. “Done.”

“I’ll get them filed tomorrow and then I can start looking at the contracts for the clubs you bought.”

“No,” I shake my head. “You misunderstand me. When I said done, I meant done. For good.”

“But I’ve worked for you and your family for years, Shane,” she snaps.

“You just called one of my family a whore,” I snarl at her. “Consider our working relationship terminated.”

“You’re just going to throw away everything we have built together for her?” she shrieks. “I can give you everything, Shane. Everything!” She walks over to me, pushing her tits out so that her nipples are almost touching my chest.

She breathes heavily. I smell the whiskey on her breath and the sweet perfume she has dabbed on her neck. Her pupils are dilated and her cheeks are flushed pink.

I lean my face close to hers and she gasps at the closeness. “You have nothing that I want,” I say and then I walk out of her hotel room.

CHAPTER 46

JESSIE

I'm pulling my hair into a ponytail as I walk into the living area and blink in shock as I see Shane, Liam and Mikey wearing dress pants and dress shirts and looking good enough to eat. As I get nearer, I can smell their cologne too. I just finished a bath and I'm in one of Conor's t-shirts. It's Patrick's funeral tomorrow and I'd thought we were all going to have a few beers and watch a movie together.

"I didn't realize we were going out?" I say with a frown as I look down at my under-dressed state.

Mikey pulls me into his arms and runs his nose along my throat. "We're going out, Red, but not you."

I step back and stare at him in surprise while Shane and Liam grin at me. "What? Why?" I can't help feeling a little hurt that they're all going out without me.

"You're staying with me, Angel," Conor growls in my ear as he walks up behind me and slides his arm around my waist too, until I'm pressed between him and Mikey. "The boys are giving us the place to ourselves."

The tone of his voice sends shivers skittering up my spine. God, I have missed him. "Why?" I breathe.

"You'll see," he chuckles.

Shane leans forward and kisses my cheek before he looks over my shoulder at Conor. "Be good," he warns.

"Of course," Conor replies.

“See you in the morning, baby.” Liam gives me a kiss on the cheek too before Mikey seals his lips over mine and slips his tongue into my mouth while Conor holds onto me.

“Come on,” Shane says, pulling him away. “I thought you two were going to drink me under the table.”

“Oh yeah,” Mikey chuckles and the three of them head for the door.

“We won’t be on clean up duty when you get home, so don’t come anywhere near either of us if you’re going to puke. You got me?” Conor says to their backs and they all nod and mumble their agreement.

A few seconds later, they have left and closed the door behind them, leaving Conor and me alone. I turn in his arms and wrap mine around his neck. “Not that this isn’t a lovely surprise, but why do we need the house to ourselves?”

“Oh,” he flashes his eyebrows at me, “with everything that’s happened, I forgot to give you your punishment.”

“What punishment?” I breathe, feigning my innocence even as a wet heat rushes between my thighs.

He frowns at me. “For flirting with Sean O’Connor!”

“I did not flirt!” I insist.

“You smiled at him,” he reminds me.

“Smiling is not flirting!”

“Hmm.” He leans down and kisses me softly. “I think I’m going to have to torture a confession out of you, Jessie Ryan.”

I chew on my lip as I look up at him. This is the side of Conor I only see glimpses of. It’s terrifying and exciting all at the same time.

I take a deep breath. “You think we’re ready?”

“Yes,” he nods his head. “But we don’t have to do anything you don’t want to. I’m just as happy to fuck you all night, Angel if that’s what you need?”

“No.” I shake my head. “I trust you completely.”

“Hmm.” He rubs a hand over his jaw and we start to walk toward his bedroom. “You say that now, but wait until you see what I have in store for you.” He chuckles darkly and I shiver.

“Have you got some of those jiggle balls, or something?” I grin at him, remembering the fun Shane and I had with them.

“Oh, Angel, they’re for amateurs,” he winks at me and I wonder what the hell I’ve gotten myself into.

When I walk into Conor’s room a moment later, my heart skips a beat when I see the things he has laid out on the bed.

“I wanted you to see everything,” he says softly as he guides me over to the bed.

I look at the array of equipment, floggers, a paddle, a butt plug with a beautiful green jewel on the base, leather cuffs and a blindfold. But the thing that intrigues me most are the lengths of chain. What the hell? “Where did you get all of this?” I ask as I reach down and stroke my fingertips over the soft leather of the flogger.

“Didn’t Shane tell you?”

“Tell me what?”

“We just bought a chain of clubs. We have one here, London, Chicago, LA, Paris, and one in New York.”

“And what do sex toys have to do with your new clubs?”

“What do you think?” He grins at me.

“They’re sex clubs?” I gasp. “How did you not tell me about this?”

“I’m pretty sure they’re not called ‘sex clubs,’” he laughs. “Shane was going to tell you. I suppose he forgot with everything else going on.”

“Wait! That’s not where they’ve gone tonight, is it?” I frown at him.

“You honestly think they would go there without you?” He frowns back.

“No,” I shake my head.

“You’re okay with it then? I mean it’s just business for us, but ... it has its perks too,” he says as he picks up some nipple clamps that I hadn’t even noticed.

“Of course. And I’d love to go sometime,” I smile at him.

“Hmm.” He narrows his eyes at me and I don’t know if that’s a yes or a no. “You ever used these before?” He holds up the clamps.

“I’ve had them used on me,” I whisper. It wasn’t a particularly pleasurable experience, but I imagine there is nothing Conor Ryan could do to my body that I wouldn’t enjoy.

Thankfully, he doesn’t press me for details. “You okay with them?”

“Yes. I’m okay with anything you have in mind,” I breathe as my heart races in my chest and he pulls me into his arms.

“That’s a pretty dangerous thing to admit, Angel,” he growls.

“It’s true though. So, what have you got planned first?” My eyes are drawn back to the toys on the bed.

“First off,” he slides his hands down my back and starts to peel off my t-shirt, “I want you naked. And wet.”

The second part is already taken care of as he discovers a few seconds later when his hand slips into my panties. “Fuck, Jessie,” he growls as his fingers slide through my folds and the next thing I know he is lifting me up and throwing me into the middle of the bed. He towers over me as he tugs off his sweatpants and tosses them onto the floor.

“Turn over,” he commands and I do it without hesitation. Then he crawls over me, nudging my thighs apart with his knee before he nestles himself between them. The tip of his cock nudges at my opening and I suck in a breath right before he drives into me.

“Conor!” I groan loudly as the endorphins flood my body and my walls squeeze around him. What the hell happened to all the toys he had lined up?

As if reading my mind, he growls in my ear as he nails me into the mattress. “I just need to fuck you first, Angel.”

He pins my wrists above my head as he drives into me over and over again, and the wet sound of my arousal fills the room. As soon as he senses I’m on the edge he increases his pace until my orgasm comes hard and fast. As I squeeze him in deeper, he groans loudly before pulling out of me and finishing on my ass.

“Conor!” I say and he chuckles as he starts to rub his cum down the seam before pushing a finger inside.

“On your knees, Angel,” he says as he taps my ass.

I push up onto my knees and look behind me to see him reaching for the metallic plug. He rubs his hand over it and that’s when I realize he’s using his own cum as lube and it’s so hot it makes my insides tremble.

A few seconds later, I feel the metal, warmed by the heat of Conor’s hands, pressing against the seam of my ass. I lay my face against the bed and push my hips back against him, groaning as he slides the plug all the way inside.

“And I thought your ass couldn’t look any more beautiful,” he groans as he pushes two fingers deep into my pussy, making me groan too. “So wet, Angel.”

I feel him climb off the bed. Taking hold of my hips he pulls me toward him and smacks my ass hard with his hand. The sound echoes around the room, masking my sharp intake of breath.

“You’ll tell me to stop if it starts to hurt, right?” he growls.

“Umm,” I mumble, earning myself another hard slap.

“Right?”

“Yes!” I gasp, willing him to do more. This is a side of him I rarely get to see, but that I adore. My calm, controlled Conor, unrestrained and almost feral with desire.

“Up on your knees,” he barks and I push myself, allowing him to blindfold me before he pushes me back down. Taking hold of my ankles, he pulls my legs wide apart until I am lying

spread open with my ass in the air. I breathe heavily as I wait for whatever is next.

The thwack of the paddle stings my ass as it cracks loudly, sending a rush of wet heat searing between my thighs.

“Conor!” I moan as he brings it down again and I feel my juices dripping out of me and running down my thighs.

He brings it down again, and this time the tip of it lands on the plug, pushing it deeper and sending shivers of pleasure tinged with pain skittering up my spine. My knees almost buckle but he holds me upright.

“Talk to me, Angel,” he growls, “or we stop this now.”

“I need more,” I groan.

“Fuck!” he hisses as he goes on spanking me with the paddle until my ass is on fire. When I think I’m almost done, I hear the paddle dropping to the floor as Conor pants for breath behind me. His rough hand rubs over the flaming skin of my ass cheeks before he slips two fingers inside my pussy again and I push back against him. I want more of him.

“You’re soaking, Angel,” he pants. “Why do you love having your ass spanked so much?”

“I don’t know,” I gasp.

“Yes you do.” He pumps his fingers in and out of me. “Because you know how fucking hard it makes me, and you know you’re going to be fucked good when I’m done, don’t you?”

“Yes,” I breathe as he pulls his fingers out of me and grabs hold of my hips. I brace myself for what’s about to happen. My legs tremble with need as I wait for what I really want from him. When he finally sinks his cock deep inside me I cry out in pleasure and relief. His hands are so huge they almost wrap around my waist, and as he holds on to me while he rails into me, he pushes his thumb against the head of the jeweled plug and ripples of pleasure roll through my body.

“Please, Conor?” I beg him as he leisurely fucks me.

“Soon, Angel,” he chuckles as he pulls his cock out of me, making me groan in frustration. “Now, on your back.”

I roll over onto my back and as soon as I do, Conor’s hands are sliding over my legs. He wraps one of the leather cuffs around each ankle and spreads my thighs wide apart before he chains my legs to the bed. I swallow hard as my heart races in my ears.

“You okay?” he asks as he straddles me.

“Yes,” I breathe.

“Good.” He leans down and sucks one of my nipples into his mouth, making me whimper with need. He nibbles and sucks as one of his hands slides between my thighs and toys with my pussy at the same time until I am trembling with an impending orgasm.

Then he stops.

His tongue disappears to be replaced by one of the clamps. The bite stings for a second, before it draws the blood to my breasts and my entire nipple pulses with a gentle throbbing heat. He does the same to my other one and all I can do is moan and whimper while he plays my body expertly. A few moments later he pushes himself up and disappears again. I swallow hard as I listen to him moving around the room. The clinking of chains as I wait for him makes tremors skitter along my spine. It is pleasure, laced with fear.

“It’s only me and you here, Angel,” he soothes as he takes my wrist and wraps a leather cuff around it before he chains both of my hands to the bed so I’m completely bound and spread open for him. I pull at my restraints but there is so little give I can barely move. They are tight and expertly fitted.

“I know,” I whisper.

“We leave our ghosts at the door, okay?”

“Yes.”

This is the best way I know how to exorcise those ghosts of my past and he knows it better than anyone. I’m not sure anyone else would know that this is what I need. His uncle

used to chain me up. He did it a few days earlier in the basement of his farmhouse. This is different. This is about trust. And love.

CONOR

I look down at Jessie lying on the bed and have never seen anything so beautiful in my entire life. She is chained to the bed, her ankles and wrists bound to either side so she's spread wide open for me. Her beautiful pink pussy is on display as it drips with her cum. I pick up the leather flogger and trail it over her abdomen and she shivers in anticipation as I drag it between her thighs. I used to think I couldn't do this stuff with her. I used to think that I couldn't bear to cause her any pain, but now I know her better, and she understands herself more, we both know this is only about pleasure. Hers and mine.

"Conor," she moans softly as the tails of the flogger slide through her slick folds.

"I'm right here, Angel," I tell her and she chews on her lip.

I give her a short flick to her pussy and she yelps. "Stop biting that damn lip," I growl.

"Sorry," she breathes.

Trailing the flogger back up over her body, I bring it down sharply over her torso. It grazes the clamps, making them bite into her flesh slightly harder. She sucks in a deep breath and her thighs tremble.

I step closer to the bed and slide a finger into her pussy and she raises her hips to meet me. When I pull it out again, a rush of her cum comes with it and I have to stop myself from burying my face in her. I continue with the flogger, trailing it over her gorgeous curves and flicking my wrist every so often

so that she feels its sting. Her pussy clenches every time as her breathing gets faster and harder. I'm pretty sure with practice I could make her come like this, but my patience will only stretch so far tonight. My cock is busting to be inside her.

Tossing the flogger onto the floor, I crawl onto the bed and she whimpers when my hands brush over the skin of her thighs. When I press a soft kiss on her pussy lips, her hips grind against my face, but I pull back.

"Not yet, Angel," I whisper as I move up her body. Trailing kisses over her stomach. I tug on the delicate chain that holds the nipple clamps together and she groans loudly. "Conor! Please!"

I slide a finger inside her again and her walls squeeze me. I add another and finger fuck her slowly while I go back to her breasts, sucking on her nipples through the clamps and making her squirm. When I finally pull one off, her nipple springs out so I can suck into my hot mouth and she rewards me with a rush of slick heat. I do the same to the other and the sound of her whimpers and moans as she creams all over my fingers makes me desperate to drive my cock into her. But I know that when I do, this is all over, because I won't be able to stop until I have blown my load in her and she can barely stand. Instead I move back down the bed and lick her pussy lips, lapping at her juices as they run out of her.

"I need you inside me, Conor," she breathes. "Please?"

"I'm inside you, Angel," I chuckle as I curl my fingers against her G-Spot and she bucks her hips.

"No... I need..." she pants as her breathing gets faster and louder.

"You need what?" I tease her because she rarely says the word cock. It makes her blush.

"Your cock!" she moans as her orgasm suddenly tears through her body and she pulls at her restraints as every part of her shakes and trembles.

Tears rolls down her cheeks as she shudders.

“Damn, even I wasn’t expecting that, Angel. Where the hell did that come from?”

“I... don’t...” she shakes her head, unable to form a sentence.

I crawl off the bed and start to unchain her hands and feet. “What...?” she breathes.

“I love having you tied up and spread out for me, Angel, but I want to bend you over and fuck you from behind.”

I pull her blindfold off too and she smiles up at me. “Flip over and stick that ass in the air,” I snap and she obeys without question while I make sure the chains won’t be in our way. Her ass and pussy on full display is a sight to see and I cannot wait to fuck her now. I love taking her from behind. I crawl onto the bed behind her. Her juices are dripping down her thighs and I dip my head and lick them from her before I straighten up again and line my cock up at her entrance.

“Is this what you really want, Angel?”

“Yes,” she moans softly as she pushes her ass back so I slip in an inch. I run my finger over the jeweled plug in her ass and she shivers. Then I drive into her, pressing down on the plug so that her ass and her pussy are filled at the same time and she shouts my name. I grab onto her ass cheek with my other hand and fuck her harder than I have ever fucked anyone in my life, and when she’s come for a third time and soaked my cock in her cum, I pull the plug out of her ass and fuck her there instead.

“*Conor!*” She moans my name over and over again and it is the sweetest thing I have ever heard. A few seconds later, I swear I almost fucking pass out from how hard my body comes for her.

When we’re done, I fall down onto the bed beside her and pull her quivering frame on top of mine. We both lie here gasping for breath, our bodies stuck together with perspiration as we recover from whatever the fuck that was. It’s Jessie who speaks first.

“God, Conor. That was...” She gasps for air again. “Freaking incredible. Can you please punish me like that all the time.”

“Yes,” I breathe. “Whatever you want, Angel.”

“I love you,” she purrs as she nestles her head against my chest.

I wrap my arms around her and kiss her head. “I love you more.”

CHAPTER 48

SHANE

The house is quiet when we get back home. There is no blood on the walls, so I suppose that's a good thing. Not that I would have left Jessie alone with my brother if I had thought for a second that there would be. It was time for him to show her his darker side. They were both ready for it.

"Why are there four of you?" Mikey looks through me as his eyes roll in his head and Liam giggles like a naughty teenager. I shake my head at the pair of them. "I thought you two were supposed to be drinking me under the table?"

"We did," Liam slurs. "We drank waaay more than you."

"No." I shake my head. "But you idiots were drinking tequila and you know that you can't handle it. What is it with you two and tequila?"

"It's being here. In Ireland," Mikey whispers behind his hand as though he's divulging a huge secret. "It makes us crazy."

"Yeah. It makes us all crazy, kid." I smile at him. "The pair of you should get to bed."

"Yes, Sir," Liam salutes me and then the two of them stumble off in the direction of their bedroom, laughing to themselves. I smile as I watch them. The three of us needed tonight. I needed to make sure they were okay. That the three of us were okay. And now I know that we will be, even if we're not quite there yet.

I walk to Conor's room. There's no reason I shouldn't check in on them both. As I reach his room, the faint light

from the television beneath the crack in the door gives me all the permission I need to go inside. He is lying with his arms behind his head watching the TV and Jessie is curled up on his chest asleep.

“Hey, bro,” he whispers.

“Hey,” I say as I walk over and sit on the bed. “How was your night?”

He looks down at her as she sleeps and smiles. “Epic,” he finally replies.

“Good.”

“How was yours?”

“Good. It was fun. I think we cleared the air. They’re going to be okay.”

“Where are they now?”

“I sent them to bed.”

He arches an eyebrow at me. “Hammered?”

“Yep,” I laugh. I look down at her and my heart beats faster in my chest.

“You want to get in here with us?” Conor offers.

“Yeah.” I take off my clothes before he can reconsider because I want nothing more than to sleep with her beautiful soft body pressed up against me.

“You going full-on commando?” Conor says as I pull off my boxers too.

“Yep. You got a problem with that?”

“No.” He laughs and shakes his head. “I’ve seen more of your cock these past few months than I’ve seen in a lifetime.”

“Well, you’d better get used to it, because I’m pretty sure our girl loves being fucked by the two of us together.”

“She sure does.” He flashes his eyebrows at me as I pull back the duvet and climb into bed beside them. I run my hand over her back and she moans softly. I don’t want to wake her, but she’s lying on Conor and I want her lying beside me.

“Shane’s here, Angel,” Conor says softly as he gently lifts her off his chest.

“Shane?” she says sleepily.

“Yeah,” I reply as I help Conor move her, pulling her into the middle of us so that I can wrap my arm around her and feel her ass pressed against my groin.

“Hmm,” she purrs as she wiggles her ass and I bite my lip, willing my cock to not get any harder because I want to sleep, but if she wakes him up then none of us will be sleeping for a few hours.

“Go back to sleep, sweetheart,” I whisper and she sighs softly.

“You ready for tomorrow?” Conor asks.

“Yeah. You?”

“Yep.”

“Good. Then as soon as this funeral is done, we can go home.”

Conor nods. “I can’t wait.”

I rest my head next to Jessie’s and close my eyes, breathing in the scent of her hair. Conor continues watching the TV and I hear it faintly in the background as I drift off to sleep. As I lie there somewhere between sleeping and waking I realize that I need to talk to Jessie and tell her that my proposal no longer stands. I want her to be happy, but I am also a selfish bastard and I never want to live without her. Besides, we make her happy. All four of us. Why would that ever need to change?

CHAPTER 49

JESSIE

I don't think I've ever been to a funeral before when it hasn't rained. It's fitting, isn't it? Almost like the sky is crying too. But there is no rain today. On the day of Patrick Ryan's funeral, the sun is shining brightly and the weather is hot and sticky. I stand between my four boys, who are all dressed beautifully in suits and ties. They keep their heads bowed respectfully and anyone watching would think they were dutiful sons paying their respects. As the coffin is lowered into the ground a woman nearby wails loudly and I glance sideways at Mikey just in time to see him roll his eyes. I reach for his hand and squeeze and he winks at me.

Soon this will be over and we can go home.

Home. It's funny to be thinking of a place as my true home after spending such a long time feeling like I didn't belong anywhere. We have a flight booked for tomorrow morning. I was pleased to hear that Erin won't be joining us and even more pleased to hear she has decided to stay behind in Ireland. After the funeral today there will be a huge party, as is the tradition in Ireland, but we won't be there. The boys and I, along with their Aunt Em and cousin Aoife, will go back to the house and have a barbecue and some drinks. Not to celebrate Patrick Ryan's life, or even his death, but because this is our last night and Em and Aoife don't want us to go. They have promised to visit though and I hope they do. I have loved getting to know them.

I will raise a silent toast to Patrick and Paul Ryan later though. They might have been sadistic psychopaths, but these

four incredible men beside me wouldn't be here without them.

I SIT on one of the lounge chairs with my face tilted toward the sun as I listen to the Ryan family chatting happily in the background, mostly about Aoife and Noel's upcoming wedding.

"I wish you could stay for the wedding," Aoife says with a sigh. "It's only two weeks away."

"I wish we could but we have to get back home," Shane replies.

"You promised to visit after you've had the baby," Mikey reminds her. "We'll show you the best New York has to offer."

"I'm looking forward to visiting the States," Em adds with a contented sigh.

I open my eyes and look at them all. "Don't forget to send me lots of pictures of the day, Aoife. Especially your dress."

She waddles over and sits beside me, groaning softly as she rubs her baby bump. "I will." She takes my hand and squeezes it. "I'm going to miss you."

"I'll miss you too," I say. "And I definitely want tons of pictures of the baby when they arrive too, okay?"

"Oh I'm going to bombard you with them," she laughs. "You'll be fed up of baby pictures."

"You want a top up?" I ask as I see her empty glass of lemonade.

"Yes please." She holds out her glass to me.

I walk back to the house, passing Shane as I do. "Can you help me with the drinks?"

"Of course," he replies with a frown because everyone except Aoife has a full glass.

"Everything okay?" he asks once we're inside the house.

I swallow hard. I don't know how to tell him this, but I have been thinking a lot about my future and what I want in

my life and for the first time in forever, I am certain about what that is. “I need to talk to you,” I whisper.

He narrows his eyes at me. “Okay.”

“With all this talk of Aoife and Noel’s wedding, I remembered that I finally have an answer for you.”

“An answer?”

“Your proposal, remember? In Em’s garden. Me marrying Conor?”

“Oh? Yeah.” His Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows hard.

I take a deep breath. I need to just tell him quickly and get it over with. It’s just like ripping off a Band-Aid, right?

CHAPTER 50

JESSIE

SIX MONTHS LATER

Smoothing my beautiful silk dress over my thighs, I smile at Aoife as she hands me my bouquet. It is a stunning mix of red, white and olive green roses, with blue tulips.

“You look fabulous, Jessie.” She gives me a soft kiss on my cheek. “I have never seen a smile so wide,” she adds with a chuckle.

“Thank you, Aoife,” I say. I feel so nervous my legs and hands are shaking, but my smile is real. I am excited and happy beyond belief. Today is my wedding day and I cannot wait to start this new chapter of my life.

“I’ll see you out there.” Aoife flashes her eyebrows at me before she leaves me standing in the room alone. I look out of the huge double doors of the beautiful log cabin that Shane has had built in the last six months, at that spot on the lake where he took me a little over a year ago. It seems like a lifetime ago now.

I look out at the beautiful gardens as I prepare to make my way towards the small arch of roses and ivy near the lake where the ceremony is about to take place. I have no one to walk me down the aisle today, but that doesn’t matter to me. I feel my family by my side, and of course I’m now starting a new one too.

I step out onto the deck and onto the small stone path. My head is down; I’m almost frightened to look up in case this is all a dream, but then I take a deep breath and do it. It is Conor’s eyes I see first. He stands there in his tux looking

finer than I have ever seen him look before, and that really is a feat. He smiles when he sees me and it's a smile that almost takes my breath away. He nudges Mikey who stands beside him, deep in conversation with his twin brother. Mikey and Liam look up too and I bite my lip as they stare at me. Tears prick at my eyes as Liam puts a hand over his heart and Mikey blows me a kiss. They look just as handsome as their older brother.

But where is Shane? My heart skips a beat as I scan the small alcove and he's not there. I know this day is not going to be easy for him. But then he steps out from behind the trees and my heart almost stops beating in my chest as he looks up at me and our eyes lock. I am close enough now that I see the deep green of his irises and it takes my breath away when I see the tears in them.

Is this too hard for him? As Conor puts a hand on his older brother's shoulder, it breaks the spell between us and Shane takes his place next to Conor.

When I reach them, I suck in a deep breath. I can't believe we're really doing this.

"You look..." Conor shakes his head, unable to finish his sentence.

"Beautiful." Shane finishes for him.

"Yeah. You look hot, Red," Mikey grins while Liam winks at me.

"Thank you," I whisper and then the five of us stand there staring at each other.

"Are we ready?" Aunt Em clears her throat, making us all turn toward her. She is officiating today. Not that she's licensed to, but this wedding isn't exactly traditional.

"Yes," Conor says with a firm nod of his head.

"Yes," I breathe.

"Then let's begin," Aunt Em says. "I know we're doing this your own unique way, so do you boys have the rings?"

"Yup," Mikey says as he pulls one from his pocket.

I bite on my lip as Mikey takes hold of my hand and slides the beautiful thin platinum band onto my finger. It is set with a small, but exquisite ruby. “Red, because you’ll always be our Red, and because it’s the color of love,” he says.

I swallow the lump in my throat as Liam steps up next. “Blue for those incredible baby blues of yours,” he says as he slides the second band onto my finger which has a small sapphire stone. It slides against the first one perfectly, the two stones sitting slightly adjacent and the platinum shaped to fit together like a jigsaw.

Conor steps up next. He takes my hand in his and brushes his fingertips over my knuckles before he slips the third band onto my hand which is set with an emerald. “And green for all the Irish in you,” he smiles at me and I giggle.

He bends and kisses my hand before he steps back into line.

“We’re not at the kissing part yet,” Aunt Em chides him good naturedly.

Finally Shane steps forward. He takes my hand and slides the fourth ring onto my finger. His hand is covering it and I don’t see it until he has it secured in place, fitting perfectly against the first three. The final piece in the puzzle. It is a beautiful pink diamond. The three other stones are set slightly off center, allowing them to fit together seamlessly. But this one is larger, and in the center of the ring. Like the star on top of the Christmas tree. “And a diamond for forever,” he says, his voice thick with emotion and I want to pull him into my arms and kiss him right now. I want to kiss all of them. To spend the rest of my life with any one of these men would make me happier than I had ever dreamed, but to share it with all four of them is beyond my wildest imaginings.

Of course this isn’t a legal ceremony and our wedding won’t be recognized by the state of New York, but we don’t care. As Em told us, we are expressing our commitment to each other to the universe, and to Mother Nature herself.

“Do you have your rings, Jessie?” Em asks as I stand there staring at the stunning jewelry these men have just placed on

my finger. They are cut so that they seem like four pieces of the same ring, and that's so fitting, because these men are four pieces of the same heart. And they have captured mine completely.

“Yes,” I stammer as I take the small velvet pouch from inside my dress. I open it and shake out the four platinum bands onto my hand. They are simple thick bands of precious metal, but each bear the same inscription.

We were written in the stars.

CHAPTER 51

JESSIE

It has been an incredible day, not that I had expected any less. I've heard plenty of people talk about their wedding day and how special it was, but I never thought I would experience one myself. I certainly didn't think I'd be sharing it with the four hottest and most amazing men to ever walk this earth. Our honeymoon for now is a long weekend in our beautiful house on the lake, but we didn't want to be away from the city any longer because Aunt Em, Aoife and Noel, along with their four month old son, Archie, are visiting from Ireland and we don't want to be away from them for too long. We have two weeks in a villa in the Caribbean booked for a month from now, and I cannot wait for that, but in the meantime I'm happy here with my boys.

We waved Em, Aoife and the boys off a few moments earlier. Shane did offer them the use of a couple of bedrooms for the night, seeing as we are only likely to be using one of them, but thankfully they politely declined.

Now it's just me and my four husbands. They chat amongst themselves and I busy myself clearing some of the glasses and plates we have used. Suddenly the room is quiet and when I look up I see the four of them staring at me, their eyes roaming over my body with such desire that I feel like my panties are about to melt off me.

"What is it?" I whisper.

Mikey chews on his lip while the other three continue to stare at me.

“I think we’re all thinking the same thing, Jessie,” Shane growls.

“And what’s that?” I breathe.

“Which one of us gets to be the first to fuck Mrs. Ryan,” he replies with a wicked glint in his eye.

Dear God!

“We could let Jessie decide?” Liam suggests.

“No,” I shake my head. “I can’t choose between the four of you.”

“How about we settle this like we used to when we were younger?” Shane offers with a grin.

Conor frowns. “With an arm wrestle?”

“You got any better ideas?” Shane shrugs as he starts to remove his suit jacket.

“Fine by me,” Mikey grins as he does the same and the next minute Conor and Liam are taking theirs off too.

“You’re seriously going to arm wrestle to decide this?” I fold my arms across my chest and glare at them.

Mikey winks at me. “Yes. And we know you think it’s hot really, Red, having the four of us competing for you.”

The heat flooding my core confirms he’s right. “Well, yeah. But I’m worried this is going to get a little competitive.”

Conor sidles up to me, running his hand over my ass and planting a soft kiss on my shoulder. “Oh, it’s about to get *very* fucking competitive, Angel,” he chuckles before he walks into the middle of the room and starts arranging the furniture with Mikey and Liam for their impromptu tournament.

“How about Liam and Mikey go first?” Shane suggests.

“Fine by me,” Liam nods. “I’ll get rid of my toughest competition first round before I deal with you two old timers.”

“You’re pretty cocky for a kid who was taught everything you know by these two ‘old timers,’” Conor says with an arch

of his eyebrows before he throws a sofa cushion at Liam's head.

"Let's just get down to business, eh?" Mikey says as he takes a seat. Liam laughs as he takes a seat opposite him. Conor hovers beside them, making sure they are going to fight fair. I watch in twisted fascination as the two of them prepare to arm wrestle and I'm so distracted that I hardly notice Shane isn't anywhere near his brothers but is now standing beside me. As Liam and Mikey grip each other's hands, he hoists me over his shoulder, making me yelp in surprise and then he runs out of the room and towards the stairway.

"Shane!" I half shriek, half laugh as he starts to take the stairs two at a time.

He slaps my ass and laughs to himself as his brothers start shouting after us. "Shane! You cheating asshole!" I can hear the sound of furniture being pushed over and their feet on the wooden floor as they run after us. Shane runs into our bedroom and sets me down on my feet before he locks the door behind us. Then he turns to me with pure fire and lust in his eyes. "Take the dress off, sweetheart. Right now," he growls as he steps towards me, backing me towards the bed.

I reach behind and undo the zipper as he starts to undress too. "You cheated." I arch an eyebrow at him.

"I play to win, sweetheart. By any means necessary."

The sound of his brothers banging on the door distracts me and I look over his shoulder.

"Open the fucking door, Shane!" Conor shouts.

"You fucking cheat!" Mikey adds while the three of them try and punch and kick their way through. The doors in this house are solid oak, but they are no match for three angry Ryans.

"You know that door won't hold out much longer?" I say.

"I know." Shane laughs and the sound makes my heart flutter. His genuine, playful laugh is a sound not often heard and it is a beautiful thing. "But I plan on being buried inside your hot cunt by the time they make it in here."

He removes the rest of his clothes quickly. Just as I'm stepping out of my dress and before I can even straighten up, he pushes me onto the bed and crawls over me, trailing kisses down my stomach as he pulls my panties down and over my legs. When he's taken them off completely, he rubs his nose along the folds of my pussy, inhaling deeply before he presses a soft kiss directly on my clit that makes me shudder. The low growl that rumbles in his throat vibrates through my body.

"Shane!" I pant as he moves up the bed and holds himself over me before pressing his hard cock against my entrance as his brothers go on trying to break the door down. "You ready to be fucked, Mrs. Ryan?" he breathes.

"God, yes!" I groan just before he drives his cock into me. He takes my hands, entwining his fingers with mine as he pins them either side of my head. Then he seals his lips over mine, pushing his tongue inside my mouth as he nails me to the bed, and claiming me completely.

The sound of the door bursting open a few seconds later, distracts me temporarily and I glance up to see his brothers tumbling through it. They grumble and shout incoherently as they pull off their clothes. Knowing that my eyes are on his brothers, Shane drives even deeper and harder, making me groan into his mouth and give him my full attention.

I hear stumbling and some laughing and then someone is beside us on the bed. In one swift movement, Shane slides a hand to my ass and rolls us both onto our sides, hooking my thigh over his as he continues kissing and fucking me. A hard chest is pressed against my back as soft kisses are peppered along my shoulders and I recognize Liam's mouth and then his hands as one slides up my back and onto my throat. Shane lets me up for air and Liam takes the opportunity to cup my chin and turn my head to him.

He smiles down at me, his deep brown eyes twinkling. "Hey, baby."

"Hey," I purr before he kisses me softly.

As Liam kisses me, Shane's hand slides to my hip and his fingers press into my tender flesh. Then he pulls his cock out

of me and Liam pulls his lips from mine before looking at his brother. “Fucking cheat!” he says, narrowing his eyes at him, but there is no malice in his words.

“I did what I had to do, son,” Shane chuckles.

“Hmm,” Liam murmurs as he begins to kiss my neck and Shane turns my face back to his and slides his tongue inside my mouth again. Liam’s hand slides down my back and between my thighs before he pushes a finger inside me and I moan.

“Damn, Jessie. I love how soaking wet you get for us,” he growls as he slips his finger out and pushes his cock inside me instead and I groan into Shane’s mouth, wondering why he has stopped fucking me to allow Liam to. He’s usually not so accommodating. But then Liam pulls out of me again and pushes his cock against the seam of my ass instead and I realize that Shane has only allowed him temporary access to my pussy. It amazes me how these four men always seem to know what the other is thinking.

“So fucking wet, baby,” Liam whispers against my ear as he pushes the tip of his cock into my ass and I roll my hips forward against Shane, who rewards me by pushing himself back inside me. The moan rumbles through my body and Liam seizes the opportunity to drive his cock all the way into me and the two of them find a perfect rhythm as they fuck me relentlessly. My orgasm builds quickly, the warmth pulsing through my entire body as Shane and Liam rub their hands over my hot skin and Liam kisses my neck while Shane swirls his tongue against mine. I feel like I’m about to pass out as stars flicker behind my eyelids.

“Fuck, Jessie!” Liam growls as he squeezes my breast tightly and I come with a rush of wet heat, wrenching my lips from Shane’s as I gasp in a lungful of air.

“Damn, Hacker,” Shane hisses. “Your cunt feels so good on my cock.”

I groan as Liam slides deeper into my ass and wraps an arm around my waist, pulling me close against his chest while him and his oldest brother continue railing me.

“You’re such a good girl, the way you take our cocks, baby,” Liam growls in my ear. “Conor and Mikey are going to fuck you as soon as me and Shane are done, and I’m going to enjoy watching you come apart for them. And then I’m going to fuck you again.”

“Liam,” I moan and Shane responds by biting into the tender skin of my neck until I moan his name too. I run my fingers through his hair, pulling his head back so he can kiss me again, but he brushes his lips over my cheek instead. “She’s close to the edge, and I want to feel her come on my cock again,” he says to Liam who laughs softly and slides his hand between my thighs before rubbing my clit.

“You going to come for us again, baby?” Liam whispers.

“Yes,” I pant as Shane increases his pace. “God. Shane. Liam!” I moan so loudly that Conor and Mikey start urging them to hurry up and a few seconds later Shane roars my name as he comes inside me, tipping me over the edge as he does.

Liam stills but he kisses my neck softly as his cock twitches in my ass. Conor crawls onto the bed behind Shane and holds his cock in his hand. It glistens with precum and I look up at him to see him glaring at me with such ferocity that it makes me squirm. After Shane pulls out of me, he rolls over and sits up before jumping off the bed and Conor seamlessly slides into his spot. Lifting my thigh into the air, he drives his cock into me and I’m pushed back further onto Liam who hisses in my ear.

“Fuck, Angel. This pussy is so good,” Conor growls as he rolls his hips, releasing another rush of wet heat from me.

My body trembles as they hold me between them. “You ready, Liam?” Conor asks.

“Uh-huh,” Liam moans against my neck before he begins to suck on the sensitive spot beneath my ear. Then the two of them start moving together. Not one in and one out like they usually do, but both thrusting inside me at the same time. It is a delicious feeling of fullness, teetering on the verge of pain and it has me on the edge of oblivion again. I reach behind me, wrapping my arm around Liam’s neck and pulling him closer

as he and Conor move in perfect sync with each other. Conor bends his head and sucks my nipple into his mouth and I swear I pass out for a few seconds. I can't tell where one of us ends and one begins.

"Jessie, don't come," Conor groans as I squeeze around him, pulling him in deeper.

"I can't help it," I pant as my orgasm tears through my body.

"Fuck!" Conor shouts as he comes with me. "This pussy!" He thrusts harder into me as he spills every last drop of his seed.

Liam groans behind me as he stills his movements again.

"How the fuck are you still going, kid?" Conor frowns at him over my shoulder.

"Stamina, old man," Liam chuckles.

I smile at Conor through my orgasm induced haze and he leans down and kisses me softly. He narrows his eyes at me. "You just made me look bad in front of my little brother, Angel."

"Sorry!" I whisper and he winks at me before pulling out of me. To my shame, a rush of cum follows and drips onto my thighs and down the seam of my ass. Liam's cock throbs inside me and he mutters under his breath. As soon as Conor rolls over, Mikey is crawling into his space. He lies on his back though and I look at him as he rubs a hand up and down his shaft.

"Come ride me, Red," he arches an eyebrow at me. "Liam can get behind you. Let's see how long he lasts like that," Mikey grins at his twin, challenging him.

"Okay," Liam says as he slides out of me. He taps my ass and I move over to straddle Mikey and as I do another rush of cum falls out of me. Liam catches some in his fingers and works it up the seam of my ass before pushing two fingers inside me.

Mikey holds his cock as I slide myself onto it. “Damn, Con, no wonder you couldn’t hold on much longer, because my wife’s pussy is fucking hot!” he groans as I slide all the way onto him. “And so damn wet.”

I bite my lip as I stare down at him and heat flushes my chest and neck. “I like it when you call me your wife,” I purr.

“I like it too, Red,” he growls as he holds onto my hips and thrusts into me, causing me to whimper.

Liam lines up behind me, his hands just above Mikey’s as he slides his cock into my ass again. “Fuck. You’re tighter this way, baby,” he growls in my ear. “And I can get in deeper too.” As if to prove his point, he drives into me, all the way to the hilt and I cry out in pleasure. I plant my hands on Mikey’s chest as the two of them fuck me together. It’s not long before Shane and Conor crawl onto the bed beside us. Both of them are hard again and I know what’s about to happen. I have thought about this for a very long time. Shane moves first, squeezing my breast with one hand as he squeezes his cock with the other. When he kisses me, I whimper into his mouth as Conor takes my other hand and slides it onto his cock, working it up and down the shaft. Then his lips are on my throat, kissing and suckling. Or is that Mikey? Because now there are more lips on my neck and hands all over my body as Mikey and Liam go on fucking me to the same relentless rhythm. I have to close my eyes to deal with the overwhelming sensations.

Suddenly, Shane pulls back. “Look at me!”

I open my eyes and focus on his face. His eyes burn into mine and I know what he’s thinking. I lick my lips and he doesn’t hesitate. He pushes himself up onto his knees until his cock is level with my mouth.

“Suck it, sweetheart,” he orders and my pussy walls contract in response, causing Mikey and Liam to groan loudly. I suck him into my mouth, as far as I can go, while the other three continue their delicious torture. Kissing my neck and my nipples. Their hot hands all over my skin as Conor keeps me working his cock. I flick my tongue over the tip of Shane’s

cock and a moan vibrates through his body before I take him to the back of my throat. But the maddening teasing of my body means I lose focus and my eyes roll into the back of my head as an unexpected orgasm tears through me like a wildfire. I moan loudly but the sound is muffled by Shane filling my mouth. Sensing that I need him to take control, he weaves one hand through my hair, grabbing it with just the right amount of pressure as he holds my head still and starts to fuck my mouth. My eyes water as he hits the back of my throat and I suck harder as my hand moves faster on Conor's cock.

"Where the fuck did you learn to suck cock this good, Jessie?" Shane moans as he drives his hips into my mouth and I suck him harder until he spurts hot and heavy against the back of my throat.

Once I have licked him clean, a second hand is on my head, fisting in my hair. Shane pulls back and Conor turns my head. "My turn, Angel."

WITH SHANE and Conor's hands and mouths on me, Mikey rubbing my clit, Liam's fingers digging into my hips and their cocks filling me, I feel my climax threatening. They keep me teetering on the edge.

"You think we're going to make our wife squirt?" Liam growls.

"I don't think we can call this a successful wedding night if we don't," Mikey chuckles.

I shake my head. "Please?" I beg. If they don't give me some release soon, I think I might pass out.

Shane and Conor each suck a nipple into their hot mouths while the twins increase their pace and pressure and my orgasm goes off like an atomic bomb, drenching Liam beneath me as well as the sheets. I have no doubt that everybody got a little of it because I have never experienced a rush like it, but I have no shame. These boys caused it after all.

I have no idea if the twins came too, but realize they must have because they both groan and pant and stop moving. Liam

finally slides his cock out of my ass before Mikey pulls me down to lie on his chest.

“Wow, Red!” Mikey pants, his breath ruffling my hair as our bodies stick together with perspiration.

“I can’t...” I breathe. “I have no bones.” I melt into him, completely unable to move.

Someone chuckles softly beside us and I can’t even lift my head to see who it is. But I feel warm hands on my back and hear the steady breathing of all four brothers as we lie there catching our breath and enjoying the post-orgasmic haze of whatever the hell they just did to me.

WHEN I WAKE LATER in the night, I’m facing Liam with Conor at my back.

“You okay, baby?” Liam says softly as I shuffle beside him.

“Yes. Are you?”

“Not really,” he whispers.

“Why? What’s wrong?”

“Well, I just realized that I’m the only man in this bed who didn’t get to fuck your pussy tonight,” he chuckles softly and I swat him in the chest.

“No. But you’re the only one who fucked my ass,” I remind him.

“Not the same as your pussy though,” he breathes. “I mean, your ass is hot, baby, but your pussy is like next level fire.”

I giggle as he slides his hand onto my ass and presses my body against his hard cock. “I suppose you’re planning on rectifying this situation now then?”

“Hmm. Are you sore?” he whispers.

“A little.”

All three of his brothers are in the bed with us, so there is no room for him to roll on top of me. Instead, he pushes

himself up and pulls me beneath him, nestling himself between my thighs. “I promise to be gentle, baby,” he says as he peppers soft kisses on my throat and slides his hand between my folds. “You’re already wet for me,” he hisses.

“I know.”

He draws his hand back and wraps my legs around his waist before he sinks his cock deep inside me. “Fuck, Jessie! You feel so good.”

“Liam!” I groan softly.

“Can you two keep it down?” Conor mumbles sleepily beside us.

“I’m fucking my wife, Con,” Liam chuckles. “I can’t help it if I do it so well she can’t control herself.”

“We’ll *all* be fucking your wife if she keeps moaning like that, so keep her quiet,” he chuckles back.

“Sorry,” I giggle as I clamp a hand over my mouth.

“No you’re not,” Conor replies as he turns on his side and slides his hand between Liam and me until he finds my clit and starts to circle softly as Liam fucks me slowly. Liam takes my hand from my mouth and pins it above my head and then the two of them take turns kissing me, swallowing my moans and whimpers as they coax a long rolling orgasm from me.

CHAPTER 52

JESSIE

I stare down at Archie's beautiful rosy cheeks as he lies snuggled in my arms. His long dark lashes flutter occasionally and he makes the cutest little grunts that turn my insides to melted chocolate. I'm going to be sad to see him go home with Aoife and Noel. It has been over a week since our wedding and I have had the absolute best time, not only on my weekend honeymoon with my four hot husbands, but with the extended Ryan family afterward too.

"We really need to go," Noel laughs as he walks toward me. "He's kind of hard to stop staring at though, isn't he?" He looks down at his son with such love and pride on his face that it brings a tear to my eye.

"He is," I say as I hand Archie over to his father who takes him to his car seat and straps him in. "You'll come back and visit us soon, won't you?" I look to Aoife and Em now, who I am also going to miss dearly.

"What?" Aoife flashes her eyebrows at me. "Now that Shane has bought that incredible plane, you try and stop me. You'll be fed up of us dropping by."

I wrap my arms around her as she reaches me and we hug tightly. "I'm going to miss you," she whispers in my ear. "It's been so much fun."

Em comes up behind her and wraps her arms around us both. "Me too."

"We really need to go if we're going to catch our flight. I know it's their plane, but they still have to take off on time,"

Noel reminds them.

“We know,” Aoife says as she breaks our hug and wipes the tears from her eyes.

The brothers hug their aunt and cousin too, and Noel shakes their hands before giving me a brief kiss on the cheek and we wave them into the elevator.

“You okay, Red?” Mikey says as he wraps an arm around me as we walk back to the kitchen.

“Yeah,” I say with a sigh, “but it was nice having them here, wasn’t it?”

“They’ll visit,” Conor says as he walks beside me, placing his arm around me too and kissing the top of my head.

We all walk to the kitchen and Conor and Mikey make a start on dinner. I’m about to help when Shane pulls me to one side. “I feel like someone else stole your heart this week,” he says with a smile.

“Archie?” I smile back.

“Yeah.”

“Hmm. Kind of. I mean he’s super cute. And such a good baby.”

“Yeah,” Shane says with a nod as he stuffs his hands into his trouser pockets. “Is that what you want, Jessie?” His face is suddenly serious as he narrows his eyes at me.

“What?” I say, aware that all of the brothers’ eyes are on me now. “No. We talked about that. No kids. Remember?”

“Hmm.” Shane rubs a hand over his jaw. “I swore I’d never have kids.”

“Exactly.”

“Because I’m worried I’d be a terrible father. Just like mine was.”

“I know,” I say softly as I place my hand on his arm. “You don’t have to explain.”

“But mostly, I was worried that I might hate the kid. Like our dad did us.”

“I know.”

He stares at me. “But I looked at my cousin’s kid, and fuck I would protect that chubby little fucker with my life, and he’s not even mine.”

I swallow hard as I stare at him. Glancing around the room, I see that Conor and the twins are staring, too.

“Imagine how much I’d love a kid that was part of you, Jessie? Or any of us?” he goes on.

“What are you saying, Shane?” I stammer, because my heart can’t take this if he doesn’t mean what I think he does.

“I’m saying that if that’s what you want, then I’m happy to give you it, is all.” His Adam’s apple bobs in his throat as he swallows.

“You’d have children?”

“With you? Yes.”

“We’re making babies?” Mikey shouts as his face breaks into a grin.

I look up at him and Conor and Liam and the three of them stand there smiling.

“I already spoke to them about it,” Shane says and I look back at him. “But we’re all okay with not having kids if that’s what you want too, sweetheart.”

“What?” I stammer, opening and closing my mouth like a goldfish, because of all the things I ever expected Shane Ryan to say to me, that he would be willing to have a child was the absolute bottom of the list.

“You don’t have to decide right now.”

“If we did do this, how would it work? How would we know...?”

“We wouldn’t,” Conor answers as he walks toward me. “That’s the only way we could see this working. We’re all the

baby's father.”

“I love that idea,” I smile. “You know that twins run in both of our families though, right?”

“Yeah, but you got four dads to share the nightly feedings and diaper changes with,” Liam says as he walks over to join us too.

“I know Shane just said you don't have to decide right now, but I kinda need to know, Red,” Mikey says with a shrug. “Am I gonna be a baby daddy, or what?”

I can't help but laugh as he stands there with his ‘Kiss the Chef’ apron on and his hand on his hip.

“Yes!” I say with a smile and suddenly I am in the middle of a giant group hug, being smothered in kisses.

EPILOGUE

JESSIE

Two weeks later

I walk into the den to see all four of my boys in there. Liam and Mikey are playing pool while Shane sips coffee and scrolls through his cell phone and Conor is reading a book.

“Hey guys,” I say as I walk into the room.

They all look up and smile at me and my heart might burst with how much I love them all. Mikey puts his pool cue onto the table and walks over to me, picking up a small paper bag from the coffee table as he does.

“We got you something, Red,” he says with a grin as he hands it to me.

“For me?” I arch an eyebrow. “What is it?”

“Well, open it and see,” he replies.

I look around the room and the four of them are watching me. I open up the bag and pull out the small white box inside. Turning it over in my hand, I laugh out loud. “Ovulation tests. Really?” I arch an eyebrow at him.

“Yep.”

“So, we’re really serious about this baby thing then? I only had my implant taken out a few days ago,” I protest, although the fact they are so into this gives me butterflies in my stomach.

“Well you didn’t think we were about to start wearing condoms, did you, Angel?” Conor growls as he puts his book

down and stands up.

“Well, no. But...”

“But what, Red?” Mikey frowns at me.

The color flushes over my cheeks. “I’m not sure we need these,” I whisper as I hold up the box of tests.

“But they’ll tell us when you’re ovulating.”

“I know that...” I stand there with my mouth open. These men know my body inside out, so why am I so embarrassed to say what I’m thinking.

“I think what Jessie is trying to say,” Liam winks at me, “is that there isn’t a single day that goes by when she doesn’t have someone’s cum in her. Isn’t that right, baby?”

“Yes,” I whisper as I blush to the roots of my hair.

“Ah,” Mikey chuckles. “But these will let us know exactly when the time is right to make a baby. And, I mean, we kinda wanna know when that is, Red.”

“We sure do,” Conor agrees.

“I thought we agreed we were happy not to know who, you know...?”

“Who scored the home run? Whose little guys were the strongest swimmers?” Mikey kindly offers.

“Yes,” I whisper.

“And we don’t, but we still want to know when the time is right,” Conor says as he stalks toward me.

“Yep. If we’re making babies, I want to bring my A game,” Mikey winks at me.

“Why do I feel like this is going to get really competitive?” I fold my arms across my chest and try to glare at them with all of the indignation I can muster, but I can barely keep the smile from my face.

“Oh it is!” Conor replies.

“Super fucking competitive,” Mikey agrees with a flash of his eyebrows.

“So, go do the test,” Liam says.

I shake my head and that’s when Shane stands up and walks over to me. Mikey steps aside and Shane stands directly in front of me. “There’s only two to three days a month you can get pregnant, right?”

“Yes,” I bite on my lip.

“So for two to three days a month, my brothers and I are going to be lining up to fuck you. Fighting over who gets to fuck you. Fucking you harder and for longer, because believe me, sweetheart, we will *all* be bringing our A game.” He leans his head close to my face until his breath skitters over my cheek and I shiver in anticipation. “Are you really telling me that even thinking about it hasn’t already got you wet and wanting to be fucked?”

I suck in a breath as the heat floods my core, because damn, that might just be the hottest thing I can imagine. “Okay,” I whisper.

“Thought so. So go pee on the goddamn stick, sweetheart,” he growls.

“I’m going,” I breathe.

I STARE at the small white piece of plastic in my hands. Two lines. I’m ovulating! Damn!

They’re all waiting for me in the den. When I tell them the result... Holy fuck! The rush of wet heat almost knocks me off my feet.

I walk down the hallway and when I reach the den, I lean against the wall, watching them for a few seconds before they notice I’m back. They are chatting and laughing amongst themselves, and I am overwhelmed with love for them.

It’s Conor who spots me first. “Everything okay, Angel?”

I hold up the plastic stick. “I’m ovulating,” I say with a smile.

I have never seen four men move so fast in all of my life. Liam pushes Mikey out of the way as he runs toward me. Conor vaults the sofa while Shane drops his cup of coffee

where he stands and sprints toward me. The four of them hurtle to me and my entire body sizzles with excitement and anticipation. I turn around and run down the hallway, hardly able to breathe I'm laughing so hard.

It's Conor who catches me first, and he hoists me over his shoulder and carries me into the nearest bedroom which happens to be my own. He throws me down onto the bed and starts stripping off his clothes as his brothers run into the room on our heels and begin doing the same.

I stare up at them watching them undress, their broad chests and thick arms all covered in tattoos, including the matching one they now all have of my name which winds around the base of their necks. "You ready to make some beautiful Ryan babies, Angel?" Conor growls.

"Yes," I whisper.

NOW THAT THIS part of the series is concluded, are you ready to see what happens next for Jessie and The Ryan Brothers?

[Ryan Renewed](#) is available now

BONUS CONTENT

EPILOGUE

MIKEY

Lying on the sun lounger, I watch her walking down the deck of the private yacht—the one we’ve spent the last six days of our honeymoon on in the Caribbean sea. I’ve never traveled much and some of the views here are fucking breathtaking, but none, and I mean not a single goddamn one, compare to my wife’s ass.

“Would you look at that?” I say to my twin, giving him a nudge in the arm as I pull my Ray Bans down my nose.

He sits up, lifting his glasses off his face before he wolf whistles her. She giggles and gives us a wave before leaning over the rail and staring into the sea, giving us an even better view of her perfect peach in the tiny string bikini she’s wearing.

“You know what I’m going to miss most when we get home?” Liam asks with a sigh.

“Sun? Sea? Good food?” I suggest.

“No. Those fucking bikinis,” he says with a growl as he stares at our girl with a hunger akin to my own.

“They’re fucking something, right?” I agree with a sigh. Jessie has worn little else for our entire honeymoon. I turn to Liam and arch an eyebrow. “I think we should have a new rule for the apartment back home.”

He grins at me. “Yeah? What’s that?”

“Jessie is no longer allowed to wear any clothes other than panties and a bra.”

“And stockings, because Conor and Shane have a thing for them,” he adds.

I nod my agreement. “Shall we put it to a vote later?”

“Put what to a vote?” Shane asks as he sits on the sun lounger beside me.

“Jessie’s not allowed to wear clothes any more when we get back home,” I tell him with a wicked smile.

“It gets kind of cold in New York, son,” he replies.

I nudge him in the arm. “I mean in the apartment, obviously.”

“Hmm.” He rubs a hand over his jaw. “It has been kind of nice her walking around in nothing but bikinis all week,” he agrees, palming his cock in his shorts.

“I feel like there’s a but coming,” Liam says with a groan.

“My office is in our apartment. I do most of my work there. I would never get a fucking thing done,” he says with a laugh.

“Fair point,” I mumble. “But look at her ass though.”

“I’m looking,” he says with a growl as he squeezes his cock harder.

Just then, Conor walks down the deck in his swim shorts. He ignores us and walks straight to her, slapping that fine ass and making it jiggle as soon as he reaches her. She squeals with delight, leaning into his body as he wraps an arm around her waist. And now all I can think about is why am I lying here watching when I could be over there with my hands on her too? But Conor has beaten me to it, because his hand is already skimming over her ass cheeks and now he’s pulling her thong bikini bottoms aside.

“Fuck,” Liam grunts, slipping his hand inside his swim shorts so he can grab his dick.

“Is he gonna...” I start to ask but Jessie’s loud moan answers the question for me.

“Yup,” Shane replies.

Conor has his hand between her thighs and from the way she's tipping her head back and the sounds she's making I'd say he has at least two fingers inside her.

I wrap my hand around my cock too, squeezing the base as it grows rock hard. "Is it weird that watching my brother finger fuck my wife has me hard as fucking iron?"

"If it makes you weird then we're all fucking deviants," Shane says with a dark laugh.

I tug my cock hard, until precum weeps from the tip. "I guess we are."

Jessie holds onto the rail, her back arching in pleasure as Conor sinks his fingers deeper into her tight pussy. His powerful forearms flex as he works her over and I groan, imagining the silky wet heat currently dripping down his fingers.

"Fuck, you hear how wet she is?" Liam groans as he pumps his cock faster.

Oh fuck, yeah I do. I thought it was the sound of the sea but it's Jessie's wet pussy greedily sucking on my brother's fingers.

"Holy shit," Shane growls. Glancing sideways, I see him stroking his cock too. Yeah, we're all fucking deviants, jacking off while we watch our wife getting finger banged. But I got to admit, Conor knows how to get her off quickly. Her legs are already trembling and her moans are growing more needy with each passing second. Conor has his face buried in her neck, but he takes a second to look at the three of us, flashing us a wicked smirk as he thrusts inside her harder and makes our sexy wife come loud and hard.

He slips his fingers out of her and sucks them clean. "Fucking delicious, angel," he says with a growl before he kisses her, palming her ass in his hands as he presses her body flush against his, while Liam, Shane and I go on stroking our cocks.

"Come here, sweetheart," Shane commands her.

Conor lets her up for air and she turns and gives us all a sweet smile before she heads over, obeying Shane like the good, and downright filthy girl she is. Conor smacks her ass again as she walks away from him, leaning against the rail as he watches her.

She stands in front of us, chewing on her juicy bottom lip and trying to look all innocent even after we just watched her coming all over our brother's fingers.

"You got all three of us fired up here, sweetheart," Shane says.

"That wasn't my fault. I was just enjoying the view," she protests, batting her eyelashes and feigning her innocence.

"Yeah, so we were we, Red," I tell her with a grin.

"Come here," Shane holds his hand out to her and when she takes it, he pulls her onto his lap. "Let me see just how hard he made you come."

"Shane," she squeals and writhes as he pins her to him with one arm banded around her waist while he slips his free hand into her bikini bottoms.

I swear his eyes fucking roll when he feels her. "Jesus fucking Christ, sweetheart."

I squeeze my dick harder and heat sears in my balls. "How wet is she, bro?"

She's facing me as she sits on his lap and he spreads her thighs wide open. "See for yourself."

Her string bikini is pulled to the side, revealing her glistening pussy, dripping with her thick, sweet creamy cum. I lunge forward, too desperate for a taste of her to wait any longer. Running my tongue over her soft folds, she groans my name softly as I taste her.

"That's it, sweetheart, let him eat your pussy while you grind that pretty little ass on my cock."

"Oh, fuck," she pants out the words as I devour her pussy while I fist my cock, tugging harder as her juices fill my mouth.

“Gonna need to fuck her, Mikey,” Shane grits out the words.

“Then fuck her ass, because this pussy is mine,” I growl against her and she shivers.

Shane reaches beneath the sun lounger and I suspect he grabs a bottle of lube—we have them stashed all over this goddamn yacht—because a few seconds later he shifts her into position. My mouth never leaves her flesh as he does, and when he sinks his cock deep inside her ass, the deep rolling groan that vibrates through her body, goes right through me too.

“Oh, fuck,” she whines as he fucks her while I eat.

I’m aware of Liam standing beside me. I glance upward to see him running his fingertips over her cheeks. “You make such sweet little noises when you’re being fucked, baby, it’s almost a shame to silence them.”

She grins at him, opening her mouth wide and allowing him to drive his cock into her and when he does, a rush of her arousal drips from her sweet pussy.

“You want all your beautiful holes filled, Red,” I ask her, but I don’t wait for an answer as I slip two fingers inside her. She squeezes me like a vise, her sweet wetness dripping all the way down to my wrist.

“You fucking love it, don’t you, sweetheart?” Shane growls, fingers bruising her hips as he drives in deeper.

“Uh-huh,” she mumbles, mouth stuffed full of Liam’s cock and saliva dripping down her chin.

“You’re so good, baby,” Liam groans, pulling her hair back into a ponytail as he fucks her mouth. I go back to focusing on eating and finger fucking her delicious pussy while I jerk off.

She tastes so fucking sweet, I’m about ready to spill my cum all over my goddamn fist, but if I’m coming then she is too. I curl my fingers inside her, pressing on that spot that makes her whimper as I suck her sensitive clit into my mouth and graze it with my teeth. I feel her orgasm shuddering through her body, muffled by Liam’s cock in her throat, it

seems to implode inside of her instead, vibrating through the three of us as we drive deeper inside her.

“Holy fuck,” Shane grunts.

Liam growls, tightening his grip on her hair.

I come all over my hand, hot ribbons of warmth dripping over my knuckles.

Holy fuck indeed.

RYAN RENEWED

PROLOGUE

THE RYAN FAMILY GROUP CHAT

Mikey: *Boys, I have an important announcement*

Liam: *What?*

Conor: *We're kind of busy*

Mikey: *Jessie is ovulating*

Shane: *She can't be. It's too early*

Mikey: *She peed on the stick*

Shane: *What the fuck!*

Conor: *But we're all the way downtown. You'd better not be lying Mikey!*

Jessie: *He's not. I peed on the stick*

Mikey: *The stick never lies*

Liam: *Fuck!*

Conor: *Jessie, stay away from him!*

Jessie: *I can't! He's just finished his workout! He looks so good.*

Mikey: *And you know how horny she gets!*

Shane: *We're on our way*

Mikey: *Don't rush though boys*

Shane: *Mikey, keep your hands to yourself until we get back!*

Conor: *Mikey!*

Liam: *Mikey!!*

CHAPTER I

JESSIE

My skin sizzles with anticipation and excitement as Mikey's arms circle around my waist. His warm breath dusts over my neck, making me shiver. The room is dark and quiet, except for the sound of soft breathing. His strong hands grip my hips tightly and I wonder if he's feeling as nervous as I am.

"You think Shane is going to be really pissed about this?" I whisper as a skitter of fear runs along my spine.

"Probably," he chuckles softly. "But he can never stay mad with you for long, Red. And we'll blame it all on me."

I lace my fingers through his. "No we won't. We're in this together, right?"

"Hmm." He plants a soft kiss on my neck.

"I'm not sure your chosen method of getting him back here was the wisest though."

He laughs and presses his lips against my ear. "There is no quicker way to get Shane back here than the promise of fucking you all night long, Jessie," he whispers, making goosebumps prickle along my forearms.

I'm sure that nobody else in the room heard him, but I blush anyway.

"Stop it!" I breathe as his hand skims my lower abdomen, dangerously close to my pussy. The room is dark, but there are eight other people in it along with us and I'd rather they didn't

see, or hear, Mikey sliding his hand into my panties because that is surely where he's headed.

Shane is forty next month. He hates parties. He's refused to even acknowledge the fact that he's approaching his next decade for the past six months. So, as we stand here waiting for him, I'm wondering why Mikey and I decided it would be a good idea to throw him a surprise party to celebrate.

I mean, it started off as a good idea, obviously. We just wanted to do something special for him. For a grumpy asshole, Shane is incredibly selfless when it comes to the people he loves. He works harder than anyone I know. He rarely takes time for himself and he never celebrates his birthdays. But forty is a big deal, right? We couldn't let that pass by unmarked. And this isn't exactly a party. Shane doesn't like enough people to have a party and he certainly doesn't trust enough of them to invite them into our home.

So that is why his aunt, Em, his cousin, Aoife, along with her husband Noel, a couple of his friends from LA along with their wives, and the brothers' longest serving and most trusted employee, Chester, are here tonight to celebrate with him - one month early so that he'll have no idea what to expect when he walks through that door in a few moments' time.

Conor and Liam are in on it too, obviously, and they played along so well with Mikey's ruse to get Shane back here. Not that any of us had much choice since Mikey just put it out there in the group chat without discussing it first. And now I'm wondering if that was the worst decision ever, because not only might Shane be pissed that we've thrown him a surprise gathering for a birthday that he doesn't want to acknowledge, but he'll be expecting a baby-making fuck-fest, which is what he refers to the few days a month when I'm fertile.

But I guess it's too late now.

The sound of the elevator door opening signals they're here and I take a deep breath.

"Jessie!" I hear Shane shout and I pray to God he doesn't say anything inappropriate about me and Mikey fucking.

We really didn't think this through.

Thankfully he doesn't and I expect Conor and Liam have also thought of that and are distracting him while guiding him to the dining room where we're all waiting in the dark.

"Why would they be in here?" I hear him ask as the door opens and the light is switched on.

"Surprise!" we all yell and he stands there, blinking in shock as he scans the room. When his eyes land on mine, he narrows them for a second before he is ushered through the door by Conor and Liam, then he's distracted by everyone rushing forward to greet him and wish him a happy birthday.

I hang back with Mikey, wondering just how pissed he is at us for this. It takes him a few minutes to work his way through the small group because they haven't seen him for a long time and they all want to talk to him. While we're waiting, Liam and Conor make their way over to us.

"What the fuck was that, asshole?" Conor says to Mikey with a shake of his head but a smile on his face.

"You couldn't think of another reason to get us back here?" Liam adds. "He's gonna be so pissed that he's shaking hands and making small talk right now instead of fucking Jessie."

"Liam!" I blush at his words even though I thought exactly the same thing.

"It's true, baby." He flashes his eyebrows at me before he wraps his arms around my waist and kisses me softly. "He'll blame Mikey though, don't worry," he adds with a laugh.

"You told me he was being kinda slow getting back here, jackass. Everyone was here waiting. What was I supposed to do?" Mikey punches his twin playfully on the shoulder.

"Stop fighting, children," Conor says with a roll of his eyes before he leans in and kisses me softly. "You okay, Angel? You look kinda scared."

"What if he's really mad?" I whisper.

Conor shrugs. "He's always mad about something."

Shane walks up behind him as he's finishing his sentence. "That's because the four of you constantly give me shit to be mad about," he says, but there is no anger in his voice at all and there is a smile on his lips.

Mikey wraps his arms around him. "Happy birthday, old man!"

"You know my birthday is next month, right?" Shane says as he slaps Mikey on the back.

"Yeah, but there's no way we could have pulled this off too close to your birthday. You'd have been too suspicious," Mikey replies.

Shane hugs each of his brothers in turn and they joke good-naturedly. Then he reaches me, his eyes narrowed as he looks at me. "I have a hunch that you were the mastermind behind this, Jessie Ryan!"

I stare at him as wet heat pools in my core. His brothers drift away to speak to the other guests, who are their friends and family too, leaving Shane and me alone.

"So?"

"Yeah," I whisper. "Surprise." I still don't know if he's annoyed with me or not. I mean, he seemed okay with his brothers. "Are you mad?"

"Damn right I am." He nods as he takes a step closer to me and wraps his arms around my waist. Bending his head low until his mouth is close to my ear, his breath skitters over my skin, making me tremble. "I thought I was coming home to fuck you into tomorrow, sweetheart," he whispers before he presses a soft kiss on my throat that makes my knees buckle.

"But you can do that any time you want," I remind him. "How often do you get to spend time with your closest friends and family all together like this?"

"I've never done anything like this," he says as he glances around the room.

"It will be fun. And I like that we get to see your friends from LA again," I smile. I met them at a wedding earlier this

year and got along so well with them all, especially Alana and her adopted daughter, Lucia, who is only eight years younger than her mom and five years younger than me. I couldn't wait for an opportunity to see them again.

That was how this whole thing came about. Alana and I were talking about how it would be great to have another occasion to get together because the boys are so busy with work. Then she talked about how much she missed New York and Shane's upcoming birthday seemed like the perfect excuse.

"Hmm." He pulls me closer to him. "Did you and Alana come up with this? Because Alejandro doesn't do birthday parties either. Well, not unless they involve a bouncy house these days."

"Well, I think his wife is a good influence on him that way too," I purr as I run my hands over the lapels of his suit jacket. "It's good to have fun in between all that working, you know?"

"I have plenty of fun." He grins before he starts to kiss my neck again and warmth spreads through me.

"Not that kind of fun, you deviant," I giggle.

"But that's the best kind of fun, sweetheart."

"Hmm." I wrap my arms around him and he stares into my eyes.

"I hate this kind of thing, Jessie."

"Sorry." I bite on my lip as his eyes burn into mine.

"I'm going to have to punish you for this, you know that, right?" he growls with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

"I'd expect nothing less," I whisper just before Conor interrupts us.

"Plenty of time for that later," he says with a grin. "You have guests."

"And presents!" I squeal, remembering that he has a pile of gifts to open, including the beautiful watch that I bought him.

Shane takes a deep breath and turns to face the room, keeping his hand on the small of my back as he does.

“Let’s do this,” he says with a flash of his eyebrows.

CHAPTER 2

SHANE

The moon is full as I sit on the roof terrace looking at the view and enjoying the quiet. I left the party about ten minutes ago because I needed some fresh air and some peace. I don't celebrate birthdays. They only remind me that I'm getting older and closer to death, while I still have so much to do with my life. They make me reflective in a way that I don't like.

I could have strangled my brothers earlier. What the fuck they were thinking agreeing to throw me a surprise party I'll never know. But then I saw her face and I knew she was behind it, and how the fuck do I stay mad at her, or any of them, when I know that they did this out of love for me? I'm not sure I'm worthy of the kind of devotion that I have from Jessie when I've done nothing to deserve it.

I spin around when I hear footsteps behind me and see Alejandro Montoya walking toward me, holding the bottle of whiskey he bought me in his hand. He and I have been buddies for a long time, and back when we were both single, along with his best buddy, Jackson Decker, we had plenty of nights out where we got drunk and picked up hot women. Understandably, none of us have any desire to do that any longer given we're all happily married.

"I thought you might want to crack this open?" He holds out the bottle of Midleton Chapter One.

"Is that why you bought me a forty thousand dollar bottle of whiskey for my birthday, so you could drink it yourself?" I grin at him.

“Maybe,” he replies with a shrug and a smile before he takes a seat beside me and hands me the bottle. “Now crack it open.”

I break the seal and he holds out his empty glass. I pour each of us a generous measure before placing the open bottle on the table and leaning back in my chair. I take a sip and the rich liquid burns my throat.

“So, forty, huh?” Alejandro says with a chuckle.

“Not yet, buddy,” I remind him and he laughs harder.

He arches an eyebrow at me. “I never figured you for the birthday party kind of guy.”

“That’s because I’m not.”

“Ah, *Jessie*,” he says.

“Yup.” I take another sip of my whiskey. “I never figured you for this kind of guy either.”

“I’m not.”

“Alana?”

“Yup.”

“What are we letting these women do to us, buddy?”

“Make us better men,” he says with certainty and I realize he’s right. Everything about my life is better with Jessie in it. Everything about me is better.

“Where are the boys?” I ask him. He and Alana have three year old twin boys. They would usually stay with Lucia and Jackson when Alejandro and Alana are out of town, but they’re both here too.

“They’re with my mama and papa. We’re flying back first thing tomorrow before they give their grandparents a heart attack.”

I laugh out loud at that. I remember how challenging Mikey and Liam were at that age. I practically raised my twin brothers and I still haven’t recovered from the ordeal.

“I miss them too much to stay away,” he says as he takes a sip of his whiskey. “Dario is so like his mom, but Tomás is just like me when I was a kid. He’s going to make me gray before I’m forty.”

“You’re forty next year!”

“I know!”

“You ever miss your life before you had them?”

“Not for one fucking second.” He turns to me and winks. “You worried you might?”

“I don’t know,” I say with a sigh.

“How are things going?” he asks. Jessie told Alana that we were trying for a baby when she met her back in LA.

“Not great,” I admit. “I mean I love the baby-making part...” I take another sip of my drink.

“Well, yeah,” Alejandro nods his agreement.

“But I hate the effect it has on her. Every month...” I shake my head.

He knows. Alana had trouble conceiving and they had their twins through fertility treatment. Jessie was convinced she’d fall pregnant as soon as we started trying. But then her period arrived that first month and she was devastated. I suppose we were all a little disappointed. But, we kept on trying, and we try hard. Now every month when her period arrives, she’s heartbroken all over again and I feel powerless to help her.

“It’s hard, amigo. I remember how upset Alana used to get. How helpless I felt not being able to fix it for her. She put so much pressure on herself.”

“Jessie does the same. It feels like our lives have become about getting pregnant. And don’t get me wrong, I love trying to get her pregnant. I want a kid with her. But it’s starting to affect everything else. How do you stop it creeping into every aspect of your life? It’s like we’re just repeating the same cycle over and over again.”

“That’s because you literally are,” he says with a tilt of his head.

“Yeah.”

“I don’t know, Shane. It’s hard when that’s what she wants. I remember how fucking heartbroken Alana used to get. How sometimes it made sex feel like something we had to do and it kinda took the edge off at times, you know? I mean fucking my wife is my favorite thing to do in the whole world, but I don’t miss the pressure.”

“Hmm.”

“You need to find a way to take the pressure off. I mean Jessie is only twenty-seven, right?”

“Yeah.”

“So there’s no rush?”

“I know that, but she keeps thinking there’s something wrong with her.”

“There’s no easy answer, amigo. I wish there was.”

More footsteps behind us make us turn as his wife, Alana makes her way toward us.

“Hey, princess,” Alejandro says as he wraps his arm around her waist.

“Hey,” she stifles a yawn. “Your aunt is looking for you, Shane.”

I down my drink and place the glass on the table before checking my watch. It’s after two.

“We should probably get going if you want to get any sleep before our flight,” she says to her husband.

He stands up and smacks her on the ass, making her giggle. “A hotel suite to ourselves? We won’t be sleeping, princess.” He smiles at her and her cheeks flush pink.

“Thank you for an epic evening, amigo,” he says, holding his arms wide, and I stand too so he can hug me.

“Thank you for coming, buddy, I really appreciate it.”

“Any time,” he replies.

When he lets me go, I hug Alana too.

“You and Jessie and the boys will have to come visit us again soon,” she says. “Jessie told me you have a club near us now. We should go?”

“No!” Alejandro barks as he pulls her to him and wraps his arms around her. “Not a chance, princess.”

I laugh out loud because he sounds like Conor. We own a string of exclusive, private members’ clubs – or ‘sex clubs’ as they are more commonly known – across the US and Europe, including one in New York and one in LA. Conor refuses to let us take Jessie to one either.

“We’ll see,” she flashes her eyebrows at him and I know that he’ll give into her eventually because the look in his eyes when he’s staring at her is all too familiar to me. It is the look of a man who would do anything to make her happy.



I SEE the last of our guests out and walk into the den to see Liam and Mikey asleep at either end of the sofa. There is an empty bottle of tequila on the floor, which explains their comatose state. Jessie and Conor are cleaning up.

“There you are,” Jessie says, blowing a strand of hair from her face. “Did you say goodbye to everyone? Em, Aoife, and Noel are flying back tomorrow, but they said they’ll stop by for some breakfast first.”

“I did. I just spoke with them.” I walk toward her. “And now I want to go to bed.”

“I just need to finish here.” She smiles at me as I pull her into my arms.

“We’ll do it tomorrow,” I insist as my hands drop to her ass and I squeeze.

She flutters her eyelashes at me. “It won’t take long.”

“I’ll take care of it. You two head to bed,” Conor says and I wink at him in appreciation. He’s such a good brother.

“Are you sure?” Jessie says but I hoist her over my shoulder and she squeals with laughter.

I slap her ass and walk out of the room, heading straight to her bedroom because it’s closer than mine. “He just said he’d take care of it.”

Once we get inside, I throw her down on the bed and start to pull off my clothes.

She looks up at me, her blue eyes shining as she arches an eyebrow at me. “I thought you were tired?”

“I never said I was tired. I said I wanted to go to bed. I’ve been desperate to fuck you since I got home eight hours ago. Now take off your clothes and spread those legs wide so I can see my beautiful pussy.”

“You’re so bossy,” she pouts but she sits up and pulls her dress off over her head before taking off her bra and panties. Then she lies back and looks up at me while I finish undressing.

“Spread them, sweetheart,” I remind her.

Her cheeks flush pink as she does as I ask.

“You’re soaking already, Jessie,” I say as I crawl onto the bed.

“I know,” she breathes.

I pepper soft kisses on her ankle, working my way over her calves, her knees and her thighs, edging closer to where I want to feel her the most. I can smell how wet she is and it’s making my cock weep for her.

“Did you like your birthday gift?” she purrs.

“I haven’t tasted it yet,” I chuckle.

“I mean your watch.”

I stop what I’m doing and crawl up the bed to her. I’m wearing the watch now. It’s a Breitling. It’s fucking beautiful, but I love it because she chose it for me, and because she had it inscribed. “Yes, I do. Thank you.” I settle between her thighs and kiss her softly. “It’s perfect.”

“I’m so glad you liked it,” she breathes. “The inscription...”

“I know what it means,” I whisper.

“Your Aunt Em helped me get the Gaelic right. Or Gaelige, that’s it, right?”

“Yes.”

“I mean it.”

“I know.” I kiss her softly. “I think we’re a part of the same star too.”

“You do?” She smiles at me.

“Hmm.” I start to trail kisses over her neck, down to her breasts and she moans softly as I suck a pebbled nipple into my mouth. “Now how about we become part of the same body instead?”

“That doesn’t make sense,” she laughs softly.

“It will when I’m inside you,” I murmur against her skin as I move lower, closer to where I was a few moments ago when she interrupted me. She whimpers as I edge closer, pressing soft kisses over her mound as I push her legs wider apart. “Damn! You smell so fucking good, Jessie,” I say before I swirl my tongue over her sensitive clit and she bucks her hips against me.

“Shane!” she moans and my cock throbs. That is the sweetest fucking sound in this world. I want to take my time eating her because she tastes so fucking good, but I can hardly wait to get inside her. My cock is aching for her pussy. I slide two fingers into her wet heat and the groan rumbles through her entire body as she rocks her hips against me.

“You feel so good,” she whimpers.

“You taste so fucking good,” I mumble as I lap up her sweet juices. I suck and lick and finger-fuck her hard until she comes all over my hand and my mouth, her cum soaking me.

When her legs stop trembling, I slide my fingers out and suck them clean. My balls draw up into my stomach as her

sweet, salty arousal coats my tongue.

“Shane,” she purrs as she reaches for me and curls her fingers in my hair.

“You need more, sweetheart?” I look up at her beautiful face, her cheeks flushed pink and her bright blue eyes dark with desire.

“I want all of you.”

“Hmm.” I wipe my mouth and crawl up to her, resting on my forearms as I edge the tip of my cock into her dripping cunt. “More?”

“More,” she groans as she wraps her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck, pulling me closer and deeper until I sink all the way into her smooth wet heat.

Fuck me, she feels too damn good. I can never get enough of her.

She gasps as I rock my hips and reach that spot deep inside her. Her walls pulse around me, milking my cock with her hungry little squeezes. I press my lips over hers, sliding my tongue into her mouth and letting her taste herself on me. Her soft moans ripple through my body, making me even more desperate for her. Waves of hot pleasure roll through my chest and core as I sink deeper into her with each thrust. I’m torn between my need to nail her into the mattress and wanting to draw this out for as long as possible.

I have never been so close to another person as I am to her. Our bodies couldn’t be any more a part of each other’s than they are right now. She is the ray of light in the dark world we live in and I would rather die than live without her.

“What are you thinking about?” she breathes as she runs her fingers through my hair and I realize I’m staring into her eyes.

“How much I love you.”

She blinks away a tear and then gives me one of her incredible smiles. “How much do you love me?”

“You know already,” I growl as I drive harder and she shudders in my arms.

“I love you too,” she whispers.

“I know,” I mumble as I bury my face against her neck. It took me a long time to let her inside the walls I spent a lifetime building.

It took me an even longer time to trust her again after she left us, but I feel her love for me in every single thing she does and says.

“Shane!” she whimpers as she clings to me while I keep fucking her slowly, drawing out the pleasure for both of us for as long as I can.

CHAPTER 3

JESSIE

My heart is fluttering like a bird trapped in a cage as I ride the waves of my last orgasm. Shane kisses my neck softly as he fucks me through it. I love this side of him. Sex with us is rarely slow and soft like this, but tonight it is exactly what I need from him.

“You’re so needy tonight, sweetheart,” he whispers. “Your pussy is milking my cock.” He rolls his hips and hits the sweet spot inside me, making me whimper his name. “Lucky for you I’m still nowhere near done.”

“Hmm,” I purr as my senses start returning and I wrap my arms around his neck. “Whiskey always makes you frisky.” I giggle at my own poetic genius.

“You make me fucking frisky,” he growls.

Neither of us notice Conor walking into the room until he’s standing beside the bed taking off his clothes.

Shane rolls his eyes and looks at his brother. “What are you doing in here?”

“Getting naked so I can fuck my wife,” Conor says with a grin and I giggle. I think I drank way too much tequila with the twins. I’m such a lightweight when it comes to alcohol.

“Well, I’m kinda busy with her right now.”

“So?” Conor replies with a shrug as he lies on the bed beside us.

“It’s my fucking birthday.”

“No it’s not. As you told us at least a dozen times tonight, your birthday isn’t for another month,” Conor replies and Shane shakes his head in exasperation.

“He does have a point,” I whisper making Shane turn his attention back to me.

He narrows his eyes at me. “Don’t be taking his side.”

“I would never take sides.” I bite on my lip and stifle a giggle, wondering if he’s going to allow Conor to join us.

“Then stop talking,” he growls as he starts to fuck me again.

Conor lies back on the bed with his arms behind his head. “I can wait.”

I have to clamp a hand over my mouth to stop myself from laughing.

“For fuck’s sake,” Shane groans, feigning his exasperation but he has a wicked glint in his eye that tells me he is more than happy for his brother to join us. He grabs me by the hips and rolls us onto our sides, hooking my thigh over his so that we don’t lose contact.

He brushes my hair back from my face and smiles at me before he looks over my shoulder at his brother who has already rolled onto his side behind me. “It’s my fucking party though, so this pussy is all mine.” He winks before he seals his lips over mine and begins to fuck me so deliciously slowly and deep that my core turns to molten lava.

“So unfair,” Conor chuckles.

Shane wrenches his lips from mine, leaving me gasping for him. “Although, as it’s my birthday...” He looks at Conor over my shoulder with pure devilment in his eyes. “You know, I’ve been wanting to try that thing the twins did in Ireland?”

“No,” Conor says.

“What? Right now?” I ask as my stomach flutters with excitement.

“Come on, Con. I’m only gonna be forty once? If Jessie is up for it?” Shane looks at me, his eyes dark with longing and how the hell am I supposed to refuse him?

“It *is* his birthday,” I whisper as I turn my head to Conor.

“I know I’m pretty buzzed off that fancy whiskey, but...” Conor shakes his head.

“What?” Shane frowns.

“Our cocks will be touching.” He shudders, making me giggle.

“Your cock will also be squeezed into Jessie’s pussy tighter than it’s ever been before and is ever going to be again. Besides, no one will ever know. It will stay between the three of us.”

Conor’s hand slides over my hips and ass and he groans. “I must be drunk because I can’t believe I’m agreeing to this.”

I take a deep breath, my walls squeezing around Shane and making him groan as both excitement and nerves ripple through my body.

“You ready for this, sweetheart?” Shane growls.

“Yes.” I swallow hard and Shane wraps his arms around me and rolls onto his back.

Conor pushes himself up and crawls behind me while Shane keeps me pressed close to his chest. His cock twitches inside me, filling me completely and I wonder how Conor is going to squeeze inside me too. My body trembles in anticipation, laced with just the tiniest bit of fear.

“We’ve got you,” Shane says softly as he brushes my hair from my face. “If it doesn’t work, we’ll stop.”

“I know,” I breathe.

Conor leans over me, peppering my back and shoulders with soft kisses. “I won’t hurt you, Angel, but you tell me to stop if it gets too much and I will. Okay?”

“Okay.” I nod, my cheek brushing the hot skin of Shane’s chest.

“She wet enough for this, bro?” Conor asks his brother and heat flushes across my cheeks.

“I’ve had her in this bed for half an hour. I’m offended you’d even ask,” Shane chuckles.

“Hmm,” Conor mumbles as his fingers skim over the edge of my entrance which is currently being stretched wide by his older brother. “How the fuck am I gonna fit in here with you though?” he asks as he edges the tip of his finger inside me.

“Holy fuck!” I hiss as he pushes in further, twisting his finger against Shane’s cock and stretching me wide.

“You okay?” Shane whispers as he brushes my hair my face.

“Uh-huh,” I pant as my heart races and excitement skitters through my body. When Conor adds a second finger the only noise I can make is a guttural moan as the pain and pleasure burns through me. My walls squeeze around them both as I release a rush of wet heat.

“Fuck, she likes that,” Shane hisses.

“Do you, Angel?” Conor groans as he works his fingers slowly in and out of me. “You think you’re ready for my cock now, too?”

“Yes,” I pant. “Please?”

Shane’s fingers dig into my hips as he holds himself still. “I can’t wait to fuck you with him,” he grunts in my ear.

I suck in a deep breath because I’m so turned on right now I feel like I’m about to spontaneously combust. I never imagined the two of them would ever do this, but maybe it’s the whiskey, or the fact that Shane is almost forty – or a combination of the two. Whatever it is, I am *so* here for it.

Conor pulls his fingers out of my pussy and I groan in both frustration and relief. He holds onto my hip with one hand as he guides his cock inside me with the other.

“Oh. My. God!” I grind out the words as he pushes inside me, stretching me wider than I had ever imagined possible.

“God can’t save you now, sweetheart,” Shane chuckles.

“You need me to stop?” Conor pants as he stops moving.

“No,” I shake my head. “Please don’t.”

“Good, ‘cause this is so fucking hot,” he growls as he pushes in a little deeper, his breathing hard and fast.

“How you doing back there?” Shane groans as he remains still, his cock throbbing inside me.

“There’s no way I’m getting all the way in, bro,” Conor replies. “I’m halfway and I think this is my limit.”

“It is.” I nod my agreement as tears prick at my eyes and my pussy throbs around them. “For the love of God can you both fuck me?”

“My pleasure,” Shane growls as he rocks his hips upward and the pressure of having Conor’s cock inside me as well means that Shane’s is directly pressed against my G-spot. My entire body trembles and I whimper shamelessly.

“That’s my girl,” Shane soothes in my ear and my eyes roll back in my head. I’m not sure how much I can take of this before I pass out or explode in one huge, life-altering orgasm.

“You feel so good, Jessie,” Conor hisses as he holds onto both my hips now and gently slides his cock halfway in and out of me. “You’re squeezing me so tight.”

I don’t even recognize the sound that comes out of my mouth when my orgasm bursts out of me like a river breaking its banks. I soak the three of us and through the sound of the blood rushing in my ears, I vaguely hear Shane and Conor groaning their appreciation and calling me a good girl.

I lie on Shane’s chest, completely boneless and in an orgasm-induced haze as the two of them go on fucking me together. Shane comes first and when he’s done, he pulls out of me, wrapping his arms tightly around me and pressing soft kisses on my forehead as Conor takes the opportunity to push deep inside me, causing me to moan softly into Shane’s chest.

“Fuck me, Angel, I would spend my entire life buried in this pussy if I could,” he groans as his own orgasm hits.

He grinds his release out into me and when he's done, he lies over me, resting his weight on his forearms as he rests his lips against my ear.

"That was fucking amazing," he whispers.

"I know," I breathe.

"Hot as fuck," Shane agrees.

"I... can't..." I mumble as my eyelids flutter closed.

"We're gonna have to stop fucking our girl into a coma, Shane," Conor chuckles and I smile.

"What? No. She looks so fucking sweet when she falls asleep like this."

"Hmm," Conor mumbles and then the two of them go on talking but I don't hear what they say, just the comforting murmur of their voices as I drift off to sleep.

WHEN I WAKE in the dark a few hours later, I am sandwiched between Shane and Conor who lie on either side of me. We've all moved to the other side of the bed where it's dry and I'm wearing a soft t-shirt that smells like Shane's cologne. They must have cleaned me up a little and slipped this on me while I was passed out in a tequila and orgasm-induced daze.

I listen to the sound of their soft breathing and smile. I take Shane's hand and pull his arm around me as I snuggle against Conor's chest and close my eyes.

This is perfect.

My life is perfect.

Well, almost.

CHAPTER 4

JESSIE

I groan as my eyes blink open and my head throbs with a dull ache. I'm lying on Conor's hard body and he wraps an arm around me.

"You okay, Angel?" he murmurs.

"No. I've got my very own private marching band in my head right now," I groan.

"I told you to lay off that tequila," he says with a soft chuckle.

I blink and look around the room. "Where's Shane?"

"He got up about a half hour ago to make a start on breakfast."

I push myself up and look into his eyes. "Don't either of you ever get a hangover?" I whisper as I press my palm against my forehead.

He shakes his head. "Nope."

"Urgh. Now I know why I hardly ever drink."

Conor tucks my hair behind my ear and narrows his eyes at me. "You didn't seem that drunk?"

"Well, no. I wasn't. But Liam and Mikey... Tequila..." I groan loudly. "I only had a couple of shots."

Conor laughs softly. "Let's go get you some coffee and some toast and you'll feel better."

“Hmm,” I manage a smile. “Did we do anything while I was wasted?” I press my lips together to stop myself from laughing when I see the look on his face.

He frowns at me. “What? You don’t remember?”

“Remember what?” I giggle and it makes my head throb again.

“Jessie!”

“Of course I do. I’m just playing.”

“*Thank fuck,*” he breathes.

“It was amazing by the way.” I smile at him and my cheeks suddenly burn with heat at the memory of both him and Shane taking me together.

“It sure was, Angel,” he says with a soft groan as though he’s remembering too.

“We can do it again sometime, right?” I whisper because he said it could only be a one-time thing.

“Yeah we can do it again for my birthday.” He winks at me before rolling out of bed.

THE BROTHERS’ Aunt Em, cousin Aoife and her husband, Noel arrived shortly after Conor and I got out of bed. I woke the twins too, who were passed out on Liam’s bed still wearing their clothes from the night before. A pint of water along with a cup of coffee and a slice of toast eased my hangover but I’m not sure theirs will be as easy to shift.

Now, we’re all sitting at the kitchen table eating pastries and toast and jelly and talking about how much fun we had at Shane’s surprise party last night.

Mikey almost snorts coffee out of his nose when we remind him that he fell on his ass after he challenged Lucia Montoya to a dance-off and decided to try a Magic Mike style dance to *Pony* using one of the kitchen chairs.

“You made us all call you Magic Mikey,” I giggle.

“I forgot about that too,” Liam says as he holds onto his sides.

“You’re lucky you landed on your ass, Magic Mikey,” Shane tells him with a grin. “You almost face-planted the tiles.”

He rubs a hand over his jaw. “And it would have been a damn shame to damage this handsome face.”

“It sure would,” I agree.

“We should have more parties,” Mikey says with a huge smile on his face.

“Well, as long as they’re not for me,” Shane replies as he takes a sip of his coffee.

“Aw, you loved it.” I ruffle his hair and he smiles.

“Did you have any idea at all they were planning this?” Aoife asks him.

“No,” Shane says with a shake of his head. “The four of them didn’t give anything away. These two played their parts like Broadway actors when they were trying to get me back here.” He nods toward Conor and Liam, and I close my eyes as I remember the reason Mikey used to get him back to the apartment.

“I obviously missed my calling,” Liam says as he takes a bite of a pastry.

“Hmm. Assholes,” Shane says with a grin.

“What time does your flight leave?” I ask Em.

“Just after one,” she replies as she glances at her watch.

“That is some plane you guys have got yourselves,” Noel says with a low whistle.

“It’s a beauty,” Mikey replies with a smile. “And it comes in handy when you want to fly your family across the world for a surprise party.”

“I really appreciate you all coming all this way for this,” Shane says.

“We wouldn’t have missed it,” Em replies, smiling as she places her hand over Shane’s.

“Besides, it’s good to have two nights away from the tiny...” Noel starts to say but Aoife glares at him. “Our darling son,” he quickly corrects himself.

“Good save,” Conor whispers as he pats Noel on the back.

“I mean. I love him with every ounce of my heart and soul, but that kid has a pair of lungs on him that would put a world class soprano to shame.” Noel chuckles and even Aoife smiles at that.

“Is Archie with your parents, Noel?” I ask.

“Yeah. They love having him.”

“I can’t wait to see him,” Aoife says with a soft sigh.

“Yeah. Me too,” Noel agrees.

Talking about baby Archie changes the mood in the room and I feel a sense of sadness and disappointment washing over me. Liam is sitting beside me and he reaches beneath the table and gives my thigh a reassuring squeeze.

“Do you think you’ll be coming back to Ireland any time soon?” Aoife asks, unaware of the undercurrent of tension between her cousins and me that has started to ripple through the atmosphere.

“No plans to,” Shane replies with a shake of his head.

“Oh no. Really?” Aoife asks.

“Aoife,” Em says with a warning look.

“I know. It’s just that Patrick is dead now...” she says quietly and it’s as though even the mention of his name brings his ghost into the room with us.

The brothers all stiffen. Conor clears his throat. Noel shakes his head softly and Em shoots me an apologetic look.

“Ireland is beautiful,” I say with a smile. “I loved it there, but now we have the jet, I’d love to visit the rest of the world. We went to the Caribbean for our honeymoon. Have you been there? The sea is the most incredible shade of blue.” I sigh. “Like something from a movie.”

“No. I’d love to though,” Aoife replies and I can tell she is thankful for the change of subject.

“We had an amazing time, didn’t we?” I say.

“That was a fucking incredible vacation,” Conor says and his brothers agree and suddenly the mood is a little lighter again. I mean how could it not be? We spent two weeks on a luxury yacht doing nothing but lying in the sun, eating incredible food and having super-hot sex.

“Jessie wore nothing but a string bikini for two weeks,” Mikey says with a wistful sigh.

“Mikey!” I admonish him as everyone else around the table laughs.

“What, Red?” He winks at me. “Anyway, speaking of vacations, that reminds me...” He looks at Liam who leans forward in his chair.

“Oh, yeah,” Liam replies with a grin. “We have a proposal.”

“This sounds fucking dangerous already,” Conor says with a groan.

“Did you come up with this proposal last night while you were juiced on tequila?” Shane asks.

“Yeah, but it’s still perfectly valid,” Mikey replies.

“Yeah,” Liam agrees.

“So put us out of our misery,” Conor says.

“We want a Jessie-cation,” Mikey proudly announces.

“A what now?” Shane asks with a frown as everyone else around the table looks at them in confusion.

Liam grins at his oldest brother. “Conor got the road trip from Arizona. You got your time alone in Ireland. Me and Mikey should get a trip with Jessie too.”

“A Jessie-cation!” Mikey declares and I can’t help but laugh.

“No way,” Shane says with a shake of his head.

“Shane!” the twins shout in unison.

“I think this is our cue to leave.” Em laughs softly and she stands. “Thank you so much for arranging all of this. It’s been wonderful to see you all.”

Shane gets up and walks around the table to give his aunt a hug.

“This discussion isn’t over,” Mikey says as everyone starts to say their goodbyes.

WHEN EM, Aoife and Noel have left, we head back to the kitchen to start clearing up.

“We were serious about some time alone with Jessie,” Mikey says as he loads the dishwasher.

“A Jessie-cation?” I arch an eyebrow at him and he smiles at me.

“We’ve never had that and you both have,” Liam reminds his older brothers.

“They have a point, bro,” Conor says with a sigh.

“But...” Shane starts to say but then he looks at me. “What do you think?”

“It sounds good to me,” I admit. I mean I get a vacation and some time alone with the twins. What’s not to like?

“How many days?” Shane snaps as he stuffs his hands into his pockets.

“Well, you both had four and there’s two of us, so eight?” Mikey suggests.

“Fuck, no!” Conor snaps and I giggle.

“One!” Shane offers.

“Um. No,” Liam replies.

“How long then?” Mikey asks, his face serious now.

“Two?” Shane suggests.

“Fuck that, Shane. Be serious,” Mikey replies.

“Three?” Conor suggests.

“Four and it’s a deal,” Liam adds.

I jump up onto the kitchen counter and watch the four of them negotiating over me like I’m a car or something. I should probably hate it, but I don’t.

Shane narrows his eyes at them. “Where are you taking her, first?”

“The lake house,” Liam replies.

Shane visibly relaxes when it’s clear we won’t be traveling far. “Can we visit?” he asks with a grin.

“No!” Liam and Mikey reply.

“Do we have to agree to this, Con?” Shane groans.

“Kinda,” Conor says with a shrug.

“And it’s all fine by me by the way,” I pipe up. “In case any of you were wondering.”

Mikey grins at me and walks over to me, wrapping his arms around my waist and pulling me to him until he’s standing between my thighs. “Jessie Ryan, would you please come to the lake house with me and Liam for four whole nights so we can worship and adore you all to ourselves?”

“Yes,” I whisper as even the thought makes warmth spread through my core.

“When is this Jessie-cation taking place?” Conor asks.

“End of the month?” Liam suggests.

I see Conor and Shane working the dates in their heads. That will be a few weeks after ovulation time.

“Fine,” Shane eventually agrees.

“Yes!” Mikey punches the air. “This is going to be fucking *epic!*”

Liam laughs softly while Shane and Conor roll their eyes.

“I can’t wait,” I whisper.

“Me neither, Red,” Mikey growls before he seals his lips over mine.

CHAPTER 5

MIKEY

THREE WEEKS LATER

Jessie squeals as I pick her up and toss her over my shoulder while Liam grabs our bag from the car. The lake house is our second home so we didn't bring much, besides if I have my way we won't be needing a lot in the way of clothes. Four whole days with Jessie to ourselves. I can't fucking wait.

I put her on her feet as soon as we're inside the house and she rewards me with a soft, deep kiss.

"I am so fucking excited for our Jessie-cation," I tell her.

"Me too," she breathes, her eyes dark with heat.

I swallow hard. *Fuck!* I'm not even going to make it through the next ten minutes without fucking her. I don't know if any of us are going to be able to walk out of here when this week is through.

Liam walks in behind us and drops the bag onto the floor. He sees Jessie in my arms and the look on her face and he whistles softly. "Are we even bothering to unpack yet, baby?" he asks with a soft chuckle.

"No." She shakes her head.

"Where do you want us to fuck you first, Red?" I growl as my cock starts to harden.

"Right here is fine," she purrs.

"Right here, huh?" Liam asks as he steps behind her.

"Yeah," she moans softly as my twin pulls her hair to the side and starts to pepper soft kisses over her neck.

“Let’s get you naked,” I whisper as I reach for the edge of her sundress. She raises her arms in compliance and I pull it off over her head until she’s standing in her white cotton bra and panties.

“Fuck, Jessie. Where did you get these?” Liam growls as he tugs on the waistband.

“From the store. Why?” she whispers.

“Because they look so fucking sexy on you,” he groans as he fists his hand inside them and I chuckle. He and I are so fucking different. The tiniest scrap of black lace does it for me, but my twin has a raging boner for her comfy cotton pants.

“I think we’re gonna have to leave them on while we fuck you,” he says and I grin at him over her shoulder.

“Liam,” she gasps, spreading her legs wider as she rolls her hips against me and I assume he’s got a finger or two inside her.

I slide my hand down her body and into her panties until I reach her clit and rub softly. She wraps her arms around me and buries her face into my neck, whimpering as our hands work together to bring her to the edge.

“Oh, God!” she hisses as we press her between us.

“You close, baby?” Liam murmurs in her ear.

I slide a finger inside her to join my twin’s and her legs tremble as her walls squeeze around us, pulling us deeper. “Oh, there it is,” I chuckle as her body shudders and bucks and she moans a combination of both of our names as she comes hard for us.

When she’s ridden the final waves of her orgasm we pull our hands from her panties and I pick her up, wrapping her legs around my waist and carry her through to our bedroom with Liam close behind.

I throw her down onto the bed as Liam is already pulling off his clothes. I quickly follow him but he’s done before me and he crawls onto the bed beside her. He takes off her bra and gives each nipple a brief suck before he rolls onto his back.

“I want you to suck my cock while you’re being fucked in those panties,” he growls.

“You love these panties, huh?” she giggles as she rolls on top of him and starts to trail soft kisses over his chest. I climb on the bed behind her, slapping her juicy ass before I bend my head and take a huge bite of it that makes her squeal.

Liam’s hands fist in her hair, guiding her to where he wants her as she swirls her tongue over his skin.

“Fuck, baby, get that pretty little mouth on my cock,” he hisses while I grab onto her hips to hold her steady for me, pulling her into the perfect position so I can rail her while she sucks him.

I leave her panties on for him, fisting the soft material in my hand and pulling it to the side so it stretches taut over her perfect ass and reveals the most beautiful pussy I have ever seen in my life. It glistens with her cum and as she sucks Liam’s cock into her mouth, I dip my head to have a quick taste of her. Running my tongue over her hot entrance, she groans loudly around him.

Fuck! She tastes so sweet, I could eat her all day, but right now my cock is weeping to be inside her hot, tight cunt.

I grab her hips again and line up at her entrance. Then with a roll of my hips, I drive all the way inside her, pushing her further onto my twin’s cock and making them both groan loudly at the same time.

Her pussy squeezes me like a vise as I drive into her, using the panties as leverage to go deeper and harder. I could live ten lifetimes and never get enough of this woman. As my balls draw into my stomach I think about all the times I’ve blown my load in her and how one day I’m going to put my baby in her too.

“Fuck, Jessie. You suck cock so good,” Liam pants. Sweat glistens on his torso and his abs tighten as he’s reaching his release. I’ve been fucking women with my twin for as long as we were old enough to fuck and I know when he’s on the edge.

I drive into her harder and she sucks his cock deeper until he roars her name while I keep on fucking her through his climax. When she finally comes up for air, she wipes her mouth and purrs like a fucking kitten.

“You want to give me a hand?” I wink at him and he grins back at me.

“Come here,” he says, pulling her to lie on his chest as I push her down. He pulls her legs either side of his hips so she is stretched open for me. Then he slides his hand between their bodies and rubs her clit while I pound her pussy, the wet sucking sounds loud enough to be heard over our heavy breathing and moans.

“You hear how wet our girl gets for us?” Liam asks and I growl my agreement as my balls draw up into my stomach and warmth spreads through my core. I circle my hips, hitting that spot deep inside that makes her whimper because I need to make her come before I do.

“Oh! Mikey,” she breathes as her pussy squeezes me tighter. She buries her face into Liam’s neck as her orgasm ripples through her body and her hungry little squeezes grow more insistent until I can’t hold off a second longer and I fill her with my cum.

I lie on top of her when I’ve emptied every last drop into her.

“This vacation is going to be so much fun,” she giggles.

“You better believe it, Red,” I sigh as I rest my face against her back, holding my weight on my forearms so I don’t crush her against Liam.

“Love you two,” she says softly.

“We love you too, baby,” Liam says as he tucks her hair behind her ears.

“Hmm,” I mumble my agreement before I roll onto my side, pulling her with me so she’s lying on her side between the two of us. We each wrap an arm around her waist and I look at her beautiful face and feel more at peace than I ever have in my entire life.

CHAPTER 6

LIAM

I walk into the master bedroom to find Jessie but I can't see her. It's our second night at the lake house and it has been without a doubt two of the best days of my entire life. I love sharing her with my brothers, but I also love getting her to myself for a while too. Both Mikey and I have managed some time alone with her and I know he loves it just as much as I do.

The light from the bathroom is on and the door is half-open so I walk inside. She's putting a box of tampons back on the shelf but she must hear me coming in because she turns and looks at me. When she does, my heart breaks for her. Tears are running down her face and she wipes them away with her hand.

I cross the room in two strides and wrap my arms around her, picking her up so she can wrap her legs around me too.

"I'm sorry, baby," I whisper in her ear.

She sobs into my neck as she clings to me. This has happened every month for the last seven months and I swear each time she gets even more heartbroken than the last and it kills me to see her so upset. I walk back into the bedroom as Mikey walks in. He looks at us both, his eyes wide as he wonders why our wife is sobbing in my arms.

"She got her period," I whisper as I carry her to the bed.

"Fuck, I'm sorry, Red," Mikey says as he walks to us, hugging her from behind until she is the Jessie-meat in a Ryan-brother sandwich.

“I’m fine,” she sniffs but her hot tears keep falling onto my neck.

I flash my eyebrows at Mikey and he nods his understanding. We need to take care of our girl. Shane and Conor will want to know but they’ll only worry about her if I call them now.

Mikey presses a soft kiss on the back of her neck. “You got cramps too, Red?”

“Yeah,” she whispers.

He rubs her back. “I’ll go make you some of Conor and Shane’s stinky stuff.”

“Thanks, Mikey,” she mumbles.

With a final kiss on the top of her head, he walks out of the room to go make her one of our older brother’s famous healing poultices. They stink, but they are great for muscle pain. They are also the best thing for period cramps according to Jessie – well aside from orgasms, but she’s clearly not in the mood for any of them right now. Not that she ever is on her first day. The cramps are worse in the first twenty-four hours; it’s the second day when she gets hornier than a teenage boy at the beach.

I crawl onto the bed and lie down, pulling her on top of me. She’s stopped crying and she just lies there on me while I rub my hands over her back.

“It will be okay, baby,” I whisper, brushing her hair from her cheeks where it’s gotten stuck to them with her tears.

“What if it’s not, Liam?” she whispers.

I cup her chin, tilting her face so I can look into her beautiful blue eyes. “What do you mean?”

“What if I can’t give you all a baby?”

I frown at her. “But you will. You know what the doc said. It could take up to a year or more.”

“But what if there’s something wrong with me?” Her voice sounds so small and quiet. Seeing my feisty, stubborn wife this

broken is too fucking hard to deal with. “There is nothing wrong with you, Jessie. And we don’t care about a baby as long as we have you.”

“You’re just saying that to make me feel better,” she sniffs.

“I’m not.”

“But I thought you all wanted a baby?”

“We want you, Jessie. A happy you. We should never have started with those stupid ovulation tests.”

She blinks at me and I wince. I shouldn’t have said that aloud, but it’s true. I’ve been thinking for a couple of months that there’s too much pressure attached to this whole baby-making thing, for Jessie at least. Not that fucking her senseless for three days a month isn’t fun, but we do that pretty much every day regardless.

“MIKEY!” Jessie groans softly and my eyes snap open. She’s lying on her side in between the two of us, facing me with her back pressed up against him. But why is she moaning his fucking name in my ear? She never gets us mixed up.

It’s hot and we don’t have any covers over us. Glancing down, I see my twin’s hand in her panties and everything becomes clear.

“You pair of fucking deviants,” I chuckle.

“She’s got cramps, haven’t you, baby?” Mikey whispers.

“Uh-huh,” she groans as she bites down on her lip.

I turn onto my side and keep watching them, his hand fisting in her panties as he rubs her clit. She drapes her leg over mine and grinds herself onto me.

“Are you close, baby?” I ask as I brush her hair back from her face.

“Yes,” she moans as she looks up at me through her long, dark lashes.

I lean forward and kiss her, sliding my tongue inside her as she wraps an arm around my neck and pulls me closer until I feel Mikey’s hand working her now as it’s wedged between us.

Her body tenses as her orgasm draws closer and she sucks me deeper into her mouth, clawing at my neck as my brother tips her over the edge. I swallow her whimpers and moans as he keeps on rubbing her clit until she melts into us both. She pulls back, gulping in air.

“You’re so fucking horny, Red,” Mikey chuckles.

“Me?” She giggles. “You’re the one who woke me up with your hand in my panties.”

“Because you were grinding that fine ass of yours on my cock,” he protests. “You knew exactly what you were doing, Red.”

“Hmm, maybe,” she purrs and my cock throbs at the sound.

“How are your cramps?”

“A little better,” she breathes.

“You need some more help?” I arch an eyebrow at her and she nods.

I suck my two fingers, coating them with spit before I slide my hand between us, beneath the waistband of her underwear and to her hot pussy until I find her clit. I apply gentle pressure and she gasps as I keep circling the swollen bud of flesh with my fingers. I’m as hard as iron and I am fucking desperate to pull that tampon out of her and fuck her, but I know she’ll be too sore for that right now. She reaches into my shorts and squeezes my dick, making me suck in a breath.

I look at my twin over her shoulder and he knows exactly what I’m thinking. He takes hold of her wrist and pulls her hand away, lacing his fingers through hers.

“Just relax and let us take care of you, Red,” he growls in her ear.

“Hmm,” I murmur as I trail soft kisses over her jaw as Mikey does the same to her neck. “This can just be about you. Okay?”

“Okay.” She smiles and her eyelids flicker as I bring her close to the edge again. She is so fucking selfless when it

comes to us and I love being able to take care of her. I kiss her again as I rub my fingers over her swollen clit, circling the delicate bundle of nerves as I tongue-fuck her mouth. Her nipples are hard against my chest as she presses herself against me. Her skin is hot and damp as she lies sandwiched between me and my twin. Mikey pulls her hips back slightly, to allow my hand more room, and no doubt so he can grind his cock on her beautiful ass while he sucks on her neck.

“Fuck, Liam!” she moans into my mouth, grinding herself onto my hand as her orgasm hits. She shudders, bucking against me and whimpering as I keep on working my fingers until every last tremor has ebbed away.

I break our kiss and pull back so I can get a good look at her. Her eyes dark and her cheeks flushed pink. “God, you are so fucking beautiful, baby.”

Her blush deepens and she smiles at me. “So are you,” she whispers.

“You feel better now, Red?” Mikey asks.

“Yes,” she breathes as she stretches her body. “Thank you, both.”

I cup her chin in my hand, rubbing the pad of my thumb over her cheek. “You sure?” I ask her and she blinks at me. We both know I’m not just talking about the cramps.

“Yeah,” she says with a soft sigh. “There’s always next month, right?”

“We’ve got all the time in the world,” I say with a wink and she presses her head against my chest until I’m looking into the concerned face of my twin.

He shakes his head softly. Our girl is heartbroken and I wish I could fix it for her.

CHAPTER 7

JESSIE

I stand in the shower with the hot water running over my body. I've had a lovely day with the twins. Mikey made us pancakes for breakfast and then we watched movies all morning on the huge screen in our cinema room. After lunch, we went for a swim in the lake that ended in the three of us fooling around on the deck when we got out.

My cramps have all but gone. I'm in our beautiful lake house with two of my favorite people in the whole world, who have done nothing but take care of me since yesterday evening when my period arrived. So, why do I still feel like this? I can't even describe what it is. An emptiness maybe? Disappointment tinged with failure. What if there's something wrong with me? What if I can't give my incredible husbands the one thing they want?

I close my eyes and let the water wash over my face. I don't hear the sound of the bathroom door opening. The first thing I hear is his voice and it sends shivers along my spine.

"Hey, Angel," he says as his hands slide over my hips until they're resting on my stomach.

"Conor?" I wipe the water from my eyes and turn in his arms. "What are you doing here?"

He brushes a strand of wet hair back from my face. "The boys told us." He looks down at the shower floor and there is a faint trickle of blood pooling at my feet. "They said you were upset."

“Us?” I look behind him to see Shane pulling off his pants and boxers. The rest of his and Conor’s clothes are strewn across the bathroom. A ball of emotion swells in my chest and I swallow it down before I start to cry.

Periods always make me so damn emotional. This was supposed to be the twins’ chance to spend some time alone with me – our Jessie-cation – but they are so sweet and selfless that they called their brothers because I’ve been so upset. And now I feel guilty that I’ve spoiled our alone time.

“Move over,” Shane says with a grin as he steps into the shower too.

“You didn’t think we could stay away after Liam told us how upset you were last night?” Conor says as he turns me until he’s standing under the water and Shane can press his body against my back.

“I’m okay,” I lie and Conor narrows his eyes at me.

Shane pulls my long hair to the side and presses his lips against my ear. “It’s natural to be disappointed, sweetheart,” he breathes.

“Are you guys disappointed?” I look up into Conor’s dark brown eyes.

“Only because you are, Angel,” he replies.

Meanwhile, Shane traces the shell of my ear with his lips. “But don’t for one second think that any of us are disappointed in you, Jessie. You are the only thing that matters. You got that?” he growls before he starts to pepper soft kisses down the side of my neck.

“Okay,” I whimper as Shane’s hand slides over my stomach, reaching between my thighs.

“Besides, we weren’t sure the twins could handle you alone on your period,” Conor says with a grin.

“Why not?” I blink at him as he runs a hand through his wet hair. God, he looks so freaking delicious it makes my ovaries ache in an altogether different way.

“Because you get so fucking horny, that you’re even more insatiable than usual,” Shane answers, murmuring against my skin as he continues nibbling my neck.

As if to prove his point he slides a finger through my folds and pushes inside me, making me moan softly.

Conor chuckles before bending his head low and sealing his lips over mine. He kisses me softly, his lips gently opening mine to allow his tongue inside. I curl my arms around his neck and lean into him while Shane gently thrusts his finger in and out of my pussy. I spread my thighs wider apart and Shane growls his appreciation in my ear as he adds a second finger. “So fucking needy, sweetheart.”

I push my ass back against him, feeling his hard cock pressing into me and suddenly I’m desperate for both of them. I pull Conor closer until I’m sandwiched between the two of them so tightly I can barely breathe. But this is what I want. What I need.

“Our girl wants fucking, Con,” Shane groans as my walls squeeze around him.

“Then let’s oblige,” Conor growls as he puts his hands on my waist. He and Shane have done this so many times, they’re as in tune as the twins are when it comes to fucking me together. Shane slides his fingers out of me and Conor lifts me, wrapping my legs around his waist before he reaches back and shuts off the water.

Then he starts walking out of the shower and my eyes widen in horror. “Where are you going? We need to stay in here,” I gasp.

“Nah,” Conor shakes his head. “We want to fuck you in bed.”

“Yup,” Shane agrees as he opens the door to the master bedroom.

“You can’t,” I look between them both.

“Why not?” Shane arches an eyebrow at me.

“You know why!” I hiss. “We’ll need new sheets. Maybe even a new bed.”

“Then we’ll get some,” Conor says with a shrug.

“But there will be...” I don’t finish the sentence but I don’t have to.

“You think a little blood is gonna bother us?” Conor winks at me before he throws me onto the bed and I bounce into the middle.

I look up at the two of them. Their hard, muscular bodies glistening with water and their huge cocks standing to attention. I have no idea what I did to deserve their devotion. They and their brothers make me feel like the luckiest girl in the world.

“It will be more than a little,” I breathe as I brush my wet hair back from my face.

“Who gives a fuck?” Shane growls as he advances toward me first, grabbing hold of my ankles and pulling me to the edge of the bed before he drops to his knees. “Even two days without this pussy was too much,” he says before he bends his head and swirls his tongue over my clit.

“Shane!” I blush as he pushes my legs wider apart and buries his head between my thighs.

“You taste so fucking good, Hacker,” he groans as he licks and sucks my delicate flesh so good that I no longer care about the fact I’m on my period. He obviously doesn’t.

I press my head back against the soft duvet as the waves of pleasure roll through me. When Conor crawls onto the bed beside me and sucks one of my hard nipples into his mouth, I groan as I experience a rush of wet heat.

“Fuck,” Shane hisses as Conor’s hand slides down my body and he starts to circle my clit.

“Just one before we fuck her?” Conor says with a grin.

I bite on my lip. I love it when they talk about me like I’m not here.

“Uh-huh,” Shane mumbles against me as they work together with Conor sucking on my nipples and rubbing my clit as Shane licks and sucks around his brother’s fingers. I whimper with need as they bring me close to the edge before easing me back down again.

“Please!” I cry out as I chase the orgasm they are deliberately withholding.

“You think she’s had enough teasing, bro?” Conor asks with a chuckle.

I look down and all I can see between my thighs is the top of Shane’s face and head. His eyes are closed but he opens them and winks at me as he pushes a finger deep inside me. I cry out as my climax washes over my body in a huge, rolling wave.

“Good girl,” Conor mumbles as he trails hot kisses up to my throat and I think they’re both going to kill me with hot sex and praise. Shane lets go of my ankles and plants them on the bed, so my legs are still wide open in front of his face and I can still only see from his eyes up. Then he takes a dark towel from the floor and wipes his face and that’s when I realize they are so prepared for this. I glance to the side and realize the bed sheets have been changed too. We usually have white ones in here, but these are dark navy blue. There are more towels on the nightstand and a huge jug of water. When did they even have time to do this? I was only in the shower for maybe five minutes before they joined me. The twins helped! God, they are so fucking incredible.

“You want her ass or her pussy?” Shane asks Conor as he pushes himself up into a standing position.

“Pussy. Always,” Conor winks at me and heat floods my body.

Shane looks down at me as I lie trembling, both from the incredible orgasm they just gave me and the anticipation of what’s to come.

He flashes his eyebrows at me. “Your ass is mine then, Jessie.”

I gasp out loud as I suck in a deep breath. God this is going to get so messy.

Shane sits on the bed beside me, narrowing his eyes as they search my face. “If you’ve still got cramps, sweetheart, we don’t have to do anything you don’t want to.”

“No, I want to. It’s just...”

Conor chuckles softly as he runs his fingertip over my cheek. “We’ll jump in the tub straight after. Okay?”

“Okay,” I whisper.

Shane frowns at me. “We always fuck when you’re on your period. Why is this any different?”

“Because we usually do it in the shower, or the tub, or the lake.” I arch an eyebrow at him. “Or there’s only one of you and I wear a tampon until, you know... We’ve never done this before,” I whisper.

“Hmm, well you get a period every four or five weeks and they last for three to four days, so it was only a matter of time, right?” Shane says with a wink. “It’ll be fine.”

“Hmm,” Conor agrees as he lies down on the bed. “Come here.” He holds out a hand and I take it, allowing him to pull me up until I can straddle him. He grabs my hips in his powerful hands. “How wet are you?” He licks his lips as he looks down at my pussy.

“Soaking,” I whisper.

“I bet you are, my horny little angel. Slide onto my cock so I can feel you,” he growls.

I shift my hips, taking hold of his shaft with one hand so I can lower myself onto it. I glide on easily, taking him all the way to the hilt until he’s touching that sweet spot inside me. There is a delicious ache in my cervix that throbs when he thrusts his hips and goes that little bit deeper.

“Fuck, Jessie!” he hisses as he keeps a grip of my hips, holding me in place while he drives upward, probing deep inside and causing another rush of searing wet heat.

“Jesus, Conor,” I whimper shamelessly as I grind down on him as much as I can.

“You love my cock, don’t you, Angel,” he groans.

“Yes. I love the way you fuck me.” I moan loudly as the pleasure vibrates through my body, causing the throbbing deep inside me to intensify. I need some release and I need it now. I close my eyes, only vaguely aware of Shane crawling onto the bed behind us. But when he grabs my waist, his hands directly above Conor’s, shivers of pleasure skitter along my spine. His breath is on my ear, hot on my cool damp skin. “Lean forward, sweetheart so I can get inside you too.”

I nod and bend forward until I’m lying on Conor, my chest flush against his and my head tucked into his neck as he stills his movements to allow his brother to ease inside me. He edges the tip in first, sticky and wet with lube, and I moan softly.

“More,” I urge and he presses deeper. I will never get used to the feeling of being stuffed full of their huge cocks. It is exquisite – ecstasy bordering on the brink of pain.

“More?” he growls. He wouldn’t usually be so gentle with me but I love that he is when I need it.

“Uh-huh,” is all I can manage as my brain stops being able to function.

Shane takes his cue to push deep inside me and I moan into Conor’s neck. Shane leans over me, until I’m sandwiched between him and his brother. “You ready, Con?” he hisses as he stays still, his cock throbbing in my ass.

Oh dear God!

“Yup.” Conor grinds out the word, the effort of not moving making his heart beat fast against my cheek.

Then they start to fuck me. It’s slow and gentle but raw and primal at the same time. They hold back as much as they can at first, one moving in while the other slides out until my walls are squeezing and pulsing around them both. They start moving faster, going harder and deeper as I teeter on the edge of oblivion.

“We gonna make you squirt, Angel?” Conor whispers in my ear as he brushes my hair back from my face.

“Yeah,” I groan because I can feel it building. The intensity is mind blowing. Stars flicker behind my eyelids as every nerve ending in my body aches and throbs for the delicious release that constantly remains just a breath away. I’m so close for so long that I feel like I might pass out.

“You take us both so well,” Shane growls in my ear. “Such a good fucking girl the way you let us fill you with our cocks.”

Holy fuck! I’m going to pass out.

When Shane burrows his hand between us and rubs my clit, my orgasm detonates through my body like my veins are filled with black powder and he just lit the fuse.

I can’t even speak any words, I just moan loudly as the rush of my climax bursts out of me, soaking the three of us.

“Good girl,” Shane whispers in my ear as I pant for breath, completely spent and boneless, and in an orgasm-induced stupor.

I lie between them with a huge smile on my face as they grind out their own releases, stoking the embers of my climax with every thrust and sending soft fizzes of pleasure skittering through me.

When they’re both done, they pull out of me slowly. Everything is wet and sticky, but I don’t care. I lie on Conor’s chest as Shane pushes himself up and climbs off the bed. I’d be happy not to move for the rest of my life.

My eyelids flutter closed.

“I think we fucked our girl into a coma,” Shane laughs and Conor’s responding chuckle rumbles through his chest and makes me purr like a contented cat.

“TIME FOR SLEEPING LATER, Angel. We need to get cleaned up,” Conor whispers as he cups my chin in his hand and tilts my head so I can look into his eyes. “Shane has run the bath.”

I blink at him. “Already?”

“You fell asleep,” he says with a smile.

“Oh. I guess you really did fuck me into a coma.” I smile back at him.

“Hmm. Gonna fuck you into another one later.”

Then he sits up in bed and takes me with him. Standing up, he carries us to the bathroom. Shane is already in the tub waiting for us as Conor walks up the two steps, and gently places me inside before he climbs in himself. I didn't look down at either of us while he did, but the water around us turns a deep pink color. I'm sure my cheeks flush the same shade as I bite on my lip and Shane chuckles as he pulls me to sit beside him.

“You're so fucking cute when you pretend to be all sweet and innocent, Jessie.”

“I'm not pretending. I *am* sweet and innocent,” I protest making him and Conor laugh out loud.

I glare at both of them in feigned indignation, suddenly feeling much more awake.

“Well, you're definitely sweet,” Conor says with a wink.

“Definitely not innocent,” Shane adds.

I tilt my head to one side and bite on my lip as I look between them both. “Hmm. I suppose I'll take that.”

Shane pulls me onto his lap and wraps his arms around me. “You'll take whatever we give you, won't you, sweetheart?” he growls.

“Yeah,” I giggle.

“Good girl.”

CHAPTER 8

MIKEY

I hear laughter coming from the bathroom and Liam and I walk inside and it makes me smile to hear her giggling. It was the right decision to call Shane and Conor here, even if it did put a huge dent in our Jessie-cation.

Liam and I start pulling off our clothes as soon as we get into the room. We had this tub specially built when the house was constructed. It's deep with a bench seat around the edge like a jacuzzi, and it's big enough that it fits all five of us easily. Despite that, I'd prefer only three of us to be in it for the next hour.

"You two are on dinner duty seeing as you gatecrashed our vacation," I say as I step into the hot, bubbly water.

"We didn't gatecrash. We were invited," Shane replies with a flash of his eyebrows.

"Whatever. You still gotta make dinner." I slide into the water next to Jessie and pull her to sit on my lap.

"Fair enough," Conor replies as he stands and starts to climb out of the tub. "Come on," he says to Shane and our oldest brother rolls his eyes but he stands too, giving Jessie a soft kiss on the cheek before he climbs out of the tub.

"You guys want anything in particular?" Conor asks as he grabs a towel and wraps it around himself.

"Hot dogs and nachos," Jessie squeals as she wraps her arms around my neck and smiles.

“Jessie Ryan,” Conor leans down and kisses her forehead. “You have the culinary tastes of a fifteen-year-old boy.”

“But we’re on vacation,” she purrs.

“Toss a salad too,” I say with a shrug. “Then we’ve got all the food groups covered.”

She smiles at me and my cock twitches. It’s already semi hard from her naked ass on my lap but now I want her. I want my cock inside a part of her body. Like *now*.

I ignore my brothers and keep my eyes fixed on Jessie. Her eyes darken as she looks back at me while Liam slides into the tub beside us.

“We got anything for dessert?” Conor asks.

“Get the fuck out, Con,” I growl and both he and Shane laugh as they leave the room, leaving Liam and me alone with our girl.

“I want my cock inside you now, Red,” I groan as I rub my hands over her hips.

“Me too,” Liam kneels on the floor of the tub in front of us, his eyes as dark as my own and the need for her written all over his face.

I know she’ll just have been fucked by Conor and Shane together and she’s always a little more tender around this time of the month, so I lift her off my lap and push myself out of the tub until I’m sitting on the edge.

I look down at my cock and she does too, licking her lips as she does. It stands thick and proud, desperate to feel her. She leans forward, starting at my balls she trails her soft, wet tongue the length of my shaft and I shudder. Then she swirls her tongue over the tip and I fist my hands in her hair as she sucks me into her silky smooth mouth, making a groan rumble through my chest.

She looks up at me, her blue eyes dark with lust as she sucks my cock.

“Take it all, Red,” I growl.

While she's sucking me off with all the skill of a highly trained call girl, Liam edges up behind her, positioning himself so that he can fuck her pussy while I fuck her mouth. The moment Liam slides inside her, she groans around me, the sound muffled by my cock in her throat.

"Fuck, baby. You sure love sucking Mikey's cock because your pussy is fucking soaking here," Liam says.

She mumbles her agreement but then she goes on sucking and licking me as Liam fucks her and it doesn't take long for my balls to draw up into my stomach as I blow my load against the back of her throat.

I hold her head still as I pump out the last of my release into her mouth and she drinks it greedily, sucking every drop from me until I slide out of her. She looks up at me, her eyelids flickering and my cum dribbling from her lips, and I have never seen her look more beautiful. I wipe her chin with the pad of my thumb.

"Where the hell did you learn to suck cock so good, Red?" I arch an eyebrow at her. "You make me blow my load quicker than a horny teenager."

She smiles at me. "You guys give me plenty of practice."

"Damn right," Liam groans as he kisses her neck.

I slide back into the tub and look at Liam over her shoulder and he stops fucking her long enough so I can lift her onto my lap. "Come here, Red," I growl as I pull her to straddle me again so I can suck the sweet soft skin of her neck as my twin rails her.

"Oh fuck, you two..." she groans as he brings her to the edge.

"You love being fucked like this?" Liam asks her.

"Uh-huh."

I slide my hand down between her thighs and rub her clit until she whimpers with need.

"Your pussy is so fucking hot, Jessie," Liam growls in her ear. "I can't get deep enough inside you."

“I want you deeper,” she moans softly as her eyelids flutter.

“Fuck!” Liam hisses as he drives harder and I increase the pressure on her clit before I seal my lips over hers and claim her mouth. Swirling my tongue against hers I can still taste myself on her.

Every time he thrusts inside her, he presses her against me, her hard nipples grazing my chest until she’s pressed so tightly between the two of us that I feel every tremor ripple through her body as she comes for us. I swallow her soft whimpers as her orgasm ebbs away and when she’s finally stopped trembling I let her up for air, pushing her damp hair back from her face.

“You’re so fucking hot, Red,” I hiss as I stare at her. My cock is twitching again already. I want her so fucking much. No amount of time with her is ever enough. In less than a minute, my cock is going to be as hard as iron again. How easy it would be to slide into her pussy and fuck her again. And how her eyes would darken if I did, because she is just as fucking insatiable as I am. But we need food and she needs a break.

“You’re pretty hot yourself,” she whispers and then she snakes one arm behind her, wrapping it around Liam’s neck and pulling him to her so she give him a quick kiss on the lips. “I love you both so freaking much.”

“Love you too, baby,” Liam whispers.

“Thank you for inviting Shane and Conor here. I’m sorry if I spoiled our break by getting all crazy and emotional.”

“Hey!” Liam snaps before he grazes his teeth over her shoulder blade in warning.

“You didn’t get crazy, Red,” I cup her face in my hands. “And you have every right to be upset.”

“And you didn’t spoil our Jessie-cation,” Liam adds.

“Nope,” I shake my head in agreement. “And now we have an excuse to have another one.”

She giggles and the sound vibrates through my bones. Damn, I would fucking die for this girl.

“Shall we go see if Conor and Shane have managed to rustle up something vaguely edible for dinner?” I suggest.

“Hmm,” she purrs softly as she leans forward and rests her head against my chest.

“You tired?” Liam asks as he rubs her back.

“Not tired exactly,” she murmurs.

“Fucked?” I offer with a flash of my eyebrows.

She laughs again. “Exactly.”

“Let’s get out of here before Mikey fucks you again then.” Liam laughs too and he goes to stand but she reaches for his arm and pulls him back to her until she’s sandwiched between us again.

“I don’t know what I’d do without you boys,” she whispers.

“You’ll never have to know, baby,” Liam says as he presses a soft kiss between her shoulder blades and she purrs contentedly.

“Yeah. Stuck with us for life, Red.”

“I’d better be,” she says with a smile.

CHAPTER 9

JESSIE

I lean back in my chair and rub my hands over my stomach. “I’m so full,” I groan loudly.

“You’ve barely eaten,” Conor says as he looks down at the half-eaten hot dog and the small pile of nachos I’ve left. I’ve eaten plenty, but I usually have a huge appetite.

“I have,” I protest. “And now I’m full.”

“Well, we can’t have this good food go to waste,” Mikey says as he reaches over the table and takes my plate.

“You don’t want dessert then?” Conor asks.

I look at the fudge cake in the center of the table and lick my lips. “I’m sure I could squeeze in a little slice shortly.”

“Hmm. Thought you might,” he says with a wink.

Shane is sitting beside me and he drapes an arm around my shoulder. “Are you feeling okay now, sweetheart?”

“Yeah. I’ll be fine. Thank you all for looking after me.”

“That’s kind of our job, Angel,” Conor says softly.

I smile at him. Right now I do feel fine, if slightly too full. I’m still disappointed but I count myself lucky that I have these four incredible men to share that with and to remind me that our life is about so much more than baby-making. And my period isn’t kicking my ass too much either. It’s definitely lighter than usual and apart from some initial cramps in the night, I haven’t had any further.

“We were talking earlier when you were drying your hair,” Shane says and my stomach drops. Serves me right for feeling too happy and smug.

“What about?” I whisper.

“We think we should stop with the ovulation testing.”

“What?” I blink at him. “Why? Don’t you all want a baby now?” My lip trembles as I speak and I curse myself for being so damn emotional.

“Yes, we still want a baby,” Shane replies and his brothers voice their agreement.

“We just don’t want you driving yourself crazy every month,” Conor says as he reaches across and takes my hand.

“I’m not...” I say as a tear rolls down my face and I swat it away. What the hell is wrong with me?

“We all love the baby-making part, Red,” Mikey adds.

“Yeah,” Liam agrees as he takes my free hand in his. “But we don’t want you to feel so much pressure, baby. It’ll happen when it happens.”

“But w-what about... W-we won’t know when the time is right...” I stammer.

“Like you said yourself when we started this, there isn’t a day goes by without you being fucked by at least one of us. We’re not going to miss the window,” Shane assures me.

“I know you said this is for me,” I sniff, “so why does it feel like a punishment?”

“Jessie,” Conor says with a sigh as both he and Liam squeeze my hands tighter.

“It’s not a punishment at all,” Shane replies. “But we all think it’s for the best.”

I pull my hands from Conor and Liam’s. “So it’s decided then?”

“No, Red. It’s up to you,” Mikey replies but I see the looks that his brothers shoot him. It is decided, whether I like it or

not.

“But none of you want to keep doing it?” I swallow as emotion balls in my throat.

“Jessie,” Shane cups my chin in his hand and turns my head so I can face him. “We don’t want you to keep on doing those tests every day and putting so much pressure on yourself to get pregnant, but we do want to keep trying for a baby. We all still want this with you, but just with a little less pressure. Tell me you understand that,” he frowns.

“I understand,” I whisper and the room is full of silent tension, because this hurts me and I can’t explain why.

“Cake?” Mikey offers in a desperate attempt to lighten the mood.

I force a smile. “Sure.”

CHAPTER 10

SHANE

We've been back from the lake house for two days and Jessie has stopped with the ovulation testing. I know that she wanted to continue, but I hope in time she sees that it's the best for all of us if we take our feet off the gas a little. It's not like we fuck her much less when she's not ovulating anyway.

I look up from my computer screen to see her walking into my office and closing the door.

"Something wrong?" I look behind her at the door. She rarely closes it, no matter what we're doing.

"I wanted to talk to you about something," she says, biting her lip as she takes a seat opposite me. It's not the sexy lip biting she does, either, but the one when she's feeling anxious about something. It makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end. An anxious Jessie is never a good thing.

I close my laptop and rest my hands on top of it as I look at her, trying to read her mind so I can be prepared for whatever bombshell she's about to drop, because she looks to be in that kind of mood. She stares back at me, her bright blue eyes fixed on mine as I give her my full, undivided attention.

"What is it?" I ask.

She sucks in a deep breath before she speaks, another sign that she is nervous. "I've been thinking about the baby thing."

I try to keep my face neutral as I groan inwardly. I'd been wondering when she'd bring this up and I suppose two days of her not doing that was more than I'd hoped for. Every month

when her period arrives I watch her get upset and disappointed, but each month her disappointment grows deeper, and because I know her so well, I see the feelings of guilt creeping in too. Not that she has anything at all to feel guilty about, but there's no telling her that.

I lean forward slightly. "What about it?"

"About why it hasn't happened yet," she whispers.

"Because it takes time," I remind her.

"I know that, but..." she swallows hard as though the words are lodged in her throat.

"But what, sweetheart?"

"I know it can take time for like normal couples..." Her voice trails off.

I keep staring at her because I don't know where she's going with this bit.

"But there are four of you. I ovulate every month. I'm always full of..." Her cheeks flush bright pink and I can't help but smile at how she blushes so easily around me and my brothers, like she isn't as much of a horny deviant as we are.

"Cum?" I offer.

"Yes," she whispers. "So why hasn't it happened yet?"

"You were on birth control for years. Doesn't that shit take time to leave your system?" I ask with a shrug.

"It's been seven months, Shane."

I stare at her. Do I tell her Mikey's theory, or will that only make her more upset?

Since we decided to try for a baby, my younger brother has researched baby-making with a fervor that would put a Harvard student to shame. Jessie's periods aren't entirely regular and can come anywhere between four and five weeks. They're pretty heavy too and she gets bad cramps that incapacitate her for at least a day a month until they ease off. On our second month of trying, her period arrived after five

weeks and one day. Her bleeding was even heavier than usual and the worst of her cramps lasted a full two days.

She put it down to the birth control hormones coming out of her system, but Mikey has a theory that she may have been pregnant and it was so early that we didn't notice that she lost it. It's just a theory. We will never know if it was true, but apparently it's much more common than people realize. But as Jessie is already upset enough, I don't land that one on her today.

"We spoke to Lisa about this," I remind her. Lisa is our personal physician. She removed Jessie's implant and then talked us all through what to expect. Not getting pregnant immediately was a part of it. "She said it could be up to a year before we conceive. I know it's upsetting, sweetheart, but it will happen when the time is right."

She leans forward in her seat as her eyes search my face. "But that's just it, Shane. What if it doesn't?" she asks quietly and the anguish on her face almost breaks my heart.

What the fuck do I say to that? "Then we'll deal with it," I offer.

"But wouldn't it be better to deal with it now?"

I rub a hand over my jaw and sigh. "What are you talking about, Jessie?"

"There are tests—"

"No," I interrupt her before she can finish the sentence.

"Not for you guys, for me," she says with a frown as though I've mistaken her meaning.

"I know what you mean, Jessie, and the answer is still no."

"But..." She stares at me, her mouth opening and closing like a fish in a bowl.

"You are twenty-seven years old. We've only been trying for seven months."

"But if there's something wrong?"

“Why are you so convinced there’s something wrong with you?” I frown at her. I fucking hate seeing her driving herself crazy like this. I knew this baby-making would bite us in the ass. We shouldn’t have started those damn ovulation tests.

“Because it can’t be all of you, can it?”

“It’s probably not you either, Jessie. Why is it such a big deal that you’re not knocked up already?” I snap and regret my tone.

“Because it just is, Shane! Are you sorry you even agreed to try now?” she snarls, her eyes narrowed and her fists clenched at her sides.

“I’m going to pretend you didn’t just say that,” I snarl back.

“Then I’m getting the tests done.”

“The fuck you are!” I shout, louder than I had intended to and she blinks at me in shock. I don’t know why this pushes my buttons so damn much, but the fact she immediately jumps to the conclusion that something is wrong with her makes me pissed.

She pushes herself up from her chair. “You’re an asshole!” she snaps as she heads for the door.

“Is that the only comeback you ever have for me?” I challenge her. I’m irrationally pissed now and that was probably uncalled for, but I don’t care.

She spins on her heel until she’s facing me again and flips me the bird. “Fuck you!” she snaps before she storms out of my office leaving me staring after her wondering how the hell we just got into an epic argument again.

CHAPTER II

JESSIE

I blink away the tears as I march down the hallway to my bedroom. I don't know why I'm such an emotional wreck lately, but Shane is a complete jerk. I don't know what I was thinking going to him to talk about this. I mean, I get that he's an asshole a lot of the time, but he's also logical and rational too, so why the hell did he get pissed as hell about the fact that I want to have a few blood tests to rule out any physical reasons why I'm not pregnant yet?

I wipe the tears from my cheeks and sniff loudly. None of the other boys are home. Not that I think they'd be any more sympathetic to my cause. They just don't get the pressure I feel under every month when my period arrives. It makes me feel like a failure, even though my rational brain knows that's not true. The value of a woman, and a person, is so much more than their ability to procreate, so why the hell is it bothering me so much? Why is it consuming me?

Even as I ask myself the questions, I know the reason why. It's because I'm scared they'll change their minds. They're all excited by the thought of it right now, but I see their faces every month when I get so upset – it takes a toll on them too.

What if they decide they're happier as we are?

What if Shane decides that he was right not to want a child for all those years after all? Because that is my biggest fear, that I will have my perfect family ripped away from me again. Right now it is only a promise of a home full of children, and promises can be broken, right?

WALKING out of the bathroom after my shower, I see Mikey lying on my bed. He gives me a huge grin as I walk into the room, his eyes roaming over my body which is covered only by a small towel because all of the huge bath towels seem to have disappeared from my bathroom. I have an idea the hot, mischievous devil smiling at me had something to do with that.

“Hey, Red.”

“Hey.” I smile back at him as I approach the bed but then I see there is a mini dress and some black lace underwear laid out on it and I frown. “What’s this? Are we going out?”

“You’re going out,” he says with a deep sigh. “But not with me. I was asked to get these ready for you.” He fingers the lace of the panties and as he does, I see they’re crotchless and my pussy floods with warm heat.

“But I’m under strict instructions not to even touch you,” he adds with a roll of his eyes.

“What?” I flash my eyebrows at him as I sit beside him on the bed. “Since when do you guys obey rules like that?”

He runs a fingertip down my cheek, following my jawline and throat until it reaches the edge of my flimsy towel. Goosebumps prickle over my skin.

“Well, ordinarily, you know I wouldn’t.” He winks at me. “But Shane is currently in one of his *don’t even look at me funny* moods.”

“So he thinks I’m going out with him?” I roll my eyes. “He hasn’t even asked me. What if I’d rather stay here with you?” I move quickly, straddling him as he lies on the bed.

He rests his hands on my hips and shakes his head. “No way, Red. You’re not getting me into a heap of trouble. You know the rules. You two have had a fight so you need to work it out. Don’t be using me as a distraction.” I close my eyes and Mikey sits up and wraps his arms around me. “Even if it would be the best distraction ever,” he whispers in my ear. “Because I wish it was me you were wearing those panties for tonight, Jessie.”

I open my eyes and look at him.

“But you know that you and him need to work this out.”

“Did he tell you what we argued about?” I ask quietly.

“No.”

“Aren’t you curious?”

Instead of replying, he seals his lips over mine and kisses me, softly at first until I start to grind my hips against his hardening cock. A growl rumbles through his chest and he slides his tongue into my mouth as I rake my nails down his muscular back. Warmth pools in my core as he kisses me, rolling my hips over his cock until I’m moaning into his mouth. I shift my hips, trying to gain some friction on my pulsing clit, but he holds me still. When he pulls back from me, I’m left panting for breath and wanting more.

“I need to stop because I want to fuck you so bad,” he breathes.

“You didn’t answer my question,” I remind him.

“What you two fight about is between you and him, Red. Right now, you should get ready because Shane wants you to meet him in the basement in a half hour.”

I swallow hard. Part of me wants to tell Shane to go to hell. He doesn’t get to act like an asshole and then start ordering me around like I’m his obedient servant. But the other part of me knows that this is his attempt at making things right. Besides, for the most part I enjoy him being a bossy alpha-hole.

“Fine,” I say with a sigh as I climb off Mikey. “Hadn’t you better leave then?”

Mikey laughs loudly. “No way. Just because I’m not supposed to touch you, doesn’t mean I can’t watch you getting dressed, Red. And if you could just wander around here in only your panties for the next half hour, that would be fucking perfect.” He winks at me again and I clamp my lips together to stop myself from smiling.

“You’re a deviant, Mikey Ryan.” I shake my head.

“Only for you, Red.”

A LITTLE OVER a half hour later I walk into the basement. There is no sign of Shane, but there is a sleek black limousine with its engine running near the elevator and a driver standing beside it. He opens the door as I approach and I peer inside to see Shane sitting on the back seat. He’s dressed in a suit and a white dress shirt, open at the collar so that the tattoo of my name on the base of his throat can be seen. I’m still so mad at him, but that doesn’t stop my pussy throbbing in anticipation at the sight of him.

I climb inside and sit on the opposite end of the seat so I’m as far away from him as I can reasonably be. I’ve got to make him work a little, right?

“Jessie!” he says, his tone full of frustration.

“Shane!” I snap back.

“Come here,” he sighs as the car starts to move.

I remain in my seat so he moves along the bench instead and I suppress a smile. It may seem like a small victory, but making Shane Ryan bend is a huge feat and we both know it. He sits beside me, his thigh pressed against mine and the heat from his body, coupled with the thick tension in the confines of the car, makes goosebumps prickle along my forearms.

“Where are we going?” I ask, trying to keep my tone sharp, but he rests his hand on my thigh and it sends a jolt of electricity straight to my pussy.

“To dinner.”

“At a restaurant?”

“Yes.” He frowns at me.

“Oh?” I breathe. I can’t help feeling a wave of disappointment. When he chose the crotchless panties, I thought I might be getting to visit The Peacock Club. The brothers own a string of exclusive, private members’ sex clubs. I’ve been there before, but only during the day for a meeting. I’ve never been there in the evening yet, although I’m desperate to.

“You were expecting somewhere else?”

“Maybe,” I whisper.

He laughs softly. “If I take you to a sex club wearing crotchless panties, Conor would come in and drag you out of there.”

I turn to him and smile. That is so true. The reason we haven’t been there yet is because Conor is so resistant to the idea. I’m sure he thinks it’s some kind of free-for-all, when in fact it’s probably safer than their regular club. Anything might go in a sex club, but as a rule it’s a very safe and respectful place. Everything is consensual, unlike in some clubs when a girl can find herself getting groped just trying to get across the dance floor.

“We’ll go there soon. Promise.” He winks at me and I have to turn away from him because I want him so freaking bad. I swear he and his brothers have turned me into the horniest woman alive. Making out with Mikey earlier has left me needy and on edge and I know that Shane could resolve the issue in a matter of minutes, but until he apologizes to me I’m going to continue to be petty and resist him.

“You still pissed at me, sweetheart?” he asks in that tone that makes me hot and needy.

“Yes,” I snap as I stare out of the window.

“I’m not apologizing, Jessie.”

That certainly gets my attention and I turn back to him. “Really?”

“What exactly do you expect me to be sorry for?” He arches an eyebrow at me.

“For being an asshole!”

“According to you, I’m always an asshole,” he says with a shrug.

“Well, yeah. But you were extra asshole-y today.”

He shakes his head in frustration.

“If you’re not apologizing then what’s all this for?” I narrow my eyes as I glare at him.

He reaches over and grabs me by the hips, pulling me until I’m straddling him. I gasp because I wasn’t expecting that, but I make no effort to wriggle from his grip. We both know where this is heading and I’m powerless to stop it now. Being alone with him only ever leads to one thing.

“This is because I know you’re upset. I know that you’re pissed at me even though you know I’m right...”

I open my mouth to tell him that he’s not right but he palms the back of my head and brings my mouth crashing down onto his, kissing me so hard I almost lose my breath. I waited a long time for one of Shane Ryan’s kisses and they were worth every second. They are possessive and all-consuming.

Despite my anger at him, my body melts into his until I’m sagging against his chest and practically whimpering into his mouth. The feminist in me shouts at me to stop being so weak, but she’s shouted down by the horny demon that the Ryan brothers have let loose.

He wraps his free arm around my waist, pressing me tighter to him until I feel his hard cock pressing against my pussy. I wrench my mouth away from his, gasping for breath as pleasure rockets around my body and wet heat slicks between my thighs.

“I hate when you’re pissed at me,” he says as he brushes my hair back from my face. “Let me make it better.”

“Shane,” I breathe. “You can’t just fuck me and pretend that today didn’t happen. You completely dismissed my feelings.”

He narrows his incredible green eyes at me. “That wasn’t my intention,” he finally says. “So if I did that, then I’m sorry.”

I blink at him. An apology from Shane Ryan is a rare thing.

“And also I have no intention of fucking you before dinner.” He grins at me.

“You’re an asshole,” I whisper.

“So you keep telling me,” he says before he starts to trail soft kisses over my throat and I groan softly. “You’re so needy tonight though, sweetheart. I can tell by the way you’re grinding yourself on my cock. What did Mikey do to you?” he growls as one hand slides between my thighs and he dips a finger into my pussy.

“Nothing,” I hiss.

“But you’re fucking soaking. He must have done something.”

“He kissed me. That’s all,” I whimper as I bear down, trying to get more of him inside me, but he pulls back so he can continue taunting me.

“That must have been some kiss.” He withdraws his finger and runs it through my slick folds instead.

“It’s these damn panties,” I groan. “You know they make me horny.”

“Hmm.” He chuckles. Whenever he takes me out on a date he makes me wear crotchless panties and then he spends the rest of the night teasing me until I’m a trembling, dripping mess. “Well, I did just offer to make things better but you called me an asshole.” He dips the tip of his finger inside me again and wet heat floods my pussy.

“Shane?” I plead.

“I’m going to enjoy teasing you all night,” he whispers. “By the time I get you back in this car after dinner, you will be begging me to let you ride my cock.”

I stare at him, chewing on my bottom lip. It used to be that I thought he had all the power in our relationship, but that has shifted significantly in the time we’ve been together. He’s no longer just the grumpy alpha-hole who constantly pushes me, he’s my husband, one of my best friends and he makes me believe I am his equal in every way.

Despite our argument earlier, I know that we will work out a solution eventually.

“I’m pretty sure you’ll be doing some begging of your own,” I purr.

He smiles at me. “Damn straight.” He kisses me softly before he pulls back again. “You want me to make you come first though, sweetheart?”

Is this a trick question?

“Yes, please,” I purr as I grind my hips against him.

“Good girl,” he whispers as he drives two fingers deep inside me and that coupled with his words makes wet heat slick his fingers. “You like that, huh?”

“Shane!” I groan loudly, wrapping my hands around his neck and grinding shamelessly on him as he finger-fucks me in the back of the car.

“You hear how wet you are for me?” he growls. “How the fuck am I going to get through dinner without fucking you?”

“Then don’t,” I gasp. “Fuck me now!”

“I can’t, Jessie. I want to eat this pussy on our way home later, and I much prefer it when it’s only your cum I’m tasting.”

“Then pull out,” I offer as he rubs his thumb against my clit and stars begin to flicker behind my eyelids.

He laughs softly. “You know I can’t do that. Besides where else would I come? I don’t want to spoil your beautiful dress.”

“I don’t care,” I gasp as I ride his fingers, chasing the orgasm that I know he’s deliberately withholding now.

“You would when we got to the restaurant, Jessie. Trust me,” he chuckles as he pulls me closer to him, stilling my hips so he can push deeper inside me and press that sweet spot that makes my entire body tremble.

“Shane!” I shout as my climax washes over me in delicious rolling waves.

“That’s my girl,” he chuckles in between peppering my neck with soft bites and kisses.

CHAPTER 12

JESSIE

The car rolls to a stop and I peer out the window and smile. This is the little Italian restaurant in Brooklyn where we came for pizza the night the boys proposed to me. Back in Ireland, Shane made me an offer that his brothers still don't know about and they never will. He suggested that I could marry Conor and have a regular life with a husband and babies, and he and the twins would step back if that was what I truly wanted.

It was the day of their father's funeral when I finally gave him my answer – and that was that I wouldn't marry one of them unless I could marry all of them. I have never been able to choose between the four of them and I never want to. I was happy to go on with the four of them as we were, because marrying four people is still illegal in the state of New York. However, I underestimated my husbands. I mean the Ryan brothers don't operate within the limits of the law for anything else, why would they care about doing that when it came to marriage?

So one night shortly after we came home from Ireland, they brought me here. The place was lit entirely by candlelight and it was empty except for us and halfway through our meal, the four of them dropped to their knees and proposed to me. I have never said yes to a question more quickly in my life.

The place isn't closed to the public tonight though, and there are diners sitting outside in the warm evening sunshine.

“You're really bringing the big guns tonight?” I arch an eyebrow at him.

He leans forward, his lips dusting over my ear. “You’ve seen nothing yet,” he growls and my stomach flutters with excitement.

I’m about to ask what else he has planned when the car door is opened by our driver.

Shane climbs out first and holds out his hand to me. “You ready Mrs. Ryan?” he winks at me as I reach for him and my heart swells in my chest. I will never get tired of being called that.

“Sure am,” I grin as I step out of the car, pulling the hem of my short dress down once I’m outside on the street.

Shane slides an arm around my waist and we walk into the restaurant, where the owner, Tony, greets us enthusiastically and seats us in our usual booth near the back. He leaves us with our menus and then walks away with a huge smile on his face. He’s practically squirming with delight and I frown as I watch him walk to the kitchen. Tony knows us and he’s always smiley and happy to see us, like with all of his customers, but he is downright giddy this evening.

“Did he seem like super-buzzed to you?” I ask Shane as I turn back to him.

He is looking at his menu. “Hmm. Didn’t notice,” he mumbles without making eye contact.

“What are you up to, Shane Ryan?”

He looks up from his menu and I arch an eyebrow at him.

He doesn’t answer, instead he looks behind me. I turn in my seat and almost fall off it as I see who’s walking toward us. No wonder Tony was practically squeaking with excitement.

“Is that Carl Paxton?” I whisper as I stare at the silver haired guy in a chef’s uniform making his way to our table.

“Maybe,” Shane replies.

“Oh. My. *God!* How did you swing this, Shane?” I gasp as I keep my eyes trained on Carl. He’s one of the most famous chefs in the entire world. He’s been on a tour of South Asia recently for his hugely popular cooking show and he only got

back to the States yesterday. I know this because I stalk him on Instagram. I spend hours salivating over the images of his dishes, because he's not just a famous chef, he is world renowned for his desserts. This man can do things with butter and sugar that should be considered illegal. Mikey and I have tried to recreate some of them with varying levels of success.

Tony hovers nervously behind him as Carl finally reaches our table. Some of the other diners also notice him and they swivel their heads and their chairs so they can stare at him too. As well as being known for his incredible culinary skills, he can also be seen cooking shirtless with his toned, tattooed torso on full display to the delight of his millions of followers – both male and female.

Gasps and whispers rumble through the small restaurant as the superstar walks through it with a towel casually slung over his shoulder.

When he finally reaches us, he smiles widely, showing a set of perfect white teeth. Then he holds out his hand to me.

“You must be Jessie?” he says with a wink.

I take his outstretched hand but I don't speak. I stare at him open-mouthed and he laughs softly.

“And Mr. Ryan?” his eyes drift to Shane and I remember that my super-possessive and jealous husband is sitting opposite me. “Thank you for inviting me.”

“Well, my wife loves your show,” he replies and I glance at him, looking for any signs that he is annoyed with me for fan-girling over a sexy chef, but his face is unreadable right now.

“You do?” Carl looks back to me.

“Yes. I watch it every week. Me and my husband make your banana waffles all the time.”

Carl glances back to Shane again. “Have you tried my passionfruit crepes yet?” he asks us both, understandably thinking that he is the husband I'm referring to and not one of my other three. Neither Shane nor I correct him.

“Not yet, we’re working our way through your *Naughty but Nice* book first,” I babble. “We want to make sure we try every one so we don’t miss anything.”

“Wow! Now there’s a blast from the past.” He laughs again. “I almost forgot about that book.”

I stare up at him, aware that I have a huge goofy smile on my face but I don’t care. Since he got mega-famous, some of his dishes and his cookbooks got a little too pretentious and fancy for my tastes. I much prefer his earlier stuff that was the kind of food most ordinary people could attempt to make. Now you need three dozen exotic ingredients to make one of his recipes. I have no doubt that they would taste just as amazing though.

“I love your old stuff,” I blurt out. “I used to watch your *Cooking with Carl* show all the time.”

He rubs a hand over his jaw as he stares at me, his brown eyes twinkling as he narrows them. “That was at least ten years ago. You really are a fan.”

“Yep. You’re like my hero,” I say and immediately regret those words. I didn’t mean like in any other way than making delicious desserts. *Fuck!*

He nods his head and puts a hand over his heart. “I’m honored.”

By now, some of the other diners have edged closer to our table, cell phones in hand, as they stand and wait for a chance to grab a selfie. He notices them and then rolls his eyes.

“Duty calls. I’ll just deal with this and then I’ll be back to discuss your options,” he says with a wink before he turns his megawatt smile back on and spins around to face his adoring crowd.

I turn back to Shane, wincing as I wonder how pissed he’s going to be.

He is staring at me but his face is still unreadable. “What the fuck?” he growls.

“I’m sorry. But he’s like...”

“Your hero?” He arches an eyebrow at me.

I close my eyes and suck on my lip. God, I really said that. I’m such an idiot.

“I only meant as like a dessert-hero,” I whisper.

“A dessert-hero?” he rests his chin on his hand as he continues to stare at me. “My mistake. I didn’t realize there was such a thing.”

I bite back a laugh. “You know how much I love dessert,” I whisper.

“Hmm. And I know why you used to love that show,” he says and I realize he’s not mad at all. When I was sixteen, I was kidnapped and held hostage by an assassin named the Wolf. I used to watch Carl’s show on morning cable TV because it was one of the few channels we had. I would pretend he was cooking just for me and answer his questions as though he was actually in the room. Back then he was warm and friendly – at least on TV. Now he sometimes comes across as an arrogant asshole, but he’s still a great chef.

“I didn’t mean to babble like a teenage girl,” I say as a blush creeps over my skin. “I promise I wasn’t flirting.”

“I know that, sweetheart,” he growls as he leans closer, placing his huge hand over mine. “Because if I thought you were, I would have bent you over this table, taken off my belt and your panties and spanked your ass right in front of him.”

“Shane!” I hiss even as wet heat pools in my center.

“Then I’d make you come on my fingers while he watched so that when you moan my name, he would know exactly who you belong to.”

I suck in a breath as heat creeps over my chest. “You’re a devil.”

He laughs softly. “You’re wet thinking about it though, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” I admit.

“But *he* was flirting with *you*,” he goes on.

“He wasn’t,” I shake my head. “He’s got like an army of adoring female fans.”

“Like you?” he frowns at me.

“I adore his cooking ability. Nothing more. You know that.”

We’re interrupted by Tony bringing a bottle of red wine to our table before he takes our order. I order a small fillet steak and asparagus so I can save plenty of room for whatever delights Carl is going to prepare, while Shane orders a T-bone with all the fixings.

When Tony has left, I look at Shane. “Thank you so much for this, Shane.”

“You’re welcome.”

“How did you even pull it off?”

“His agent owes me a favor,” he replies with a shrug.

“That must be some favor.”

“Hmm.” He takes a sip of his wine.

“Oh, God. You didn’t threaten to kill him or something, did you?”

“Jessie!” He frowns at me and I giggle.

“Sorry. I’m just messing with you.”

“You know I adore you, right?”

“Yes,” I breathe.

He leans closer, standing slightly until his lips brush my ear. “But make no mistake, if you flutter your eyelashes at Carl Paxton again when he smiles at you, I *will* spank your ass in the middle of this restaurant and then I will break every bone in his hands.”

I look at him and swallow as he sits down. He’s being completely serious now and it’s still as hot as hell. Not the breaking Carl’s hands part, obviously. I would die if he did that because of me.

“I’ll be good. Promise,” I whisper.

He nods as Carl makes his way back to our table. He stands beside us and claps his hands together. “So, I thought the zucchini and chocolate mousse with the cherry foam? What do you think?”

I swallow and look between him and Shane. I don’t want to offend him, but the sound of cherry foam makes me feel a little nauseous. I mean I just don’t get the point of foam on a plate. It’s like air. And zucchini is a freaking vegetable. It does not belong in a dessert. “Actually, I would prefer your churros with the peanut butter and chocolate dipping sauces,” I say.

He stares at me and for a second I wonder if I’ve deeply offended him, but fancy desserts really aren’t my thing.

He narrows his eyes at me. “You know, I don’t even remember the last time I made them.”

“The zucchini thing is fine if that’s all you have prepared,” I say quickly.

“No. Churros are good. I’ll make churros. And for you, Mr. Ryan?”

Shane shakes his head. “Nothing for me. I’ll try some of Jessie’s.”

“Then I’ll make extra,” he says. “I’ll leave you both to enjoy your wine.”

As soon as Carl has left the table, I give Shane my full attention. “You know I adore you, right?”

He narrows his eyes at me. “Yes.”

“But you take one bite of my dessert and I will stab you with my fork.” I grin at him and he chuckles softly.

“In that case, I’m going to have to tell Mikey that you got all swoony over some asshole chef and told him he was your dessert-hero.”

I open my mouth in feigned indignation. “You wouldn’t.”

“Try me, sweetheart.”

CHAPTER 13

SHANE

Jessie could hardly finish her dessert so I helped her and even I have to admit Carl Paxton can cook. It still doesn't excuse him being an arrogant asshole and smiling at her the way he did. I should have punched his teeth down his throat, but I know that she has no interest in him, and she would have been pissed at me if I had. So, I let it go because I'm secure enough to know that she is devoted to me and my brothers.

I shake my head at the thought, because I can hardly believe it myself. Even six months ago I would have responded completely differently. Jessie Ryan has changed me in ways I would never have imagined.

"That was incredible, Shane," she says with a soft sigh as she rests her head on my shoulder as we walk to the car.

"I'm glad you had fun."

"I love you," she purrs.

"I know," I say, giving her shoulder a squeeze.

"You know most people's response to that would be *I love you too?*"

"Hmm, but I'm not most people," I remind her.

"You're certainly not."

Our driver opens the door as we reach the limo and she climbs inside first. Her dress rides up to almost the bottom of her ass cheeks and I bite my lip because I have been desperate to fuck her for hours now. I thought about taking her into the restrooms, but the place got super-busy once word got out that

Carl Paxton was the dessert chef for the evening. His agent agreed he could spend an hour there and to his credit he made dessert for all of the other diners too, so maybe he's not as big an asshole as I give him credit for.

She sits on the long bench seat near to the window and I sit on the opposite end.

"Come here!" I order as soon as the door closes behind us.

She bites on her lip as her cheeks flush pink. It amazes me that she can look so sweet and innocent when she is behaving like a brat. She's my brat though and I fucking adore her.

"Now, Jessie!"

She does as she's told, edging closer until I can reach her. I grab her hips and pull her to straddle me, wrapping my arms tightly around her waist so I can hold her in place. Her dress rides up to the very top of her thighs and I can smell her wet pussy. It's driving me fucking crazy.

"I love you too," I whisper.

"I know," she says with a grin.

I dust my knuckles over the soft skin of her cheeks. After everything we've been through, sometimes I can hardly believe that she's mine.

"You remember the very first time I fucked you?"

"Of course I do," she breathes. "We were sitting in your office, just like this."

"I have never been so desperate to get inside someone as I was that day with you," I say, brushing a strand of hair from her face.

"You hid it well," she giggles. "I thought you hated me."

"I sure fucking tried to," I admit, but she doesn't seem bothered by the comment. She knows better than anyone how hard it was for me to let her in.

"I guess I'm just too damn lovable," she says with a flash of her eyebrows. "You might even say I'm irresistible."

“You *are* irresistible,” I growl as I start to peel off her dress. “And I want you naked right now.”

She lifts her arms in compliance so that I can pull the dress off over her head. I run my hands over the soft skin of her back and unclip her bra before pulling that off too and letting her gorgeous tits spring free.

I suck one of her hard nipples into my mouth, making her groan and grind herself on my cock.

“You said we’d be just one night, do you remember?” she breathes as I move to her other nipple. I bite her gently and she purrs like a kitten.

I do remember and at the time I even convinced myself that it was true. “Yes,” I growl.

“See how that worked out for you,” she giggles and I bite deeper but that only makes her grind harder against me. My girl loves a little pain to go with her pleasure, and I love to give it to her.

“And then you said you were only interested in my pussy,” she teases me.

“Right now, I *am* only interested in your pussy.” I wink at her.

“Liar,” she breathes as she presses her tits against me.

My hands coast down her back until I grab her ass and squeeze hard. “You’re right. I want this too.”

“You do?” she purrs.

“Yeah.” I slide my hand between her thighs and drag a finger through her dripping folds. “When we get home I’m going to spank it and then fuck it.”

Her eyelids flicker and she clings to my neck. “Why not here?” she whimpers.

“I don’t want to do that in the back of a limo.” Those things are too intimate to do to her when my driver might hear. I slide two fingers into her cunt and she clenches around me. “Not enough room to swing my belt.”

“Shane,” she whimpers.

“I love how much you love my belt, Jessie.” I start to unbuckle it.

“I thought you weren’t...” she whimpers as I keep finger-fucking her with my free hand.

“I’m still going to fuck you, sweetheart,” I growl, then I pull my fingers out of her, causing a rush of her cum to dribble out. I pick her up and lie her down on the seat. “After I eat my dessert.”

Pressing my hands flat on the inside of her thighs, I push them down against the seat, spreading her wide open for me. I swear she has the juiciest, pinkest pussy I have ever seen. I kneel on the floor, leaning closer to her as I listen to her heavy breathing while she waits for what she wants from me.

I press my nose against her folds, running it up from her hole to her clit and breathing in the scent of her. I close my eyes and savor it before I eat. Carl Paxton might be some fucking dessert magician, but nothing in the world could top this. She is the sweetest thing I have ever tasted in my life. I could feast on her pussy every day and I’d still never get my fill. My cock is busting to get inside her but I need this first.

“Shane,” she whimpers as her fingers curl in my hair. “Please?”

“You’re so fucking wet,” I murmur against her skin, my lips dusting over her folds. “Why are you soaking already?”

“Because you made me wear these panties...” She gasps as I start to swirl the tip of my tongue over her clit. “You’ve just had your fingers in me,” she groans loudly as I slide two back inside her. “And now you’re about to eat my pussy too.”

“Hmm,” I mumble as I suck and lick, savoring every drop of her sweet cum. “It better all be for me, sweetheart.”

“It is!” she gasps. “You know it is.”

“Good girl,” I growl before I suck her clit into my mouth. Her hips roll as she rides my face. When I graze the sensitive bud with my teeth she comes hard for me, bucking and

shaking as I press my fingers deeper inside and the rush of her slick heat coats them.

“Oh, fuck! Shane,” she pants for breath, her hands in my hair as the last of her climax rolls through her body. I sit back on my knees and pull my fingers out of her before sucking them clean.

She pushes herself up onto her elbows and blows a strand of hair from her face as she stares at me. Her eyes are dark. Her cheeks flushed pink. “Did you enjoy your dessert?” she giggles softly.

“Hmm. Your dipping sauce is way better than Carl Paxton’s.” I wipe my mouth as I grin at her.

“Shane!” She flushes a deeper shade of pink.

“It’s true,” I reach for her hips. “Now come here.” I pull her onto the floor of the limo, turning her around until she’s facing the seat so I can bend her over it. I look down at her. Her crotchless panties stretched taut over her perfect peach of an ass so that her pussy and backside are on full display. I think about how that asshole chef smiled at her. How the anger burns in my veins when I think of her with any man other than my brothers. I can keep it in check these days but I still feel it. I swallow hard as one word keeps on repeating over and over in my head.

Mine!

She has done nothing wrong, but I’m going to fuck her like she did anyway. I drive my cock into her silky wet heat and she groans loudly as she’s pressed against the seat.

“Jesus, Shane!” she hisses as her walls tighten around me.

I lean over her, my lips dusting over her ear. “This pussy is mine, Jessie,” I growl. “Don’t ever forget it.”

“How could I? You’re such a possessive asshole.” She grinds out the words as I nail her to the seat.

“You. Love. It.” I drive into her with each word.

“Fuck, yes,” she moans as I wrap my hands around her waist, gripping her tightly as I fuck her hard and deep.

CHAPTER 14

JESSIE

I have no idea what caused the sudden change in Shane, but he went from being kind of sweet and funny to fucking me like he was pissed as hell. Not that I'm complaining. I mean, angry sex with him is super-hot, but I'd kind of like to know what I've done – if indeed I have done anything.

As soon as we got home, he carried me to my bedroom and practically tore off my clothes while barely speaking a word. Now I'm cuffed to the headboard, lying face down on the bed with my ass in the air waiting for whatever the hell he has planned. I'm pretty sure it involves his belt because I heard him taking it off about five seconds ago and it sent shivers along my spine.

The bed dips behind me and his warm, rough hand rubs over the skin of my back. I arch it in pleasure, pressing into his touch. I turn my head to see him and he's kneeling on the bed behind me, in just his suit pants, staring at my ass.

I swallow hard. "Shane?" I whisper.

He seems to snap out of his trance. "Yeah?"

"Are you mad at me?"

Sometimes he spanks me like he's mad even though he's not, and it is hot. Sometimes he spanks me because he is mad at me, and that's hot too. And often I don't care if he's pissed at me or not, because the outcome is always the same and neither of us remember what we were even mad about. But sometimes, like tonight, I feel a need to know one way or

another. Maybe because we fought earlier today and because the whole baby issue makes me feel so raw and vulnerable.

He frowns at me as he lies beside me until his face is close to mine. “No,” he whispers.

“Good.”

He narrows his eyes at me. “You want me to untie you?”

“Nope.” I grin at him.

“You know you’re everything to me, right?”

“Uh-huh. Written in the stars.”

“We sure are, sweetheart,” he says before he gives me a quick kiss on the lips. “But now I’m about to spank that beautiful ass like you’re the biggest brat I’ve ever met.”

Wet heat floods my core. “I *am* the biggest brat you’ve ever met, aren’t I?” I purr.

“Hmm.” He rubs a hand over his jaw. “You did flip me the bird this afternoon. And remind me what you said as you were leaving?”

My cheeks flush pink.

“Do you remember?” His hand glides down my back and skims over my ass.

“Fuck you?” I whisper.

“Fuck me?” He flashes his eyebrows at me. “Yes, that was it.”

I roll my lips together to stop myself from giggling but he sees me.

“You think that’s funny?” he growls, but there is a wicked glint in his eye that makes my thighs tremble with anticipation and excitement.

“No, Sir,” I purr.

“Fuck! You know I love it when you call me Sir,” he groans and then he springs up from the bed.

The jangling of his buckle as he picks up his belt makes wet heat flood between my thighs and I brace myself for the first strike. He smacks me with his hand first, right on the fleshy part of my ass and I groan loudly. This is going to be all about pleasure.

“You want to be punished like a brat?” he growls as he spanks me again.

“Yes,” I whimper as he goes on, warming up my skin in preparation for the soft leather. Heat sears between my thighs as I push my ass higher, wanting more from him.

“You want my belt now, sweetheart?” he growls.

“Please?”

The sound of the door opening makes both of us look up to see Mikey sauntering into the room.

“Wow, Red, what did you do?” he asks with a laugh.

“Nothing,” I groan as I wait for the first crack of the leather. When it lands on my skin a few seconds later I cry out.

“Did she flirt with Carl Paxton?” Mikey opens his mouth, feigning his horror.

“No.” Shane grinds out the word as he spanks me again.

Mikey lies on the bed beside me, his face just inches from mine and a mischievous look on his face.

“You knew about that?” I ask.

“Of course.”

I wince as Shane spanks me again and my juices run from my pussy.

“If you haven’t been naughty, then why are you getting a spanking?” Mikey asks with a flash of his eyebrows before he pushes himself up and stands beside his oldest brother.

“She didn’t flirt,” Shane says as he brings the belt down again. “But she did say he was her hero.”

My cheeks flush with embarrassment. “Shane!” I protest.

“Oh sorry. Her dessert-hero,” Shane adds.

“Oh, Red,” Mikey says with a devious chuckle. “I thought I was your favorite dessert chef? All those hours I spend in the kitchen making you banana waffles and fudge cake and you called another man your dessert-hero.”

“I didn’t mean—” I gasp but Shane spans me harder and I lose my ability to speak.

“Fucking brutal, right?” Shane says.

“I’ve never felt so hurt in my life,” Mikey replies.

“You want to take out your pain on her ass?” Shane asks.

“Hmm. I can think of better things to do with Jessie’s ass than spank it, bro,” Mikey replies.

“Such as?”

“Eating it. Fucking it.”

“Well you get to do both of those after you’ve spanked her if you do it right.”

“What if I hurt her?” Mikey whispers.

“You won’t.”

“I might, bro. I mean she’s so small compared to us. Do you just like really hold back or something?”

Shane laughs out loud and I can’t help but giggle.

“I can guarantee, no matter how hard you hit her with that belt, she can take it.” He rubs a hand over my ass and a shiver skitters up my spine.

“Thank you,” I whisper.

“That doesn’t mean you try and hurt her,” Shane warns as he hands his younger brother the belt. “But you want to make it hurt.”

“Fuck, Shane! How do I make it hurt but not hurt her?”

“Just spank her with the belt, Mikey,” Shane says, frustration creeping into his voice. “Because you’re kind of killing our mood here.”

“Yeah,” I agree.

“I’m sorry, Red,” he says before he brings the belt cracking down over my ass cheeks, but he gets the angle slightly off and it stings like a bitch.

“Jesus!” I hiss.

“Fuck! I hurt her,” Mikey mumbles.

“I’m fine,” I breathe.

“You just aimed too high is all. She can take way more than that. But you want to aim for here, see?” Shane traces his finger across my ass. “Where the lines already are.”

“Okay.”

“Try again and don’t apologize to her before you do it. You wouldn’t be doing it if she didn’t want you to.”

“Sor...” Mikey starts to say but then he clears his throat and I smile.

Mikey spansks me again and he hits exactly the right spot with the right amount of pressure and I groan loudly and wet heat rushes between my thighs.

“Fuck!” Mikey groans.

“That’s the kind of response you’re aiming for,” Shane chuckles.

“Have you ever made her come from a spanking?” Mikey asks.

“Yup,” Shane replies and I close my eyes as I recall the times he’s done that.

“Damn!” Mikey hisses.

“You have to spank her pussy for that though,” Shane chuckles.

“Her pussy?”

“Don’t worry. You’re not ready for that yet.”

“No,” Mikey agrees as he hands the belt back to Shane.

“So, are you joining us here, or are you just at a loose end?”

“Do we get to eat and fuck her after?”

“Of course we fucking do,” Shane growls and I chuckle.

“Then I’m in.”

I LIE on Mikey’s hard chest and smile. My ass is stinging. My pussy is throbbing and I am completely wrung out with orgasms.

“This ass is so fucking beautiful,” Shane growls as he crawls onto the bed beside us and rubs his hand over my flaming skin. Then he presses a soft kiss there before he begins to rub arnica gel on the parts of me he’s marked with his belt.

“I kinda get the whole belt-spanking thing now,” Mikey chuckles.

“Told you,” Shane replies.

“Still prefer just to eat and fuck you though, Red,” he whispers in my ear.

“Hmm,” I mumble as I concentrate on Shane’s firm hands rubbing my ass and Mikey’s huge biceps wrapped around me.

“I hope you’re comfortable, kid, because she’ll be asleep in about thirty seconds,” Shane laughs softly.

“Are you kidding? I could stay here forever,” Mikey replies.

“Yeah, well I want her back as soon as I’m done here.”

“Take your time then,” Mikey replies as he holds me tighter and my eyelids flutter closed. “But I’m staying in here with you both.”

“Fair enough,” Shane agrees. “But she sleeps between us.”

I giggle softly. I love them so much.

“Hey, you didn’t kill our favorite chef, did you, Shane?” Mikey whispers as though I won’t be able to hear him.

“No,” Shane replies. “He was flirting with her though. Asshole.”

“So why is he still breathing?” Mikey asks.

Shane stops rubbing my ass. “Look at her, Mikey,” he says with a sigh. “If I killed every guy who smiled at her or wanted to fuck her, we’d have to buy a cemetery to hide all the bodies.”

“Hmm,” Mikey chuckles. “But she’s always been this hot, so what else has changed?”

I smile against Mikey’s chest. I mean, of course I know they think I’m hot, but it never gets old to hear them say it.

“I just get it,” he finally replies.

“Get what, bro?”

“How much she loves me. That prick was flirting with her and I know how much she admires him, but she didn’t look at him the way she looks at me. At us.”

“Nope. She’s something, right?” Mikey says as he kisses the top of my head.

“She sure is,” Shane replies as he goes back to rubbing arnica on my ass and I drift off to sleep.

CHAPTER 15

CONOR

I frown at the screen in front of me as the numbers start to merge into each other before my eyes. I've always done the books for our businesses. We have an accountant too, but I like to look over everything myself to make sure everything is in order. I know Shane is grateful for me having oversight too, because that suspicious fucker trusts other people to do a job even less than I do.

There have been some anomalies in our accounts recently. Payments not adding up to what they used to and a deposit going missing. It's nothing too major and with an operation as big as ours, we have to allow some room for human error, but it still bugs me. And there is always the possibility that it's part of something bigger.

I run my hands through my hair and lean back in my chair. I've been at this for three hours and my eyes need a break. Right on cue the door to my office opens and the best break in the goddamn world walks straight through it holding a plate of food in one hand and a bottle of water in the other.

"Hey, big guy," she says with a huge smile on her face as she kicks the door closed behind her and walks toward my desk.

Fuck, she's like a sexy little bundle of sunshine. Shane took her out on a date last night and I missed her.

"Hey, Angel." I hold out my hand to her and she sets the water and food on my desk before she laces her fingers

through mine. I glance at the plate and my stomach growls. It's one of Mikey's famous Philly cheesesteak sandwiches.

"You've been holed up in here for hours and I thought you might be hungry?" She arches one eyebrow at me and I pull her onto my lap, lifting her so she is straddling me.

Running my nose along the column of her throat, I inhale her sweet, intoxicating scent. "I am hungry," I growl and she giggles.

"I mean for food, Conor," she says as she places her hands on the back of my neck.

I grab hold of her hips, pulling her closer to me until I can rub my cock against her pussy and it starts to harden instantly.

"You come in here wearing this tiny little summer dress and think that I don't know what you're really after?" I wink at her and her cheeks turn pink.

"It's over eighty degrees outside. That's why I'm wearing a summer dress. You need to eat."

I grin at her as I slide my hand up her back until I can palm the back of her head and push her face close to mine. "Oh, I'm going to eat, Jessie. You can fucking count on it."

"A man cannot survive on pussy alone," she breathes.

"Your pussy is all the sustenance I need," I chuckle and she rolls her hips over me as her breath catches in her throat.

"Conor!" She feigns her protest even as she's grinding herself against me.

I slide my hand beneath her dress, feeling the supple smoothness of her skin as my hand runs up her thigh until I reach the edge of her panties. Sliding my hand beneath them, I cup her ass cheek and squeeze. "Tell me this is what you really came here for, Jessie," I growl as I trail my lips over her neck. "Because I know if I put my fingers in you right now, you'd be dripping wet for me wouldn't you?"

"Actually, I've got lots of work to do today," she purrs. "I don't have time to fool around with you."

So she wants to play? “Is that so, Angel,” I hiss as I stand, pushing my laptop and the plate of food out of the way before lifting her onto the desk until I’m standing between her thighs. I reach for my belt and unbuckle it as she sits there chewing on her lip.

“You’re just going straight for it, big guy?” She looks down at my hands working fast to open my zipper next.

I narrow my eyes at her. She’s looking for an ass spanking and I might just give it to her. “You just said you don’t have time to fool around, but make no mistake you won’t be leaving this office until I’ve fucked you, so we might as well get on with it, right?”

She tilts her head to one side. “I suppose.”

“Just a quick fuck until I fill you with my cum and then you can go back to work,” I growl as I pull my cock out of my boxers with one hand as I tug her panties to the side with the other.

Then I wrap an arm around her waist as I pull her closer to me and drive deep inside her.

“Conor!” she hisses as she wraps her arms around my neck.

“Fucking soaking,” I groan as her walls squeeze around me.

“You planning on coming in me before you eat me then?” she breathes as she rakes her nails down my back.

“Are you looking for a spanking, Jessie?” I groan.

“From you? Always,” she whispers in my ear.

“Tell me why you came down here?” I growl as I pull my head back and glare at her.

She flutters her eyelashes at me. “To bring you your lunch.”

“My lunch?”

“Hmm. But it is two courses,” she giggles.

I glance at the sandwich. “Two?”

“Hmm.” She leans forward and traces her lips along the skin of my neck. “Your first course is my pussy, obviously.”

“Obviously.” I smile at her.

“And I already finished my work for the day so I’m all yours,” she purrs.

“Already?” I frown at her. She was looking into the financials of an old rival of ours. I wanted to rule out their involvement in any of our recent business anomalies. I forget sometimes how incredible this woman is at her job.

“Yup.”

“So, why did you tell me you were too busy?” I growl. I tilt my head back as her soft tongue dances over my skin, making my cock twitch in her pussy.

“Because I wanted to make you mad at me so you’d bend me over this desk and spank me.”

“Fuck, Jessie!” My balls draw up into my stomach and I pull out of her before I blow my load.

I pull her off the desk and spin her around until she’s facing it. Her breathing comes harder and faster as she realizes I’m about to give her exactly what she wants.

Placing my hand between her shoulder blades, I push her down until her face is pressed against the desk. Her legs tremble as I pull her dress up over her hips and run my hands over her ass. “This ass is so fucking beautiful, Jessie. I don’t know whether to worship it or eat it.”

“Conor!” she pants as I reach the waistband of her panties and start to tug them off over her legs. I don’t have any more time for her teasing. I’m too damn hungry.

I slide off my belt, palming the buckle and wrapping half of the leather around my fist before I rub a hand over the soft skin of her ass.

She whimpers at my touch and it makes me smile as I draw my hand back before I bring the soft leather down over

the plump flesh of her cheeks, making her groan in pleasure. I'm gentle the first few times as I build up to the level that we both thrive on, but nevertheless each strike with my belt leaves a satisfying pink stripe on her perfect ass.

"You look so good bent over my desk waiting for me to fuck you," I growl as I land the next blow, harder this time.

"Please, Conor," she begs me and she knows how much I love to hear her pleading for me. This woman makes me harder than titanium.

"You think you deserve to be fucked? Coming in her interrupting me while I'm working? Trying to make me mad enough to spank you?"

"Yes!" she gasps as I strike her again.

"Why do you love my belt so much, Angel?"

"Because you fuck me so good when you use it?" she groans and she's right. Something about doing this to her makes me fuck her harder and for longer.

It took me a long time to let this side of myself loose with her, but now that I have, I live for the days when she's like this. Begging me for a little hurt to go along with her pleasure. I still love to fuck her soft and slow too and she is the only woman to ever get that side of me, but this right here is so fucking hot. I swear I could come just watching her ass turn red and listening to her desperate whimpers for more.

When her ass is striped like a candy cane and she has taken enough, I drop to my knees, ready to worship at the altar of her dripping pussy and her perfect peach.

"Conor, please," she moans as I push her thighs wider apart and spread her pussy lips with my thumbs to see her cum dripping from her. The smell of her sweet juices makes my cock throb painfully but I need to taste before I can fuck her.

I plant my hands on the back of her thighs and drag my tongue the length of her, from her clit to her delicious ass and she shudders, her thighs trembling in my hands.

“This is the best thing I’ve ever fucking tasted,” I growl as I go back for more, sucking and licking her, lapping at her cream as it dribbles from her opening.

“Conor!” she squeals as I push my thumb into her ass and start to fuck her slowly with it. A few seconds later, my girl is grinding on my face and coming all over my tongue and I lap her up like she’s my last meal.

While the tremors of her climax are still rippling through her body, I stand and grab hold of my cock, rock hard and weeping to be inside her. Grabbing her hips with my free hand, I drive into her wet heat and she moans loudly as she squeezes me. I lean over her, wrapping her hair around my fist and pulling her head back until my lips are dusting over the shell of her ear. “My belt makes your pussy taste so fucking sweet, Jessie,” I growl as I nail her to my desk, fucking her so hard that the bottle of water topples over and rolls onto the floor.

“Oh, fuck! Conor!” she hisses as she squeezes me tighter, pulling me deeper even as I can’t get any further inside.

“You gonna come on my cock now too?” I hiss.

“Uh-huh,” she breathes.

“That’s my good girl,” I hiss as her juices coat me and her walls milk my cock as I pull another orgasm from her. The sound of her moaning my name tips me over the edge and I drive into her one last time as I find my own release.

“Conor!” she groans as I pull out of her and our cum drips down her thighs.

“You’re so fucking hot, Angel!” I growl as I pull her up and spin her around to face me. Her cheeks are pink and her eyes glazed as she smiles at me.

“You’re pretty hot yourself, big guy,” she pants as she wraps her arms around my neck again and places a soft kiss on my throat. “Now where are my panties?”

“You’re not getting them back,” I chuckle.

“You’re getting to be worse than Mikey for stealing my panties.”

“I didn’t steal them. They were willingly given,” I remind her.

“Hmm,” she purrs, fluttering her eyelashes at me. “If you give them back to me, I’ll help you go over the accounts.”

“But you’re going to do that anyway, and it will be much more fun having you working in here with me if you’re not wearing any panties.”

“You’re a deviant,” she says with a wicked grin.

“Because you got me pussy-drunk.” I squeeze her ass and she squeals.

As she opens her mouth to give me a snappy comeback, we’re interrupted by a knock at the door. I straighten her dress but I keep my arms around her waist as she turns to face the door.

“Come in,” I bark, annoyed at being disturbed when I’m alone with her.

A second later, our head of security for the club, Chester, pops his head into the room. “Sorry, Boss,” he says with a wince as he realizes he’s interrupted us. “But someone is here to see you.”

“Tell them to make an appointment with my secretary,” I snap and she shivers in my arms. Chester shakes his head in frustration. I don’t have a secretary.

“Actually, it’s not you he’s here to see,” Chester goes on. “I was talking to Jessie.”

My arms tighten instinctively around her. She rarely has visitors and the few she’s had in the past have always led to trouble.

“Who the fuck is it?” I snarl before Jessie has a chance to speak.

“I don’t know, but he asked for Jessica Ivanov,” Chester replies and my blood freezes in my veins. Nothing good has ever come from hearing that name. We buried Jessica Ivanov and her entire legacy over twelve months ago. Nobody has called her by that name since.

“Fuck!” I hiss, anger rumbling through my chest as I pull her closer.

“What does he look like?” she asks.

“Just a kid. Maybe twenty-one. Looks young enough to be carded if he tried to get in here while the place was open for business.”

“Is he Russian?” I ask.

“Sounded American to me.”

“What the fuck did you say when he asked for Jessica?” I snap, barely able to contain my anger.

“I brought him into the club and left him at the door with two of our bouncers. I figured you’d want to at least speak to the guy?” Chester replies.

“Hmm.” I run a hand over my jaw. “Sit him at the bar and I’ll deal with him shortly.”

“Sure, boss,” Chester says with a nod and then he walks out of the room leaving us alone again.

“Conor, who the hell could this be?” She blinks at me, searching my face for answers as she places her hands on my chest.

I brush her hair back from her beautiful face. “No idea, Angel, but if he is any threat to you, he won’t be breathing when he leaves this club, I promise you.”

I lean over and switch on the security monitor, then we both watch as Chester escorts our intruder to the bar and leaves him sitting on a stool.

“You recognize him at all?” I ask.

She peers closely at the screen. “Nope.”

He looks young. Maybe fresh out of college. He has dirty blonde hair and he wears glasses. He doesn’t look like much of a threat but I know that looks can be deceiving and if he’s looking for Jessica Ivanov then he obviously has some dangerous connections.

I take my cell from the table. “I’m gonna get Shane and the boys down here too. You want to speak to him, Jessie, or you want us to deal with him?”

“No, I want to hear what he has to say, but I’m happy for you to do the talking,” she replies and I feel a wave of relief. We need to know who this guy is and why he’s asking for a woman who is supposed to be dead. Because this woman here in my arms is Jessie Ryan. Jessica Ivanov is the true heir to the Russian Bratva empire, and she hasn’t been her for a very long time.

CHAPTER 16

JESSIE

Conor returned my panties as soon as Chester left the room. Now, I sit between him and Shane as the twins escort our visitor into the office and close the door behind them. His face is pale and his eyes dart around the room, like a frightened rabbit trapped in the lair of a wolf. I suppose that Liam and Mikey are a pretty intimidating pair. I watched on the security camera as the twins placed their hands on his shoulders and the poor guy looked like he was about to pass out. And now he is confined in a tiny room with all four terrifying Ryan brothers – no wonder he’s as white as a ghost.

His eyes land on me and I offer him a faint smile and regret it immediately because we have no idea who this guy is, but something about him looking so terrified endears him to me. I have been where he is many times myself.

Mikey pushes him roughly onto a chair and all five of us stare at him while he keeps scanning our faces, blinking rapidly as a bead of sweat runs down his brow.

“Who are you?” Conor barks.

“H-Hayden Chambers,” he stammers.

“So, Hayden Chambers.” Conor clasps his hands together, placing them on the desk in front of him as he leans forward. “What the fuck are you doing in our club asking about a dead woman?”

Hayden blinks and shakes his head. “She’s dead?” he whispers.

“Why are you asking about her?” Conor snarls again.

Hayden's Adam's apple bobs in his throat as he swallows. "I think she might be my sister," he says, the crack in his voice apparent.

My heart starts to hammer in my chest and I gasp quietly. Shane places a hand on my thigh and squeezes gently, distracting me enough to allow me to regain my composure. Ordinarily I have a great poker face but that was the last thing I expected to hear today.

"Jessica's brothers are dead," Shane says calmly.

Hayden nods. "I heard that. I suppose I'd be her half-brother really. I believe Alexei Ivanov was my father, too."

"You looking for a slice of his empire, kid, then you're looking in the wrong place," Conor snarls.

"It's nothing like that," he stammers. "I was just looking for my sister. Since my mom died last year, there's just me and I just wondered if I had some other family out there, is all."

"You said you believe he's your father, but you don't know for sure?" I ask him and he turns to face me, giving me his full attention and offering me a chance to study his features. He has dark eyes like Alexei, but then plenty of people do. I see a resemblance when I look closely, but perhaps I am seeing one because I'm looking for one.

"My mom left Russia with me when I was a baby. I don't believe he even knew I existed, but she told me he was my father before she died. I could hardly believe it when I discovered who he really was. I suppose that was why she never wanted me to know him, but she gave me dates and told me where they met and it all seems to add up. I don't see why she would lie to me then after keeping it a secret for all those years."

"Why did you come here looking for her?" Conor asks, his knuckles white as he clenches his fists on the desk.

"Because this is where the trail ended," he says. "This was the last place she was known to be."

"And who told you that little snippet of information?" Shane growls.

“Some Russian guy I met at a bar. He didn’t give me his name.”

“What bar?” Conor snarls.

“The Black Bear.”

“Never heard of it,” Shane says.

“It’s in Newark. It got closed by the cops last week.”

“Convenient,” Liam snorts.

“It’s true,” Hayden adds.

“So you never asked this guy’s name?” Shane asks.

“No. He didn’t seem like the type of guy who appreciated me asking questions about who he was. I was happy not to know.”

“And you think we do look like the kind of guys who appreciate complete strangers turning up at our place of business and asking questions about dead Russians?” Conor barks and Hayden jumps in his chair.

“No.” He shakes his head. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know. Is she really dead?” he whispers.

“She no longer exists,” Shane answers, “so it seems you’ve had a wasted journey.”

Hayden swallows hard and I’m sure I see tears in his eyes. “I understand. I’m sorry I took up your time.” He pushes himself up from his chair.

Mikey places a large hand on his shoulder and pushes him straight back down. “Nobody said you could leave, fuck-face,” he snarls.

Hayden visibly trembles as he looks between Shane, Conor and me.

“If we let you leave here,” Shane says, his fiery green eyes narrowed and fixed on Hayden, “we expect you never to come around here asking questions again. You got that?”

Hayden nods furiously. “Yes, Sir.”

“Let him up,” Shane inclines his head to Mikey who takes his hand from Hayden’s shoulder before escorting Hayden from the room.

As soon as Mikey is back inside and he closes the door I let out a long, deep breath that I feel like I’ve been holding in for the past five minutes.

“You okay, sweetheart?” Shane asks as he takes my hand and squeezes it in his.

“Yeah,” I breathe. “You think he was for real?”

“No,” Liam replies and his brothers turn and glare at him but he shrugs. “Just some loser looking for some easy money.”

“Maybe he was telling the truth though?” I suggest. “It’s perfectly plausible that Alexei had another child he didn’t know about.”

“You’re saying you believe that guy, Red?” Mikey asks.

“I’m saying it wouldn’t hurt to look into him a little more and see what his story is – whether he’s genuine or not.”

“I agree. Then we can find out who the asshole was who gave him your former name too. Because I’m going to cut out his fucking tongue,” Shane snarls.

“Now that I can get behind,” Mikey agrees.

“Hmm. Now if only we knew a super-hacker who could get her hands on that kind of information,” Shane chuckles before he stands and plants a soft kiss on my forehead.

“I’ll make a start as soon as I’ve helped Conor with the books.” I smile up at him and he winks at me before bending his head until his lips are grazing my ear. “Don’t be too long, I miss you working in my office with me.”

“I won’t.”

“We should all get back to work,” he adds as he looks at his younger brothers.

Mikey nods his agreement and stands too but Liam remains in his seat and stares at me. “You weren’t actually

taken in by any of his bullshit, were you, Jessie?” he asks with a frown.

I frown back at him. It’s not like Liam to be the unreasonable one amongst his brothers. “All I’m saying is there’s a possibility he’s telling the truth.”

“And what if he is?” he snaps.

I blink in confusion. Why does it seem like he’s so pissed at me?

“I don’t know what happens then,” I tell him honestly.

He opens his mouth to speak but Shane puts a hand on his shoulder. “Enough. There’s no point arguing about it until we have more information. Let Jessie do her thing and then we can decide what to do next. All of us.” He turns to me as he says that last part and I know it’s mostly for my benefit, because in the past I have been known to be a little impulsive and make reckless decisions. But that was the old me. I’m much more considered now – at least most of the time anyway.

“Of course,” I agree.

CHAPTER 17

JESSIE

I've spent the entire afternoon looking into Hayden and he's a pretty quick study. I didn't get a chance to look into him yesterday after he dropped his bombshell and it was probably a good thing because I was so rattled by his revelation I'm not sure I'd have been at my most clearheaded.

I turn the computer off, pick up my notebook and head to the den to meet the guys. We have a group date night once a week, but every four weeks, we stay in the apartment and have a movie or game night – all five of us, with no work and no interruptions. Cell phones are switched off. Laptops, tablets and computers are left untouched and we pretend like there is nobody else in the world but the five of us. It used to almost kill Shane because he's such a workaholic but I think he looks forward to them more than any of us now.

I walk into the den and drop my notebook onto the coffee table.

"Where have you been, Red?" Mikey says as he reaches out and pulls me onto his lap as he sits on the sofa. "We're waiting to start the movie."

"Sorry. I was just finishing up," I whisper.

We're all distracted by Liam and Conor as they walk into the room carrying bowls of fresh popcorn. Placing them on the table next to my notebook before they sit on the sofa with Mikey and me. I stretch my legs out over Conor's lap and he lifts my foot to his lips and presses a soft kiss on my ankle.

Shane sits on his usual spot in the armchair. He holds the TV remote in his hand. “And are you finished?” he asks me.

I roll my lips together. I was hoping he’d ask me that. I know we’re not supposed to talk work tonight, but this isn’t exactly work, is it? “Yes.”

“Finished what?” Conor asks before he tosses some popcorn into his mouth.

“Looking into Hayden,” I reply and I see Liam’s shoulders stiffen.

“And?” Shane asks.

“No work. It’s movie night,” Mikey protests.

Conor frowns at him. “This isn’t work.”

“No. It’s not,” Shane agrees. “We can wait a few minutes to start the movie.”

Mikey groans and rolls his eyes. “Fine. Make it quick, Red,” he says with a wink as his arms tighten around me.

“There wasn’t a lot to find. His story checks out though. His mom moved to the US from Russia when he was three months old. She married some guy from New Jersey called Jon Chambers and he raised Hayden as his own until he died nine years ago of lung cancer. Hayden is smart. He got a scholarship to UCLA, but he dropped out in his second year when his mom got really sick. She died of lung cancer last year too. Just like he said. He lives alone in a tiny apartment in New Jersey. He makes fifteen bucks an hour waiting tables at a bar in Queens. Has a couple of friends from his job. Stays at a girl named Heather’s place in Queens a couple of nights a week, but checking their social media they’re not in a serious relationship. I mean I got plenty of other stuff. I know his favorite food and how often he visits the laundromat too, but I’m pretty sure the movie would be more entertaining than that.”

Shane narrows his eyes at me. “Any red flags at all?”

I suck in a breath. “One,” I admit.

“And that is?”

“He owes over a hundred thousand dollars in unpaid medical bills from when his mom was sick.”

“So he’s after money,” Liam says with a scowl.

“Maybe?” I shrug.

“Maybe? Of course he is, Jessie. He finds himself in massive debt and all of a sudden he finds his rich long-lost sister?” Liam snaps.

“I’m not rich,” I remind him, earning me a scowl from the rest of his brothers too. “And you know, so what if that was his motive for finding me? There are far worse reasons he could be looking for help. If he even is looking for any. It’s not like he’s in debt because he partied his inheritance away or owes money to some nasty people. He couldn’t pay his dying mom’s medical bills. I mean it’s freaking awful that people even have to pay to die,” I shout, fidgeting on Mikey’s lap in frustration, but he keeps his arms firmly wrapped around me.

“I don’t trust him,” Liam adds, his arms folded across his chest like a moody teenager.

“Well, I want to speak to him. If he is my half-brother then I want to know.”

“Why?” Liam snaps. “Why do you need a half-brother?”

I shake my head in annoyance. “I don’t need one, Liam, but I might have one and that means something. How can you not see that?”

“Red...” Mikey starts to say but Liam interrupts him.

“And what if he is your brother, what then? You expect us to let a complete stranger into our home? Have him over for dinner once a week? Sleepovers?”

“Yes!” I reply.

“Don’t be ridiculous, bro,” Mikey says at the same time.

I turn to him and frown. “Why is that ridiculous?”

“What?” He blinks at me. I know he was probably only trying to help me out, but why is the prospect of my family being here so unthinkable?

I untangle myself from his arms and stand up. “So, I’m supposed to call this place home but it’s not really my home is it?” I shout as the four Ryan brothers stare at me. “There would be no question of your family coming for dinner or sleepovers, but when it’s mine then it’s ridiculous?”

My hands are balled into fists at my sides as I wait for them to tell me that I’m wrong.

“That’s not what he meant, Angel. Calm down, and—” Conor says.

“Don’t tell me to calm down,” I interrupt him. I mean in the history of the world, has actually saying that to someone ever had the desired effect?

Conor frowns at me. “We have no idea who this guy is yet and you’re getting pissed about something that might never be an issue.”

“And that’s the problem. This will never be an issue for any of you because this is your home and if you invited somebody here nobody would give a shiny rat’s ass. But I have to ask permission like a child? Like I’m just renting a room here with you guys until...” I swallow because I’ve gone too far and I don’t even know how to finish that sentence.

“Jessie Ryan!” Shane snarls in that quiet, animalistic growl he has that makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end. “Sit your ass back down.”

I swallow hard, not daring to turn and look at him. Instead I look at the three faces of his brothers who stare at me, willing me to do as I’m told before their oldest brother’s temper explodes and ruins movie night for good.

“Now!” Shane barks.

Mikey holds out his arms and I sit back on his lap.

“Look at me,” Shane commands and I turn my head and stare into his fiery green eyes.

“Until he proves otherwise, Hayden will not be trusted by any of us. Not in our homes. Not with you. Not with anything.”

I open my mouth to reply but he shoots me a warning glare that makes me close it again. “But this *is* your home. In case you haven’t noticed, we rarely have any visitors here. We do not like strangers here.”

“I know,” I whisper.

“But,” he licks his lips and glares at his brothers and me, “if Hayden is your half-brother, and if he proves himself trustworthy, of course he can come here whenever you want him to.”

“And how would he prove himself?” I ask.

“Only with time, sweetheart,” he says softly. “Until then, you’re just going to have to run his coming here by us.”

“Okay,” I nod.

“We all okay now?” Mikey asks with a half-hearted laugh, trying to lighten the mood.

“Yeah,” I say as I lean against his chest.

“I’m sorry if I made you feel like this wasn’t your home, baby,” Liam reaches over Conor and squeezes my hand. “It’s only home now because you’re here.”

“I’m sorry too,” I whisper.

“Great. Now can we please put this fucking movie on? I’ve been waiting to watch it all week,” Mikey asks.

“It better not be a pile of shit like the last one you picked,” Shane replies as he presses play on the remote.

“Yeah, sorry about that one,” Mikey chuckles. “This one will be better. Promise.”

The opening credits come on and we all settle back to watch the movie. Liam holds onto one of my feet, rubbing the pad of his thumb over my toes and sending tiny waves of pleasure rippling through my calves and up my thighs. I love to have my feet massaged. Conor holds onto my hand, his fingers laced through mine while I lean against Mikey’s hard chest. I look over at Shane and he’s watching us instead of the movie. He winks at me and I smile back as warmth floods my

core. This is exactly where I belong. My name might not be on the deeds of this property, but this is my home in every way that matters.

CHAPTER 18

JESSIE

Mikey and Liam wake me as they climb out of bed. It's their turn to make breakfast this morning. "You need any help?" I ask as I blink in the dark room.

"No, they don't," Shane growls as he wraps one of his huge biceps around me. "You're staying here."

"Okay," I whisper as I stretch my legs. My body aches from last night's exertions. Movie and date nights always end the same way – with the five of us in bed together – and I love it.

Conor rolls into Liam's vacated spot and snuggles up behind me. "Morning, Angel," he whispers before he kisses my shoulder blade softly.

"Morning, big guy," I whisper.

"How's that ass?" Shane chuckles as he rubs a hand over it.

"Fine," I purr as the memory of Shane spanking me last night makes wet heat pool between my thighs. "It was a pretty tame spanking by your usual standards."

"Hmm." He rubs his jaw over my neck and his stubble tickles my skin. "It wasn't supposed to be a punishment, that's why."

"I know," I whisper.

"But if I ever hear you saying that this place isn't your home again, sweetheart..." he growls, not needing to finish his sentence because the threat is implicit.

“I know.” I swallow as he trails soft kisses over my throat.

“Actually, I’ve been thinking about that,” Conor says and Shane looks up at him.

I turn to lie on my back so I can look at the two of them.

“What about it?” Shane asks.

“Well, if Jessie was legally married to one of us, then she would be legally entitled to a claim on our assets,” Conor says.

“I can’t just be married to one of you though,” I whisper.

“It would only be for legal purposes,” Shane assures me.

I shake my head. “I don’t care about that stuff though.”

“If anything happened to us…” Conor says but I glare at him.

“Nothing is ever going to happen to any of you. I am not marrying one of you because I am married to all of you. You all agreed that the piece of paper didn’t matter.”

Shane sighs softly but Conor starts to chuckle. “I knew she wouldn’t go for it, bro. So I have another idea too.”

“We just get her name put on all the paperwork? The houses? The bank accounts? The businesses?” Shane arches an eyebrow at his brother.

“Yup.” Conor nods his agreement.

“What? That’s like way too much. No. I don’t need that,” I insist. “I don’t want your money.”

“Jessie,” Shane says as he brushes my hair from my face. “Some day very soon you’re going to be the mother of our children as well as our wife. We are all in this until the end. There is no getting rid of any of us, so we’re doing this. Okay?”

I stare at them. It’s true that I don’t want their money, but if we have children, I do want their futures to be secure. “As long as Mikey and Liam agree, but just the apartment. Or one of the clubs? Not everything.”

“What do you give us?” Conor asks as he pins one hand to the side of my head while Shane does the same to the other. Then they both start to trail their hot delicious mouths over my skin, leaving trails of fire in their wake.

“I don’t know,” I mumble as I squirm beneath their ticklish kisses.

“You do,” Shane murmurs against my skin. “What do you give us, Jessie?”

I close my eyes. I really don’t know the answer.

“U-um...” I stammer as they move lower and now their free hands are running over my abdomen and down between my thighs. I part them in anticipation and they both smile against my skin.

“Still waiting on that answer, Angel,” Conor says as his fingers skim my pussy. “Tell us and we’ll take care of you.”

“I don’t know what you want me to say,” I mumble as they start to drive me crazy with their delicious teasing.

“Answer the question,” Shane says as his lips move lower to join Conor’s fingers. “You’re gonna have to give her a clue because I need to taste this pussy, Con.”

Conor chuckles in response and then he lifts his head to look at me. “Think about what you have to give and then tell me what you give us,” he arches an eyebrow at me.

Fuck! This is a riddle. I have nothing really. No assets. I mean I can get my hands on money if I need it. But I give them my time. My love. My... Damn. I got it.

“Everything?” I offer as Conor’s hand slides between my thighs.

Shane looks up at Conor. “Our girl got it,” he grins at him.

“She’s as smart as a whip,” Conor chuckles.

“That was the answer?” I pant as my body sizzles with hit sweet, anticipation.

“Yep. Everything. So let us do the same for you, Angel,” Conor whispers as he sinks one finger deep into my pussy

while Shane's tongue dances over my skin until he reaches my clit.

"You already do," I pant but the two of them are too focused on what they're doing to me to hear, bringing me to the edge of orgasm as they work my body perfectly together.

AN HOUR LATER, we're sitting in the kitchen eating breakfast when I decide to raise the issue of Hayden again. Everyone is full of Mikey's delicious pancakes and have smiles on their faces, so I figure now is the best time to do it.

"So, are you all okay if I reach out to Hayden and see what his angle is?" I ask as I take a sip of my coffee.

"Of course," Shane answers before any of his brothers can object and I feel like kissing him. "But you do nothing without running it by us first and you do not meet him alone under any circumstances. Deal?"

"Deal," I agree.

"I'm free today if you want to stake him out?" Mikey offers with a flash of his eyebrows.

"I can take a few hours off too," Conor adds.

"If these two don't put him off then he probably is your half-brother," Shane says with a chuckle.

"Oi," Mikey gives him a gentle nudge. "We'll be on our best behavior, won't we, Con?"

"Yup," Conor nods his agreement.

"You both promise?" I wrap my hands around my coffee mug and stare at them.

"It could be worse, Liam could be going with you," Mikey replies and Conor and Shane start to laugh.

"Why is that so fucking funny?" Liam snaps.

"Because you have got your panties in a real bunch about this guy, bro," Mikey chuckles.

"Fuck you all," Liam says with a sigh and slight shake of his head.

I walk around the table to him and sit on his lap and he reluctantly wraps his arms around me as I take his face in my hands. “I love that you have my back, but I got this. I promise.”

He stares at me with his huge brown eyes before he nods softly. “I know, baby. I just want you to be safe.”

“I will be,” I say before I seal my lips over his and kiss him softly. He fists his hands in my hair as he deepens our kiss and I open my mouth, allowing him to slide his tongue inside.

“Not at the breakfast table,” Conor groans.

“You were happy to eat her on it the other morning,” Shane reminds him.

“That was different. That was me,” Conor chuckles and I’m vaguely aware of the three of them clearing the table and moving to the other side of the kitchen leaving Liam and me alone.

I pull back from our kiss and look at him as he pulls me closer to his chest. “I promise I won’t do anything reckless,” I whisper. I mean with my track record, I get that he is anxious about Hayden.

“Okay,” he smiles at me. “I promise to try and not lose my shit every time his name is mentioned.”

“Okay,” I giggle. “I love you, you know that right?” I ask, because out all of his brothers he is the one who doubts his own worth, and sometimes I wonder if that makes him question how much I love him. When we found out that his and Mikey’s biological father was the man who slaughtered my family before kidnapping me and making my life hell for two years, he struggled so much with accepting that I could see him the same way I always have.

“Yeah. I love you too, baby.”

“I know.”

CHAPTER 19

CONOR

Mikey and I sit in the front of the SUV while Jessie fidgets nervously in the back. We're parked outside Hayden's apartment in New Jersey. We know he's in there because my super-smart and incredibly hot wife is tracking his phone.

"He should be getting ready to leave for his afternoon run by now," she says, her brow furrowed in annoyance.

Mikey arches an amused eyebrow at me and I suppress a smile. I have to admit when this guy showed up at our club looking for her, I was less than impressed. In fact, I was ready to slit his throat for even daring to mention her previous name. And if I'm completely honest, I've been hoping this kid isn't her half-brother, but my reasons are entirely selfish, because I don't want to share her affections with anyone other than my own brothers. Seeing her now though, jittery with nerves and excitement, I'm starting to bend a little. I mean she has nobody except us, and while I want to believe that she doesn't need anyone else, I see how much having a sibling would mean to her.

"You want us to just go in there and get him, Red?" Mikey asks.

"No, you can't do that to the poor guy. He might have a heart attack or something," she says with a shake of her head and I laugh. I'm not sure it's going to be that much less terrifying when Mikey and I drag him into our car.

I turn to Mikey to suggest maybe we try and not make the kid shit his pants but Jessie shouts down my ear, “Here he is.”

I turn in my seat to her pointing out the window at the door to the run-down apartment building. Sure enough, Hayden is walking out of there dressed in shorts, t-shirt and a baseball cap. He grabs hold of his ankle, stretching his hamstring as he prepares for his run.

“Showtime, big guy,” Mikey says with a grin before he jumps out of the car. I follow him and we approach Hayden from either side in case he decides to use those running shoes he has on.

The kid looks between us both. Fear etched all over his face. Fuck! I think he actually will shit his pants if we go with our original plan of just bundling him in the car.

“Hey.” I hold my hands up. I’m not used to this diplomacy shit, but then I’ve never had a wife who I live and die for before either, so I suppose I’m becoming a new man. “We don’t want to hurt you, kid. We just have someone who wants to speak to you is all.”

He bounces on the balls of his feet as though he’s getting ready to run. Jessie is under strict instructions to stay in the car and not even show her face in case this is some kind of trap and anyone is watching. I know she must be itching to roll that goddamn window down and talk to him.

“You’re getting in that car one way or another, kid,” Mikey says. “So why not just walk in like a man before my brother and I make you cry in front of your whole neighborhood?”

Hayden’s Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows.

“Get in the fucking car, kid,” I snarl and he nods before he takes a few tentative steps toward it. When I open the door, Jessie’s smiling face is right there and it seems to ease his nerves a little. I mean how could it not? She’s like a ball of fucking sunshine.

“Hi Hayden. Get in,” she says and he climbs into the car as she scoots back along the seat. I close the door behind him before Mikey and I climb in.

“I’m sorry we had to surprise you like that,” Jessie says as he sits in the back seat staring at her, still unsure what the hell we want with him.

He doesn’t speak so she goes on talking. “I’m Jessie. And these are my husbands, Conor and Mikey. Well, two of them anyway, but you met the other two in the club a few days ago.”

“You have four husbands?” he asks. “Is that like even legal?”

Mikey turns in his seat while I keep my eyes on the road. “We don’t really care much for the law,” he says with a smile but there is an edge to his voice. Hayden must pick up on it too because he says no more on the matter. I mean, I can’t blame the kid for asking. Having four husbands isn’t exactly the norm.

“I know it’s kind of unusual but it works for us,” Jessie says.

“Sure does, Angel,” I agree with her, looking in the rearview mirror and giving her a cheeky wink that makes her cheeks flush pink.

CHAPTER 20

JESSIE

“Jessie?” Hayden says, clearing his throat. “Are you Jessica?”

“I knew her. A long time ago.”

He frowns at me and I’m not sure he understands. I mean, he’s a smart kid from what I found about him, but I suppose book-smart and regular-smart aren’t always entirely compatible.

“You can relax, Hayden. I just want to talk to you,” I say with a reassuring smile.

“Okay,” he eventually replies and settles back against the seat. “What was she like?”

“Do you know anything at all about her?”

“Only that her family were murdered when she was young and then she went missing after.”

“But you thought she was still alive? Why is that?”

He clears his throat. “Well, she was never found, so I thought maybe she had survived, but it wasn’t until I started looking for my father that I found out she had.”

Conor fidgets in the front seat as he drives, his knuckles turning white on the steering wheel and the tension in the car suddenly grows thicker.

“Who told you that?”

“Like I said the other day, some guy in a bar.”

“A guy in a bar?” I arch an eyebrow at him but I keep my voice calm and steady, trying to put him at ease and to prevent either Mikey or Conor reaching back and throttling the truth from him. “I’m going to need a little more than that from you.”

His Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows. “I don’t have any more. I was asking around about Alexei and, well,” he pulls at the collar of his t-shirt, “as you can imagine people weren’t too happy about me doing that. I was about to get thrown out when this huge guy came over to me and stopped them. I thought he was going to fucking kill me. Then he told me that Alexei was dead but that his daughter was still alive. He said her name was Jessica and I’d find her at Emerald Shamrock. When I found out it was a nightclub, I thought maybe she worked there. That’s all I know.”

“What was the name of the bar?” Conor barks.

“The Black Bear. Like I said,” he says.

I stare at him. A bead of sweat runs down his brow and he wipes it away.

“What did the guy look like?” I ask.

“Terrifying,” he replies with a shudder. “Huge. Greasy. He had really dark hair and it was slicked back with like oil or something. He had a beard. I honestly don’t remember that much. He told me to get out and I did. I swear, I was just happy not to have been shot at. This,” he looks around the car and then his voice drops to a whisper, “is not my world.”

I lean back against my seat and stare at him. I can’t get a good read on him and that worries me.

“You want to come for dinner?” I ask.

His eyes widen and he looks between me and my two bodyguards.

“They’ll behave. I promise.” I wink at him.

“Are you...?” he asks again.

“Look, kid, she told you Jessica Ivanov was dead,” Mikey barks.

I put my hand on Mikey's shoulder. "It's okay. I got this."

Hayden stares at me, his face pale and his eyes wide with terror. This really isn't his world. That much I believe. "I'm Jessie Ryan," I tell him. "Jessica Ivanov is dead. She died along with her parents and her brothers and we won't speak of her again, okay?"

"Okay," he says but he blinks in confusion.

"But that doesn't mean you don't have a half-sister."

Hayden keeps blinking at me.

"He's not getting this, Jessie," Conor snaps.

"He is," I say with a reassuring smile. "It's just taking a while, right?"

Hayden swallows. "Right."

"You want to come for dinner at our place then?" I ask again.

"Yeah," he says with a nod of his head.

"Good," I smile at him and I squeeze Mikey's shoulder. "Mikey here is a great cook."

"I make a great chili, kid. You like chili?"

"Love it," Hayden says.

"You'd better call Shane and let him know we're bringing a guest home," Conor says to his brother.

"Good idea." Mikey takes his cell from his pocket. "He can make sure Liam is all calmed down by the time he gets home. We don't want him getting all stabby."

"Stabby?" Hayden almost chokes on the word.

"He's joking," I lie.

HAYDEN STANDS at the large window in our kitchen with a bottle of Bud in his hand. I walk to stand beside him. Mikey is cooking in the background and Conor sits at the kitchen table watching me and Hayden so intently that I feel his eyes burning into me. Hayden has been here for two hours now and both Mikey and Conor have been perfect hosts. They haven't

let either of us out of their sight, but they also gave us a little space to talk privately. Not so private that they wouldn't have heard every single thing that we said, but they have kept their distance and I know how hard it must be for them not to interrogate him because I know they want to.

I have asked questions mostly and Hayden has seemed happy to talk. I know he's only ever lived in New Jersey but he wants to move to New York. He's smart with numbers and was going to major in business before he had to drop out of college to help look after his mom. She was sick for three years before she died. He has no other family. He doesn't have a girlfriend or a boyfriend, and he has worked waiting tables since he was eighteen.

I like him.

"This is some view," Hayden says with a low whistle.

"It sure is," I agree as we look out over the city skyline. "You should see it from the roof terrace."

"You have a roof terrace?" he asks as his eyes widen in excitement.

"Yep, with a pool."

"Wow!" He takes a swig of his beer. "How long have you lived in New York?"

"A few years."

"And before that?"

"All over really," I say with a shrug.

"You're so lucky. I've always wanted to travel," he says with a sigh and I can't help but smile that he thinks my running from a psychopath was traveling.

"No reason why you can't one day," I tell him and he shrugs.

He looks like he's about to say something when the kitchen is filled with the unmistakable sounds of all four Ryan brothers being in the same room. A chorus of 'hey, bro's' ripples around the kitchen.

I spin around and smile at Liam as he stands beside the kitchen island. He smiles back at me but he scowls at Hayden.

“That’s Liam,” I whisper and Hayden gives him an awkward wave.

Shane walks toward us and as soon as he reaches us, he wraps me in his arms and kisses me. Not a soft peck on the lips, but a full on, passionate Shane Ryan kiss. I gasp for breath when he lets me up for air. That was a blatant display of his possessiveness, but I love that about him so I let it go. “This is Hayden,” I say to him and then I turn to Hayden. “And this is Shane.”

Shane extends his hand and Hayden takes it gingerly in his.

Oh please, don’t crush his fingers, Shane!

But he doesn’t. He shakes it gently as he forces a smile. “I hear you’re joining us for dinner?”

“Yeah. It smells delicious,” Hayden says breathing in the aroma of Mikey’s delicious chili.

“It is. You’re in for a treat,” Shane replies, his hand coasting over my back until he rests it just above my ass. “Shall we sit?” He motions toward the table and the tone of his voice makes it clear this is not a request.

MIKEY AND CONOR have dished out dinner and we are all sitting with a plateful of chili, and we’re about to dig in when Shane speaks.

“So, how much debt are you in, Hayden?” he asks matter-of-factly, like he’s asking what his favorite soda is.

“U-um,” Hayden stammers as he holds his fork halfway between his plate and his mouth.

“Shane!” I frown at him.

“What? Let’s not waste time with small talk and discuss the things that are on all of our minds.”

“I…” Hayden starts to speak but he is flustered.

“You haven’t told him that you already know about his mom’s huge medical bills?” Shane arches an eyebrow at me.

“Well, it wasn’t part of our opening conversation, Shane,” I hiss through gritted teeth.

Shane puts his fork down and rests his huge forearms on the table. “I think it’s best that we lay all cards on the table,” he glares at Hayden. “Jessie here has a gift. She can find out pretty much anything about anyone. So we already know that you’re in debt that you have no hope of repaying. You see the building we’re sitting in?” He looks around the room. “The building we own. You can see why my brothers and I might be concerned that you’re not looking for a sister at all?”

Hayden nods. “I can see why you might think that, but it’s not true. I don’t want Jessie’s money.”

“It’s not my money,” I say, earning me a withering look from Shane.

“So, how do you intend to pay?” Conor asks.

“I honestly don’t know. I pay off what I can, but I don’t earn that much,” Hayden says quietly. “But that’s not why I came looking for Jessic - Jessie,” he quickly corrects himself.

“What if I were to offer to pay of all your debts right now?” Shane arches an eyebrow at him and I close my eyes and suck in a breath. I should have known this was coming. This is Shane’s test.

“What’s the catch?” Hayden whispers.

“You leave here now and never come back. You never mention Jessie or Jessica’s name again and you forget that either of them existed. I’ll even throw in an extra fifty thousand bucks so you can get back on your feet. What do you say?”

Hayden doesn’t speak for a few seconds as he considers Shane’s proposal. “I’m not gonna lie and say that’s not a tempting offer... But I’m not here for money.”

I flash Shane a sarcastic smile and refrain from calling him an asshole in front of our guest, hoping that he knows that’s

what I'm thinking anyway.

"Then let's eat," Shane says as he picks up his fork again.

Hayden is hesitant at first, no doubt wondering if he is about to be blindsided again. I give him a gentle nudge on the arm. "You'll have to excuse my husbands, they're very overprotective."

"With good reason," Liam snaps before he shovels a forkful of chili into his mouth.

"Well, yeah," I admit with a laugh.

"I don't think I want to know," he says with a shake of his head and a soft smile. "But I guess it's kind of nice to have people looking out for you."

I swallow the ball of emotion that rushes up from my chest and gets lodged in my throat. I remember how it felt to be all alone in the world like he is right now. My possessive, overprotective husbands might be a bit much sometimes, but I wouldn't have them any other way. "It is," I whisper.

AFTER THE STRAINED start to our meal, we end up enjoying the remainder of it and once Hayden has relaxed, he is surprisingly good company. He even makes Mikey laugh when he tells him a story about the chef at the bar where he works getting fired for stealing the owner's spare panties from her purse.

"That *would* make you laugh, being a fellow panty-fiend." I arch an eyebrow at Mikey and he winks at me.

Liam has been quiet throughout the evening and I make a note to speak to him about it later.

Hayden checks his watch as Shane and Liam start clearing the dishes. "I should be going if I'm going to catch the last train."

"We'll have a driver take you home," Shane says.

"If that's not a problem that would be great. I hate taking the train late at night," he says.

“You do?” I squeal. “I love the train at night. Not that I ever take it any more.”

Hayden shudders, making me laugh. “It’s full of scary people.”

“No wonder you like it, Red,” Mikey says, pressing a soft kiss on my forehead. “You’re a magnet for scary people.”

“Like you?” I narrow my eyes at him.

“Oh, definitely me,” he whispers in my ear.

“This has been great though. Thank you so much,” Hayden says as he pushes back his chair. “I’d love to see you again, Jessie.”

Neither of us miss the exchange of looks, grins and arched eyebrows that bounce across the room between the brothers.

“I mean, like...” Hayden stammers again, his cheeks turning bright red as he thinks of the right words. Then he throws his hands up in the air. “She’s my damn sister, guys. I didn’t mean...” He shakes his head and everyone except Liam laughs.

“Is she?” Shane asks as he comes up beside me and wraps an arm around my waist. “Because this has been nice, but we don’t really know that you two are even related.”

“So how do we find out?” Hayden asks. “A DNA test?”

“No,” Liam snaps and Shane shoots him a warning look.

“That seems the quickest and easiest way to prove it one way or another,” I say with a shrug.

“Then it’s fine by me,” Hayden replies. “So what do we do? Get one online or something?”

“No,” Shane says with a shake of his head. “You don’t need to do anything. We’ll be in touch.”

“Okay,” Hayden replies with a frown and I give him a reassuring smile. “I’ll wait for you to call me then?”

“Yeah,” I say.

“I’ll walk you downstairs,” Shane says.

Hayden stands awkwardly for a second until I break the tension and give him a hug. He seems reluctant to hug me back at first and I have no doubt he has four pairs of eyes burning into his skin. But then he wraps his arms around me. “It was great to meet you, Jessie,” he whispers.

CHAPTER 21

SHANE

When I walk back into the kitchen after getting one of our men to drive Hayden home, the atmosphere is tense. Liam leans against the kitchen island while Mikey and Conor sit at the table and Jessie hovers by the window.

“What’s going on?” I ask.

“Liam doesn’t want me to have the DNA test done,” Jessie snaps.

I frown at him. “Why not?”

“Because I don’t trust that guy, that’s why.”

“Why not? He was perfectly nice,” Jessie says with a shake of her head.

I walk toward my younger brother and lean beside him. “Whether you trust him or not, the only way to know if he is Jessie’s half-brother is if they do the DNA test. Nobody is asking you to trust him just yet.”

“I don’t see why we can’t just pay him to back off,” Liam snarls.

“Shane just tried that and it didn’t work. He’s not interested in money...” Jessie says.

“Of course he is,” Liam interrupts her. “Why are you so quick to believe everything this guy says?”

“Why are you so quick to doubt him? He could be my family, Liam.”

That seems to flick some kind of switch in my usually placid, at least around her, youngest brother. “We are your fucking family, Jessie!”

“I know that, but he might be my family too, and if he is...”

“And if he is, he’s likely to be a lying psychopath like the rest of them were.”

Fuck kid!

The change in Jessie’s face is instant. I rub a hand over my jaw as I wait for her to tear him a new one.

“My family were not lying psychopaths,” she shouts, her body trembling with suppressed rage.

“Really?” Liam takes a step toward her, his fists balled at his sides and his breathing getting faster and harder. “Your mom didn’t steal you from your real father and lie to you from the minute you were born? And your dad wasn’t an evil, murderous prick?”

“My parents did what they did to protect me,” she shrieks. “And are you forgetting about my little brothers?” She’s crying now and tears run down her cheeks. I watch her unravel and know I can’t stop it because she needs to say her piece. “They were children. Innocent children. They never hurt anybody in their whole damn lives until they were slaughtered right in front of me. Do you know what it’s like to listen to your little brothers screaming for help as a madman slits their throats? And you talk about *my* father being an evil psychopath!”

Liam shrinks back from her words, as though she’s sliced him wide open with a knife, and I suppose she has, not that he didn’t have it coming.

I have never seen Jessie so angry or Liam so unreasonably stubborn and I don’t know how to fix it. I also know that I can’t - they have to fix this themselves.

We all watch as Jessie storms out of the room like a tiny tornado, full of anger and tears and frustration.

“What the fuck was that?” I ask Liam.

He opens his mouth to reply but no sound comes out and then he closes it again, shaking his head as he sits on a stool at the kitchen island.

Mikey and Conor look at me and then him, and then the door, no doubt wondering if our irate wife is about to come flying back through it to carry on the argument. She won't though. She was too upset.

I walk to my youngest brother and place my hand on the back of his neck. “What is up with you, son?”

He shakes his head again and refuses to look me in the eye.

“You need to go apologize to her.”

His head snaps up then and he glares at me. “She brought up the fact that my dad was...” He doesn't finish the sentence. It has taken a long time for him to come to terms with who his biological father was.

“Yeah, after you called her entire family a bunch of liars and psychopaths. That was out of line and you know it. So man the fuck up and go and make it right.”

“Fine,” he snaps as he jumps off the stool. “But don't blame me if she sets me on fire or something.”

“I'm sure you can handle her,” I smile at him and he skulks off out of the kitchen and me and my two remaining brothers sit down at the island.

Mikey glances at the doorway. “You think I should go check on them? I mean she was pretty pissed?”

“No. Let him handle it.”

Conor gives our younger brother a nudge on the arm. “Don't take this away from him.”

Mikey frowns “Take what away?”

I chuckle to myself because I know exactly what Conor is talking about.

“He’s about to have make-up sex with Jessie for the first time ever,” Conor replies with a wink.

“Fuck!” Mikey breathes. “They’ve never had a fight before really.”

“Nope,” Conor shakes his head. “Liam is about to see the light, brother, so leave him the fuck alone.”

Mikey nods and takes a seat beside the breakfast bar beside Conor and I pour us each a mug of coffee and join them. “Make-up sex,” Mikey says with a wistful sigh. “I can’t remember the last time I pissed Jessie off enough for that.”

“Mine was two weeks ago when I wouldn’t let her win at poker and I took all of her chips and ate them in front of her,” Conor laughs and Mikey and I join him. Potato chips are the only kind worth playing Jessie for because she doesn’t give a damn about money.

“That’s cold, bro,” Mikey says with a shake of his head.

“*Fuck!*” Conor has stopped laughing but he is still smiling at the memory. “She had to come to the office to get something. She was so pissed at me. I fucked her over my desk and came so hard, I almost passed out.”

Mikey laughs again while I remain quiet. It was only days ago when I made her pissed on purpose so that she’d act like a brat and I could spank her incredible ass. I can spank her ass without her acting like a brat of course, but it’s always better for both of us if I have a reason.

“What about you, Shane?” Mikey asks.

“Can’t recall,” I lie.

“That’s because all sex with you two is make-up sex,” Conor says with a flash of his eyebrows. “I mean I make her pissed at stupid stuff, but you do it like it’s an Olympic sport.”

“Asshole,” I smile at him.

“Poor Jessie,” Conor says with a grin. “Once Liam realizes how good make-up fucking is, he’s gonna start being an asshole to Jessie too.”

“No, he wouldn’t do that,” I shake my head. “He hates conflict too much, even fake conflict.”

“True,” Mikey agrees.

“Any idea what’s going on with him?” I ask Mikey, who understandably knows his twin better than any of us. “I’ve never seen him like that with her before.”

Mikey sucks in a breath. “He’s still struggling with finding her in Paul’s basement.”

“Really?” I frown. I had no idea and I’m usually in tune with my brothers.

“Yeah. You know he keeps shit to himself and he tries to forget about it, but he’s been having fucked up dreams about it all.”

“For real?” Conor frowns too.

“Yup. If he’s not sleeping with Jessie, he freaks out when he wakes up and she’s not there.”

“Why hasn’t he said anything?” I ask.

“It doesn’t happen all the time and you know he doesn’t like to worry anyone. But he thought she was dead when he found her, you know?” Mikey says with a sigh.

“So the thought of anyone taking her...” I start to say but I don’t need to finish the sentence.

“Yup,” Mikey says before taking a drink of his coffee.

“No wonder he freaked out then.” Conor flashes his eyebrows.

“What do you both think of Hayden?” I take a swig of my coffee.

“Don’t trust him one little bit,” Conor replies first.

“Me neither,” Mikey adds.

“Neither do I, but I wouldn’t trust anyone when it comes to her. Jessie seems pretty open to this guy being her half-brother, though,” I say.

“Yup,” Mikey nods his agreement. “And if we don’t support her just because we can’t stand the idea of sharing her with anyone else, then we’re assholes.”

“Kinda,” Conor sighs. “But that still doesn’t mean we have to trust a single thing that comes out of this guy’s mouth.”

“True.”

Conor arches an eyebrow at me. “You gonna ask Jax to look into him?”

Jackson Decker is one of the best hackers in the world. He’s a buddy of ours and he looked into Jessie for me when we first met her and had no idea who she really was. And while Jax is good at what he does, my wife is better. “Are you kidding me? Jessie would lose her shit for real if I did that. She’s perfectly capable of looking into this guy on her own.”

“What if she...” Conor shakes his head and stares at his coffee.

I frown at him. “What if she what?”

He runs a hand over his jaw. “You know that thing where people are having a debate or something, and they only look for the evidence that will support their argument?”

“You think she won’t be objective?” I ask.

“Do you? You saw how she reacted in there. How she smiled when he talked about how they both have a sweet tooth and love baseball.”

“She’s the best at what she does, Con. We ask Jax to look into this guy for us and it’s telling her we don’t trust her. She’ll never go for it.”

“Do we have to tell her?” Mikey asks with a shrug.

“Yes!” Conor and I reply in unison.

“Okay. Just a thought.”

“Let’s see if there is anything else she can dig up and if Hayden gives us any reason to, I’ll broach the subject of Jax taking a look into him too. Okay?”

“Okay,” Mikey and Conor agree.

CHAPTER 22

LIAM

I walk into Jessie's bedroom to find her lying on the bed.
"Go away!" she snaps when I walk into the room.

I ignore her and close the door behind me. She's been crying and I hate to see her upset, especially when I'm the cause of it, but that doesn't stop the anger burning through my veins. She is one of the smartest people I know, so how can she be so fucking naïve when it comes to trusting people?

After everything she's been through, she still sees the best in everyone. I know that makes me a complete hypocrite, because that used to be one of the things I loved about her – the fact that she sees the positives in everything and everyone. But now it just terrifies me, ever since I found her in that basement back in Ireland and for a few horrible seconds, I thought she was dead and I'd lost her forever. I can't get that image out of my head. Try as I might, I can't forget that feeling and the complete despair I felt in that moment. I'm not sure I would survive losing her.

"I don't want to talk to you, Liam," she says with a sigh as I approach the bed.

"Then just listen."

She rolls her eyes and it stirs something in me that I've never felt before with her. I want to spank her ass until she's begging me to stop.

"I don't want to listen to you either, because you're an asshole!"

I clench my fists into balls. “An asshole?”

She turns her head so she can glare at me. “Yes! I expect that kind of crap from Shane, and even Conor, but not you!” She pushes herself off the bed and stalks toward the bathroom and I am hot on her heels.

I grab hold of her arm and turn her to face me. “So, everyone else gets to speak their mind, but not me? Is that it?” I snarl at her as every nerve in my body burns with a pent-up rage that I haven’t felt in a long time. I have never felt it with her before and I don’t know what to do with it.

“That’s not what I said,” she glares at me defiantly.

“Then what is it, Jessie? Why does everyone else get to be an asshole to you but not me?” I challenge her.

She blinks at me and my heart constricts in my chest as I wait for her to answer me. Is this where she tells me that I’m just the added extra? That she could do without me as long as she has my three brothers? That they give her everything I can’t?

“I...” She shakes her head. “Forget about it!”

She turns and goes to walk away from me but I keep hold of her arm and stop her in her tracks. “Don’t turn your fucking back on me, Jessie!” I hiss as I pull her toward me until our bodies are just inches apart.

“Liam!” She gasps at the harshness in my tone, but her eyes darken with heat.

I’m holding tightly to her wrist and her pulse thrums against my skin. It’s racing, just like mine is. She glares at me, her eyes full of fire and anger. Fury radiates from both of us like heat from a raging inferno. She gasps in a stuttered breath that makes her tits rise and fall and suddenly my cock is throbbing as hard as the blood in my veins.

I stare at her, my jaw clenched so tight that my teeth are grinding together. I need to do something with this anger that is burning through me, so I do the only thing that comes to mind. I am going to fucking bury myself in her cunt until she screams my name.

I pick her up and wrap her legs around my waist before carrying her to the dresser a few feet away. I throw her onto it, causing the small bottle of perfume she has on there to fall off onto the floor. The glass shatters and the fresh citrus smell fills my senses. It smells so much like her that it makes my cock throb painfully.

Her body is trembling but she winds her arms around my neck as she keeps her legs wrapped around my waist. I pull my cock free from my sweatpants before reaching between her thighs and tugging her panties to the side. My knuckles brush over her folds and I realize she's not quite wet enough for this, but I'm going to fuck her anyway. I'm going to fuck her until I feel better.

I drive my cock into her tight pussy and her walls squeeze around me.

She hisses out a breath as she claws at my neck. "Liam!" she half-groans, half-shouts.

I pull her closer to me with my arms around her waist until there isn't a millimeter of space between. "Is this what you want?" I growl as I rail into her.

"Fuck! Yes!" she pants as she pulls me deeper, her nails scratching my skin.

I fuck her harder than I have ever fucked anyone in my life, my thighs smacking against the drawers and the dresser banging loudly against the wall behind us.

"Liam!" she shouts as I drive harder and the whole dresser starts to rattle as the drawers slide in and out and it bounces off the wall. It's going to fall to pieces if I don't let up but I don't care. I'll buy her a dozen new dressers if I need to. My fingers dig into the soft flesh of her hips as I tilt her back and go deeper, making her groan loudly.

I bury my face against her neck and bite on the tender spot beneath her ear and she starts to whimper, rocking her hips against mine as though she can't get enough even as I'm giving every single fucking thing I have. My balls draw up into my stomach as I'm overcome with a need to claim her.

She is fucking mine and I will never let anyone take her from me.

“Fuck! I will never get enough of you,” I growl in her ear.

“Liam, I need you,” she groans as she pulls at my hair and suddenly all the not feeling good enough disappears. She wants this as much as I do.

I pick her up from the dresser and carry her to the bed instead. When I pull out of her, she groans in frustration.

“I just want you naked, baby,” I pant as I reach for her dress and peel it off over her head. Then I pull her panties off too and toss them onto the floor before I settle back between her thighs and she wraps her arms and legs around me again. Her skin is soft and hot against mine. Her nipples are hard against my chest as she pulls me close. When I sink into her smooth, wet heat she moans my name so fucking loudly it makes me feel like I’m going to blow my load in her right now.

“I love fucking you, Jessie,” I breathe in her ear.

“I love it too.”

I rail into her harder than before, nailing her into the mattress. Every thrust. Every scratch of her nails on my skin. Every whimper and moan that I pull from her body makes the rage inside me ebb away.

When she finally comes, squeezing and dripping all over my cock, she screams my name so loudly that I think everyone on this block must have heard. The feeling of her hot pussy milking me as she does tips me over the edge too and by the time we’re both done, we’re panting for breath, our bodies completely spent.

I lie on top of her, my head resting on her chest as she curls her fingers through my hair.

“I’m sorry about what I said,” she whispers.

“I know, baby,” I whisper back. “Me too.”

“Why are you so upset about Hayden?”

I push myself up and roll onto my side, bringing her with me so that we can lie facing each other. “I don’t trust him.”

“I get that,” she frowns at me. “I’m pretty sure your brothers don’t either, but this is about more than that, Liam.”

I nod at her. It’s about so much more, but how do I tell her that I can’t stop thinking about her in that basement back in Ireland?

She places her hand on my chest, right over my heart. “What is it?” she whispers. “Please tell me.”

“When I saw you chained to that bed in Paul’s basement, Jessie, I thought you were dead.”

She blinks at me.

“It was the worst few moments of my entire life. I...” I suck in a breath and she shuffles closer to me, draping her leg over mine until our bodies are flush together.

“I didn’t know that,” she whispers.

“You were so cold and still. I thought I was never going to see your smile or your eyes, or feel your warm skin on mine. I dream about it all the time and when I wake up and you’re not there...”

“Liam.” She presses a soft kiss on my lips. “I’m not going anywhere.”

“But what if he’s not who he says he is, Jessie? What if he wants something more from you?”

“I know you think I’m being naïve, but I’m not stupid, Liam. There is a chance Hayden is lying or has an ulterior motive, but by the same token, there is also a chance that he’s not. I don’t want to be the kind of person who always assumes the worst of people. I’m sorry, but I can’t be that, not even for you.”

“I don’t want you to change who you are, Jessie,” I tuck her hair behind her ear. “I just want you to be careful.”

“I will be.” She smiles at me and my cock twitches to life again.

“What were you going to say before?”

Her beautiful face pulls into a frown. “When?”

I don’t want to argue with her again, but I have to know the answer. “When I asked you why everyone but me gets to be an asshole to you?”

She blushes and her eyelids flutter. “I... It’s silly,” she whispers.

“Not to me.”

She looks into my eyes and bites on her lip.

“Stop chewing your lip and answer me.”

“I do like this bossy side of you,” she purrs.

“Then answer the damn question, Jessie!”

“You remember you were the first to kiss me?” she breathes and I wonder if she’s answering the question or trying to distract me.

“Of course I do. I think about that night all the damn time.” It was the night all of our lives changed. One minute, me, her and Mikey were watching movies on the couch and the next thing I was kissing her. A few moments later, I tasted her pussy for the first time and I’ve been addicted to her from that moment. Mikey and I fucked her together shortly afterward and we’ve been fucking her every chance we get since.

“I do too,” she smiles at me. “You were the first man I kissed that I ever really wanted to kiss, Liam.”

“What?” I blink at her. How can that be true? She was twenty-six when we met.

“I kissed a boy when I was fifteen and I wanted that,” she adds. “But he was just a boy.”

“Jessie, I don’t understand.” I shake my head.

“I had sex with plenty of guys, and not always through choice,” she says it so matter-of-factly that it makes me want to kill every man who has ever laid a finger on her. “Some

were through choice, of course, but usually as a means to an end. Because I needed information, or a place to stay or something.” She shrugs. “And occasionally just to scratch an itch, but they could have been anyone and I never kissed them. I mean our lips may have touched briefly, but we weren’t kissing. No tongues or open mouths.”

I realize I must be looking at her funny now because she starts to babble. “It’s not that all of the others forced me, and I even enjoyed it sometimes...” Her cheeks redden further.

“You don’t have to explain yourself to me, Jessie.”

“I know.” She takes a deep breath. “I’m just trying to tell you that I never really wanted to kiss anyone before I met you and your brothers.”

“Fuck! Really?”

“Really.”

“But what does that have to do with me being an asshole?”

“I kind of always saw you as...” She chews on her lip again and my heart stops beating. What the fuck does she see me as?

“As what?”

“My ride or die. The one who’ll always have my back, even when I’m being an asshole too,” she finally says and my heart starts beating again and I feel like a complete jackass for thinking that she thought any less of me than she does my brothers. “Conor and Shane kind of have that, and obviously you and Mikey do. I just thought... Like I said, I’m being silly.”

“I have always got your back, baby. One hundred percent.”

“I know,” she smiles.

“I can’t keep quiet when I think you’re in danger though. That’s having your back too.”

“I know that, but sometimes I feel like it’s the four of you, and then me.”

“Jessie!” I roll on top of her, pinning her to the mattress again. “It is never like that. There is no us and you, just us. Tell me that you believe that?”

“I do most of the time,” she breathes. “I think I’m just feeling emotional right now for some reason. Maybe it’s thinking about my little brothers and my mom and dad.”

“Maybe.” I kiss her softly and she opens her mouth, allowing me to slide my tongue inside. My cock is already hard again and she rocks her hips against me, grinding herself on me. I pull back from our kiss, leaving her gasping for breath. “You’re insatiable, you know that?”

“Says the guy with the huge boner?” She arches an eyebrow at me.

I rub my nose along the column of her throat. She smells so fucking good. “Shall I fuck you again, baby?”

“Yes.”

“Properly this time.” I arch an eyebrow at her.

“What do you mean?” she purrs.

“Before wasn’t the way I usually fuck you, was it?”

“No,” she giggles, “but it was hot.”

“You liked it, huh?”

“Couldn’t you tell?”

“Well, your pussy was gripping me like it was never gonna let me go.” I grin at her.

“That’s because I never want to let you go, Liam Ryan.” She smiles at me as she wraps her arms around my neck and pulls me closer, and I’m pretty sure there is no man on this earth who is happier than me right now.

CHAPTER 23

SHANE

I fasten my Breitling onto my wrist as I walk into the kitchen. Jessie is sitting on the breakfast bar, with Liam standing between her thighs as he kisses her. He didn't leave her bedroom last night after he went after her, so Conor, Mikey and I left them to it.

"Haven't you two had enough of each other by now?" I ask as I sit beside them and pour myself a fresh coffee. "I mean we all heard you make-up fucking all last night."

Jessie blushes even though there is no way she can't have known we didn't hear them. At one point we were worried they were killing each other until we heard her coming – loudly.

"Never," Liam says with a grin as he pulls back from her and turns to me. "You want a protein shake? I was just gonna make one."

I arch an eyebrow at him. "I'd rather have scrambled eggs."

"Fine." He rolls his eyes and walks to the refrigerator.

"Did you sleep okay?" Jessie asks as she shuffles along the counter until she's sitting in front of me.

"Not really. I never sleep well when you're not with me."

"Sorry," she whispers.

I slide my arms around her waist. "You don't need to apologize. It's just a fact."

“A fact that you can’t function without me?” She grins at me.

“I can function without you,” I say, bending my head and dropping a soft kiss on her bare thigh, “but I don’t want to.”

She runs her fingers through my hair and my cock twitches to life. Fuck, I wish I had time to take her back to bed. Even just to lie next to her for a while. I’m so fucking tired, but there are never enough hours in the day. I need to cut back on work, but every time I try, something seems to go wrong.

I look up at her and she gives me the sweetest smile. Sometimes I think about leaving everything behind and running away with her and my brothers. Living in our lake house, with a few kids running around and no shit to deal with.

“You look tired,” she whispers.

“I’m fine.”

“You’re working too hard.” She tugs gently on my hair, tilting my head back so she can stare into my eyes and right into my goddamn soul.

I wrap my arms tighter around her waist. “Come here.” I pull her to me until her thighs are wrapped around me. Grabbing a fistful of her hair, I pull her lips to mine and kiss her and she moans softly into my mouth. “Fuck, Jessie,” I groan as I pull away from her. “I need to stop before I take you to bed and barricade us in for the rest of the week.”

“That sounds good to me.”

“Not a chance.” Liam appears with a plate of scrambled egg and two slices of toast.

Jessie scoots down off the counter and sits beside me. “I need you with me today,” I say to Liam before I take a bite of my food.

“Why? We having more problems?” He frowns.

“What problems?” Jessie asks.

I swallow before I answer them. “It’s nothing we can’t handle. More of an annoyance than anything else,” I say to

Jessie. “But yeah, someone has been upsetting some of our customers again. I just need to smooth some things over but it won’t hurt to taken some muscle along.”

“Is there anything I can do to help?” Jessie asks.

“No, sweetheart. We got it.”

“Okay, but let me know if I can do anything, especially if it keeps happening. I mean I know you say it’s just an annoyance but if it’s happened before then someone is deliberately targeting you, right?”

I hate that she said you and not us but I let it go. “But they’re such minor issues though. I mean if someone wanted to seriously target us, they’d make more of a move. At least that’s how it’s always been in the past.”

“You say it’s minor but it’s got two of you dealing with it.”

“Only because it involves some of our best customers,” I tell her. Usually I would let some of our employees sort minor disputes but this security contract is one of our biggest and the director can get a little antsy if he doesn’t speak to me or Conor.

“It could be a distraction,” Jessie says with a shrug. “Just don’t dismiss the idea that it’s something bigger is all I’m saying.”

“She has a point,” Liam chips in.

“Hmm.” I rub a hand over my jaw. She does.

TWO HOURS LATER, Liam and I are on our way to Connecticut to meet with Brad Sawyer, the director of Sawyer Transport. We provide security for him amongst other things.

“You and Jessie sort your differences then?” I ask Liam

“We did,” he says as a smile flickers over his lips.

“I’ve never seen you so worked up like that with her before. There something else going on, son?”

He sucks in a breath. “I know I’ve been a dumbass over this Hayden guy...”

“But?”

“But I don’t trust him and I’m terrified that someone is gonna take her from us, Shane. I mean every time we think her past is behind her, it comes back and bites us all on the ass. I couldn’t handle it if we lost her again.”

“I know. None of us could, but you have to stop living every day thinking you’re going to lose her. You’ll drive yourself and her crazy if you don’t.”

“I keep seeing her in that basement, Shane. I keep dreaming about it, only in my dream, she’s dead. Then I wake up and I think it’s real and I relive the most horrible moment of my life over and over again.”

I reach over and put my hand on the back of his neck. “You’ve been through a lot this past year. Maybe—”

“I don’t want to talk to no shrink,” he interrupts me.

“Okay. But just talk to us then. Stop keeping it all bottled in until you explode like you did last night.”

“Okay,” he says with a soft sigh.

We’re quiet for a while and when I turn to look at him, he’s got a goofy smile on his face.

“Making up was that good, huh?” I chuckle.

“It was fucking epic.” He laughs too. “I can see why you argue with her all the time.”

“Not all the time.” I shake my head.

“Not as much as you used to, no, but still...”

I arch an eyebrow at him. “Well, you said yourself, fucking epic.”

“You’re definitely less tightly wound than you used to be, bro,” Liam goes on. “Our girl is good for us.”

I roll my shoulders and flex my neck. I don’t feel less tightly wound today, but I do agree that she’s good for us. In fact, Jessie Ryan is the best thing that’s ever happened to the Ryan family.

CHAPTER 24

JESSIE

I wrap my arms around Mikey's neck and press a soft kiss against his throat. "I wish you didn't have to work tonight," I whisper in his ear.

"So do I, Red," he chuckles as he slides his arms around my waist. "But Conor is downstairs on his own, so I gotta go."

"I know," I say with a sigh. Conor manages the brothers' nightclub and the twins manage the security side. They all work there at least four nights a week in a pair so one of them is always home with me and Shane. They used to work there almost every night, but since we got married, all of the brothers spend less time working and more time in the apartment. It took some time, but all of us have found a better work-life balance between us, even Shane who is still something of a workaholic, but less than he was.

"Why don't you come with me?" Mikey asks with a flash of his eyebrows. "It will sure make my night more interesting to have you doing the rounds with me."

"Won't I distract you?"

"I sure fucking hope so," he replies with a chuckle. "Especially as you're going to wear those crotchless panties for me."

"I can't wear them to the club," I protest, even as the thought sends shivers of pleasure skittering up my spine.

He bends his head and grazes his teeth over the delicate skin of my neck before he replies, "You can, because I won't let you out of my sight for even a second. Now go change!"

He slaps my ass, making me giggle and then he sits on my bed and waits for me to get dressed.

AS MIKEY and I work our way through the club, he holds onto my hand tightly. People greet him as we pass. Even though he's with me, I don't miss the admiring glances he draws from both men and women alike, but I suppose he is the perfect package. Tall. Handsome. Powerful. He turns to me and winks and I smile back at him, feeling like the luckiest woman in the world that I get to call him and his brothers mine.

We just left Conor in his office. He spends most of his time in there while he's at the club, while Mikey and Liam prefer to stay out where the customers are, keeping an eye out for any potential trouble. They have an amazing security team, but they much prefer to be in the midst of any action rather than behind a desk. I suppose that's why the brothers work so well together. Each of them has their own role which they're happy with.

When we reach the downstairs VIP area, Mikey leads us to a quieter corner of the room.

I know you want me by Pitbull comes on and I grin at him because it's one of our favorite songs and he sings it to me all the time. Wrapping his arms around my waist, he presses his mouth against my ear. "You want to dance, Red?"

"Hmm." I chew on my lip as though I'm considering his proposal even though there is only one answer to his question. "Yes." I snake my arms around his neck and he pulls me closer as we move to the music.

His hands roam over my back and ass and I suck in a breath as warmth floods my core. His solid chest is pressed up against me, making my nipples harden as our bodies grind against each other.

"I can't stop thinking about what you're wearing under this dress," he groans softly in my ear as he rocks his hips against mine.

"I can tell," I giggle as his hard cock presses against my abdomen.

“Have you ever come in public before, Red?” he growls as his lips dust over my ear making me shiver in anticipation.

“Once. In a restaurant in Ireland with Shane.”

“Really?” he murmurs as he trails soft kisses over my throat.

“Yes,” I say against his ear so he can hear me over the loud music. “But it was dark and quiet, and we couldn’t really be seen.”

“Well, it’s dark in here,” he chuckles.

I look around at the sea of other bodies surrounding us. Some so close they are almost touching. “But there are people all around us.” I gasp as his hand slides to my ass and he squeezes hard.

“I won’t let anyone see what I’m doing. Promise,” he says, his breath dusting over the shell of my ear. “But I need to take advantage of those damn panties.”

I pull my head back and stare into his eyes. They are full of mischief and trouble, but they are also dark with lust. Damn, he is so freaking hot. How am I supposed to resist him? And I trust him. If he says he won’t let anybody see, then... “Okay,” I breathe and he grins in response.

He steps forward, pushing me back slightly until we’re standing near one of the large pillars in the basement of the club. “You think you can keep a straight face while I’m making you come?” he chuckles in my ear.

“No,” I admit with a shake of my head and he laughs loudly.

“That’s okay. I got you.” He flashes his eyebrows at me as he presses me back against the pillar, one hand on my ass while the other slides to my front, down to the edge of my mini dress before slipping between my thighs. “Open a little wider, Red,” he whispers and I obey, allowing him easier access to my pussy. He circles the tip of one finger over my clit and I suck in a breath as I wrap my arms around his neck. “Fuck! I’m gonna make you wear these damn panties every day, Red. Such easy access to this sweet pussy.”

“Mikey!” I whimper. I’m not so sure about this now. Everyone around us is going to know what we’re doing.

“It’s okay, Red,” he soothes in my ear. Then with his free hand, he presses my face into his neck. “Just keep your head right here and you’ll be fine. I promise that I’ll stop if anyone gets too close or sees us. Okay?”

“Okay,” I murmur as I press my lips against his throat and inhale his intoxicating smell. Then his hand is back on my ass as he holds me tight to him while he starts to toy with my clit again.

“So fucking wet,” he whispers in my ear. “I’m gonna make you come all over my fingers in the middle of our club, Red.”

I bite on my lip to stop myself from moaning loudly because even the way he talks to me has me needy and desperate to grind myself on his fingers.

He teases me slowly, his fingers barely moving as we keep on swaying to the music. I tell myself that anyone who does look our way will just see us dancing closely, but if he keeps this maddening teasing up much longer then I’ll be so desperate for him, I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t care if he pinned me against the pillar and fucked me in full view of everyone.

“Mikey, I need more,” I groan into his ear.

“Soon, Red,” he murmurs. “You’re so fucking greedy for me.”

I press a soft kiss on the base of his throat and rock my hips against his hand and my clit pulses at the slight increase in friction.

“Fuck!” he hisses, but it has the desired affect and he glides his hand further up my dress until one of his fingers slides to where I want him. He presses the tip against me, swirling gently at my wet entrance, taunting me with the promise of more. I try to move to take him inside me but he holds me in place with his huge frame.

“This what you want?” he growls as he pushes the tip in a fraction.

“Yes!” I gasp, my face still pressed against his neck.

“Yes what?”

“Please, Mikey?”

“I love making you beg, Red,” he groans as he pushes his finger all the way inside me and my walls squeeze him tightly as I coat him in a rush of slick heat.

“Ah!” I moan into his ear and he rewards me by adding a second digit. He moves them slowly in and out of me and my knuckles turn white as I grip the collar of his suit jacket. My legs tremble as delicious waves of pleasure pulse through my body along with the heavy bass of the music from the club.

“This is what you want, right?” he chuckles as he drives in further and I gasp against his skin. “Your tight little pussy is so needy, Red,” he breathes in my ear. “I love how much my girl loves a finger-fucking. You can’t get enough of me, can you?”

“Mikey,” I groan as he maintains a steady rhythm with his fingers while the palm of his hand nudges my clit. I am teetering on the precipice of oblivion and if he doesn’t stop with the filthy talk I’m going to mount him in full view of all these people.

“You gonna come for me like my good girl?” he chuckles and my knees almost buckle. Dammit he’s onto my praise kink now too. As if him and his brothers didn’t already drive me crazy enough with the things they do to me. “You think I didn’t notice that the other night? When I was fucking you while Conor was in your ass and he called you his good girl. How tight this pussy squeezed me?”

I whimper into his neck as my walls squeeze him, proving his point.

“Well are you?” he hisses as he drives his fingers deeper, curling the tips inside me so he can press on that spot that makes me come apart.

I squeeze my thighs together as my orgasm threatens to burst out of me but he pulls his fingers out slightly and it ebbs away.

“You’re not playing fair,” I murmur in his ear.

“Well, I learned from the best, Red,” he says softly and I’m pretty sure he’s talking about his oldest brother.

But I learned a lot from him too. I slide one of my hands down Mikey’s back and then beneath his suit jacket. Then I rub his back, dragging my fingernails up and down his spine, because it drives him crazy. His muscles flex beneath his soft cotton shirt and he starts to work his fingers harder.

“I thought no one was supposed to see us, Red?” he hisses in my ear as he pushes his body further against mine until I’m pinned to the pillar.

I breathe deeply as I try to focus on maintaining at least some modicum of decency. But I’m overwhelmed by everything that’s happening. The loud music and his soft groans in my ear as he tries to maintain control. The feel of his lips at my neck. His groin pressed against mine and his hard cock digging into me as though to remind me what I have in store later. His soft, kisses. His powerful hands, one squeezing my ass as he pulls me to him while the fingers of his other one drive in and out of me.

“You’re dripping all over me,” he hisses in my ear. “I’m gonna make you scream my name in front of all these people, Red.”

“No, I can’t,” I mumble as I press my mouth against the hot skin of his throat. I part my lips as I kiss him softly, darting out my tongue and licking a trail over his damp skin. He tastes so good, I could lick him from head to toe.

A low growl rumbles in his throat. “If you don’t stop that, I’m gonna fuck you right here,” he snarls in my ear and I feel a rush of wet heat as I get closer and closer to that edge.

I look down and seeing Mikey’s hand beneath my dress, I imagine the muscles on his huge forearm flexing as he thrusts his fingers inside me and I come undone.

“Mikey, I’m gonna...” I can’t even finish my sentence as my orgasm crashes into my body like a subway train. As it does, Mikey’s free hand moves to the back of my head, and he

keeps my face pressed into the crook of his neck, muffling my groans as the tremors roll through my core.

“God, you make me want to bury my cock in you so fucking bad,” he whispers as he rubs my clit softly while I cling to him, my entire body shaking as I come down from the epic high he’s just given me.

CHAPTER 25

CONOR

I stare at the image on the computer screen with my mouth hanging open in shock and my cock straining against the zipper of my suit pants as I watch my deviant little brother making my wife come in the middle of our fucking nightclub. At first I wasn't sure that was what he was doing. They could have just been slow dancing, but as soon as he pressed her face against his neck I knew.

I should have run down there and told him to stop, but I was rooted to the fucking spot. Anger burns through my veins that he would do that while people stood just inches away from her. That someone might see is bad enough. But somebody could have accidentally brushed up against her while he was making her come. Felt her trembling in that way that's only for us. Heard her fucking soft, moans and whimpers. Got even the slightest scent of her hot, wet pussy.

If I had gone down there I might have punched him in the mouth, or even worse I might have joined in on the action - either way, I would have caused a huge fucking scene and none of us want that.

If I needed any further proof of what the two of them have just done, watching Mikey put two fingers in his mouth and suck them clean just gave it to me.

God, I am going to fucking kill him.

I walk to my office door and stick my head out. "Chester!" I shout to our head bouncer standing nearby.

"Yes, Boss?" He jogs over to me.

“Go find Mikey and my wife in the VIP area and tell them to meet me in the apartment. Now!” I bark.

“Yes, Boss,” Chester says with a nod before he disappears into the crowd.

I STAND in Shane’s office as I wait for my asshole younger brother and my horny wife to get up to the apartment. I hear her giggling in the hallway and it makes the rage burn in my chest. I hold onto the back of Shane’s office chair, my knuckles turning white as I will myself to calm the fuck down before I say something I’m going to regret.

The two of them stroll into the room with smiles on their faces, her cheeks flushed pink still after she just came in a room full of complete strangers.

“Everything okay, Con?” Mikey asks.

“No it’s fucking not okay, you fucking selfish asshole!” I snarl.

“What the fuck?” he snarls back while Jessie stands beside him, blinking at me in shock.

“You just finger-fucked my wife in the middle of my fucking nightclub!” I shout.

Jessie’s cheeks redden further while Mikey scowls at me.

“No, I finger-fucked *my* wife, in *my* nightclub, jackass!”

“Hey!” Jessie tries to interrupt us but I ignore her and focus on him, because it’s easier to be mad at him than her.

“She is *our* wife, which means you don’t just get to do whatever the hell you want with her, Mikey.”

“What?” he walks toward me, squaring his shoulders as he approaches. “So, I’m supposed to ask your permission before I make my own wife come now, is that it?”

“You were in a room full of fucking strangers!” I shout, remaining behind the chair because if I step toward him too, I might just knock him on his ass.

“Nobody saw a thing,” he says with a shrug.

“I saw *every* fucking thing!” I shout louder. “She is not some random that you picked up at the bar, so don’t fucking treat her like one.”

“Conor,” Jessie shouts now too and I turn and blink at her. The hurt on her face is obvious, but I’m too pissed at the two of them to back down.

“What is the big fucking deal, Con?” Mikey asks. “We were just having a little fun.”

I push the chair aside and march over to him, bringing my face close to his. “The big deal is that I would have to fucking kill any man who watched my wife come, you fucking selfish little prick.”

Mikey scowls at me, the tension in his shoulders matching mine. My fists are clenched by my sides as I wait for his apology.

“What the fuck is going on?” Shane’s voice cuts through the tension in the room but it is Liam’s hands I feel on my shoulders and his voice I hear in my ear. “Calm down, Con,” he says softly. I remain glaring at his twin for a few seconds before I step back.

“Mikey fucked Jessie in the VIP room downstairs.”

“I didn’t,” Mikey snarls.

“He did not!” Jessie adds.

Shane and Liam look at the three of us in confusion.

“I finger-fucked her,” Mikey adds with a shake of his head.

“Oh my God,” Jessie hisses as her cheeks flame with heat and shame, and a part of me feels guilty for making her feel bad about herself. But the anger overrides it.

“Mikey,” Shane says with a sigh. “Why the fuck would you do that?”

“Really, Shane? You of all people are asking me that?” Mikey frowns at our oldest brother.

“That was different, nobody could see us,” Shane replies and I shake my head in disbelief.

“You too?” I snap. “Is there anyone in this room who hasn’t made my wife come in front of a room full of strangers?”

“What?” Jessie gasps in the background.

“For a start, she wasn’t your wife at the time. Secondly, we were in a private booth in a quiet restaurant,” Shane says quietly as he makes his way toward me. He keeps his voice calm and controlled but I know he’s on the verge of losing his shit too. “But most importantly, Con, it was a mutual fucking decision between two consenting adults. And right now you are being very disrespectful to one of those people, so calm the fuck down and we’ll talk about this.”

“He let people watch her come, Shane.” I shake my head in disbelief that I’m the only one who has an issue with this.

“You’re an asshole, Conor Ryan,” Jessie says and I hear the crack in her voice and it breaks my heart. I look at her and consider apologizing for making her feel bad but she turns on her heel and walks out of the door.

“Nice work, dumbass,” Mikey snarls at me as he goes to walk after her.

“Stay!” Shane orders him and Mikey does as he’s told.

“Fuck, we’ve only been gone a few hours,” Liam says with a soft sigh and a shake of his head.

“What the fuck were you thinking, Mikey?” Shane asks. “You know how he is about people seeing her like that.”

Mikey looks between me and Shane. I do have major issues with anyone seeing Jessie undone that way. I’ve never been like that with anyone before and I wasn’t always like that with her either, but since she became my wife, I don’t know what changed. My possessive side has completely taken over. It’s why I refuse to go to one of our sex clubs on a date with her, even though she and my brothers all want to go.

“I didn’t think he’d be watching,” Mikey says.

“He’s always watching her,” Shane reminds him.

“I’m sorry, Con,” Mikey finally says with a sigh. “I know you don’t like the public thing, but I swear no one saw anything. I didn’t even let them hear her. I wouldn’t do that.”

I stare at my brothers. The anger slipping away and leaving a bitter taste of guilt in my mouth instead. “I just hate anyone seeing her like that. I can’t help it. It drives me crazy.”

“I know and I want to say it won’t happen again, Con, but…” Mikey shrugs.

“But what?” I frown at him.

“But it’s something you’re going to have to work on with her, bro, because it was fucking hot. I loved it and more importantly, Jessie loved it too. You know that he’s into the voyeur thing.” Mikey indicates his head toward Shane. “It’s only a matter of time before he actually fucks her in public.”

I look at Shane and frown, wanting him to tell me this will never happen. “I won’t until you’re okay with it,” Shane assures me.

“But you do want to?” I ask.

“Fuck, yeah,” he nods in response.

“Fuck!” I hold my head in my hands and sink onto Shane’s chair. “Was I just a complete asshole to Jessie?”

“Yup,” Mikey replies without missing a beat.

I shake my head. My brothers and I have lived together our whole lives and obviously we piss each other off occasionally. We can have huge fights but they’re forgotten moments later because we all know that each of us would do anything for the other. But Jessie is different. I would die for her just as much as I would my brothers, but she doesn’t fully get that yet and so it breaks my heart knowing that I’ve hurt her.

“Go make sure she’s okay,” Shane says to Mikey and Liam and they both go after her.

“Fuck!” I say again under my breath.

“You okay?” Shane sits on the edge of the desk next to me.

“I almost fucking punched him in the face, Shane,” I say with a shake of my head but my older brother laughs softly and it makes me smile.

“Well, it wouldn’t be the first time either of us has felt like punching the little miscreant. But at least you didn’t.” He arches an eyebrow at me.

“I need to work on this thing though, right?”

“Yes,” he says with a nod, “but not for me or Mikey. For her, because she’s into it, Con. And she would love to explore it with you too.”

“You think?”

He shakes his head. “I know.”

“Yeah,” I agree feeling even more guilty now that I upset her.

“You know how wet she gets when you spank her?” he grins at me.

“Yeah.” My cock twitches just at the thought.

“The public thing gets her just the same.” He punches me on the arm before he stands. “I’m having an early night for a change.”

“With Jessie?”

“Nope. I figured you’d want her to yourself after what you just did.”

“Thanks, bro.”

“Any time, dumbass.”

CHAPTER 26

JESSIE

I open the door to Shane's office and see Conor sitting in a chair in the darkness. Flipping on the light switch, the room is quickly bathed in bright light and he blinks at me.

"It's late," I say.

"I know," he whispers. "I came to find you earlier but you were with Liam and Mikey."

Walking over to him I perch on the desk beside him. I'm still wearing my dress from the club and his eyes roam over my body appreciatively.

"You know you made me feel really cheap earlier," I whisper.

"I know, Angel," he reaches for my hand and laces his fingers through mine. "I have no excuse for making you feel like that. You have more class and elegance in your little toe than I do in my entire body. And I'm so fucking sorry."

"I understand why it made you mad though."

"Still, I was a jackass. Can you forgive me?"

"Hmm." I chew on my lip. "Maybe?"

"Maybe?"

"Yep. Maybe I should punish you first though?"

His Adam's apple bobs in his throat as he swallows. "Punish me how?"

“For a start...” I open one of the desk drawers and pull out two lengths of rope that Shane keeps in here. I’ve been tied up with them plenty of times before, by both him and Conor, but I’ve never used them on anyone else. “I think I should tie you up for a change.”

He arches an eyebrow at me. “You want to tie me up?”

This is not how we play. This is not our relationship. He is dominant and I am completely submissive to him when it comes to sex. But I have no intention of changing that dynamic; he just doesn’t know it yet.

“Uh-huh.” I pull the length of rope through my fingers.

He narrows his eyes at me now, his curiosity well and truly piqued. “And then what?” he growls.

“Well, you’ll just have to wait and see, big guy.” I grin at him. “So are you up for the challenge or not?”

“Careful, Angel,” he warns as he reaches out and grabs my wrist. “Or you’ll be the one tied up in here.”

I shake my head and sigh dramatically. “So, you can give it but you can’t take it, Conor Ryan. That’s such a disappointment.”

“Fuck!” he hisses with a shake of his head. Then he holds out his wrists and my heart starts to hammer against my chest. I don’t even know if he’s going to like this, or if I can even do it right.

I take a deep breath and channel my inner Shane Ryan – bossy alpha-hole extraordinaire. “Hands on the armrests,” I command and he glares at me but he does as I instruct. I run my hand along his muscular forearm before I wrap the rope around his right wrist, securing it to the chair.

“That’s kind of tight.”

“What can I say, I learned it all from you.” I straddle him and press a soft kiss on his throat and he growls his appreciation. I remain on his lap while I secure his left wrist, pulling tight until the rope bites his skin. He narrows those deep brown eyes at me but he doesn’t flinch.

“You all safe and secure there, big guy?” I ask.

He pulls at his restraints. “Seems like.”

“Good,” I purr in his ear as I pepper soft kisses over the skin of his throat. Those ropes are thick and I tied them as tightly as I could. He’s most definitely restrained, but he’s more than capable of escaping if he wants it badly enough. And that’s the Conor I want. The tiger, not the pussycat.

“Now what?” he whispers in my ear.

“What do you think?” I catch his earlobe between my teeth and tug gently.

“You’re going to take out my cock and ride me like a good girl,” he offers.

“Well, that wouldn’t be much of a punishment now, would it?” I flash my eyebrows at him as I climb off him and he watches every single move I make.

Pressing my foot on the small brake on the base of the chair, I lock it in place to stop the wheels from being able to move.

“What are you doing?” he breathes as I take a step back from him.

“Punishing you,” I whisper. “I already told you that.”

He swallows hard, his breathing growing louder and faster.

“Showing you what you could have had tonight if you hadn’t been such a possessive asshole today,” I say as I reach for the edge of my dress and start to pull it up, working it slowly over my thighs.

“You love it when I’m a possessive asshole,” he growls and I smile because it’s true.

“Maybe,” I purr as I lift the dress high enough to expose the top of my sheer stockings.

“Fuck, Jessie,” he hisses.

“You like these?” I breathe as I lift the dress higher until my tiny black lace panties are exposed too. “And what about

these?”

“You know I do,” he growls.

“Such a shame you can’t peel them off me yourself.” I catch my lip between my teeth and he narrows his eyes in warning.

“Then untie me, Angel and I will.”

“I can’t do that, big guy. Sorry,” I whisper as I pull the dress off over my head and toss it onto the floor until I’m standing in my underwear. My bra is sheer and my pebbled nipples protrude through the fabric. His eyes roam over my body and he pulls at his restraints.

I edge closer, leaning toward him so that my breasts are inches from his face. He lunges forward, his mouth open as he tries to take a bite but I’m too fast and his teeth clamp together with a soft click, making me chuckle.

“You’ve made your point, Jessie. Now untie me.”

“Made my point?” I shake my head at him. “I haven’t even started yet.”

I take a few more steps back as I reach behind me and unhook my bra, letting it drop to the floor. Sliding my hands over my skin, I palm my breasts, kneading each of them in my hands and wishing it was him doing this instead of me.

He sucks in a breath at the sight. “Fuck, Jessie, that’s enough. Let me out of these.” He pulls at the ropes again, making the chair rattle.

“You know I’d love to, but...” I purr as I tug on my nipples. “I’m having way too much fun seeing you squirm.”

“The longer you leave me tied up like this, the more I’m going to make you beg for my cock!” he hisses.

“Oh, I think you’ll be the one doing the begging, big guy.” I grin at him and then I look at his cock straining at the zipper of his trousers. “Because that looks super-painful.”

“It is,” he growls. “Untie me, Angel. I said I’m sorry.”

“Nope.” I step back toward the sofa and sit down. Then I lean back, spreading my legs wide and planting a foot either side of me until I’m revealing that my tiny panties are crotchless too.

“Fuck!” he snarls, pulling harder at the ropes until the chair starts rocking violently.

A shudder runs down my spine as I watch him growing increasingly agitated but I can’t stop now. This is his punishment, right?

I run my hand over my breasts and my stomach before dipping between my thighs and sliding two fingers through my slick folds.

“Jesus, Conor, I’m soaking wet,” I hiss as I circle my clit. Closing my eyes, I let my head hang back as the soft waves of pleasure roll through my body.

“I can fucking see that,” he snaps, still pulling on the ropes. “Come here and let me taste that pussy.” I ignore him and he rattles the chair again as he pulls at his restraints. “Come untie me and I’ll take care of you. This is your last chance.”

I lift my head until I can look into his eyes and they blaze with fire and fury. The veins in his neck bulge as he struggles against the ropes. I give myself a virtual pat on the back for tying those knots so well. Shane’s office chair is sturdy. It kind of has to be given all the fucking we do on it, but any moment now, Conor is going to tear it to pieces to break free.

“My last chance for what?” I tease him.

“Jessie! Untie me. Now!” he barks.

This is it. The turning point. So, am I all in or not?

I take a deep breath. “Not a chance,” I say, maintaining eye contact as I sink two fingers inside my pussy and groan in pleasure.

That tips him over the edge and he struggles some more before he lets out a roar of frustration and rips the armrests clean off the chair.

I swallow a gulp of air as he stands, two huge pieces of metal dangling from his arms as he works quickly to untie the ropes now that he can reach them.

All I can do is watch him. I'm frozen still. My heart pounding in my chest as I wait for him to make his way over to me. He looks like he's been possessed by a demon – but he has never looked hotter. He is about to fuck me into oblivion and I am totally here for it.

Just as he's loosening the last of the rope he looks up at me, his eyes burning into me so fiercely I feel like I might melt.

“You'd better run, Angel,” he says as he licks his lips and I realize he is not playing.

I spring up from the sofa and run straight for the door. My stockinged feet don't have the best grip and I can't move as fast as I'd like to.

I run straight into the hallway. My heart beats wildly in my chest. Adrenaline pulses through my veins giving me a surge of energy as I race toward the other end of the apartment.

My rational brain knows I'm not in any real danger, but that doesn't stop the fight or flight response from completely overtaking my body.

When I hear Conor running behind me, I pump my arms faster, trying to get a grip on the solid wooden floor as my feet slide back slightly every time I take a step, losing me vital seconds. I mean as if Conor being a foot taller than me didn't already give him enough of an advantage. I gasp for breath as I hear him closing in behind me, getting closer with each second no matter how fast I run.

I sense him before I feel him and I yelp in terror right before he body-slams me into the wall, shaking the breath from my lungs. I tremble beneath the weight of him as he pins me against the cool plaster.

His hot breath dances over the skin of my neck, making me shiver. “You should have run faster,” he growls in my ear and I almost pass out from terror, anticipation and excitement.

Then his hands are pulling at the waistband of my panties. He tears them off me in one swift move, causing the fabric to dig into my delicate flesh. “And you should have called for help when you had the chance,” he chuckles darkly before he shoves my balled up panties into my mouth.

All I can do is whimper, the sound muffled by the damp material. He pulls my hands behind me, binding my wrists tightly together with the same rope I just used on him. I try to wrench from his grip but he pulls the rope tighter until it pinches my skin and I moan softly as tears run down my cheeks and wet heat pools between my thighs.

When he’s done, he lifts me over his shoulder, slaps me on the ass and carries me to his bedroom like a caveman claiming his prize.

AS SOON AS we reach his room, Conor kicks the door closed behind him and tosses me face-down onto middle of the bed as though I’m as light as a feather. Then he grabs the rope binding my wrists, pulling me up until I’m on my knees on the end of the bed, my ankles hanging over the edge and my face pressed against the mattress.

“Do not move a fucking inch,” he orders and I swallow hard. I want to look behind me to see what he’s doing, but I don’t dare disobey him.

I strain to listen instead but the only sounds I hear are my heavy breathing and my heartbeat thumping in my ears. I figure he must be getting undressed because he isn’t touching me. Then I hear his footsteps on the wooden floor as he pads into the bathroom and the sound of the faucet being turned on makes fear and pleasure skitter along my spine. A few seconds later he is behind me and the warm water being poured over my ass makes me flinch.

Fuck!

I love that he is an expert when it comes to causing pain.

“Don’t move!” he repeats and I stay still as the water drips off me, onto the bed and the floor.

I mumble his name, the sound muffled my panty-stuffed mouth.

“Still think I’m going to be the one doing the begging, Angel?” he chuckles as he rubs a wet hand over my ass cheeks. I tense my muscles involuntarily. A spanking on wet skin is always much more painful.

“You need to relax,” he growls. “This is what you wanted, right?” He slaps my ass hard and it stings like a bitch.

I give a muffled cry and he slaps me again.

“Do you have any idea how fucking hard you make me?” he growls as he spanks me harder, making tears prick at my eyes. But despite the pain, wet heat sears between my thighs and my pussy throbs in anticipation. “How fucking torturous it was to have to watch you touching yourself and not being able to get to you?”

“No,” I whimper but the word isn’t even audible so I shake my head.

“Will you ever do that to me again?”

Dear God, yes!

“I asked you a question,” he snarls as he spanks me again.

I lie and shake my head.

He rewards me by sliding two thick fingers into my pussy and I groan loudly as I coat him in a rush of slick heat. He spanks me as he finger-fucks me and pain and pleasure fight for control of my body. Just as pleasure is about to win out, he pulls his fingers out of me and I cry in frustration.

Then he leans over me, tracing his tongue over the shell of my ear. “You smell so fucking sweet,” he growls. “I’d eat your pussy right now if I didn’t think it would tip you over the edge.”

I try to beg him to have a little mercy on me, but my words are drowned by my damn panties.

“Because you’re on the edge, aren’t you, Jessie?”

“Hmm.” I nod.

“It’s a shame bad girls don’t deserve to come, isn’t it?” he laughs as he pushes back up.

Asshole!

“And you’re so desperate to come, aren’t you, Angel?” he says as he grabs hold of my hips, his fingertips digging into my soft flesh. “Because your cream is dripping down your thighs.”

His words alone stoke the growing fire in me and the ripples of pleasure roll through my body. When he pushes the tip of his cock against my entrance, I moan loudly through my makeshift gag.

“You want this?” he chuckles as he edges slightly further, stretching me open so painfully slowly.

“Hmm,” I whimper.

“Only good girls get my cock,” he whispers as he pulls out of me and I close my eyes, my body pulsing with need and frustration. “And you’re not my good girl, are you?”

If I could talk I would tell him that I am and I always will be. Instead, I lie in silence as the tears roll down my cheeks. Every part of my body craves his touch, but more than that, my heart and soul crave his approval.

He spanks my ass again and a rush of wetness sears between my thighs, making me moan softly. “Being spanked isn’t really a punishment for you, is it, Jessie?” he growls. “You love my hands on you, don’t you? You love my belt. And the flogger. Anything that turns this pretty ass red?” He lands another hard slap in exactly the same place as before and it makes me gasp for breath.

“Maybe I should just fuck this ass instead? Leave your pussy dripping while I come in your tight little hole?” he growls and my stomach muscles contract.

I mean I’d take him fucking me anywhere with anything right now. I hear a soft sucking sound just before he slides his thumb into my ass and my thighs tremble.

“You think you could come just from having your ass fucked?” he breathes as he works his thumb in and out of me. “Or you need this too?” he adds as he thrusts two fingers inside my pussy again and starts to fuck both of my holes until I feel like I’m about to pass out.

“Hmm, my girl needs both, right?” he says as pulls his fingers out of my pussy and the wet sucking sound reverberates around the room making my cheeks flush with heat. “You hear how wet you are for me?” he hisses.

I mumble incoherently because even if my mouth wasn’t full of crotchless panties, I can barely form a rational thought. When he pushes the tip of his cock into me again, my knees buckle and I fall flat to the mattress, my entire body trembling with the need for release that he withholds.

“We’re not done, Angel.” He chuckles darkly as he grabs my hips and lifts me back up onto shaky knees.

I don’t know how much more I can take and as he rubs a warm hand over my ass cheeks, I brace myself for another spanking on my poor throbbing ass, but he grabs my ankles and flips me over instead, until I’m lying on my back, with my wrists still bound behind me.

To my relief, he pulls my panties out of my mouth and I suck in a deep breath.

“You have any idea how much I need to be inside you all the fucking time?” he growls as he crawls on top of me, wrapping one hand around my throat as he pins one of my thighs flat to the bed with the other. His hard cock nudges at my opening and wet heat surges between my thighs.

“Yes,” I croak.

“No you don’t, Jessie, because if you did, you wouldn’t have teased me like that in Shane’s office. You would know how dangerous it is to rile me up like that.”

“I…” I start to speak but he drives into me so hard that he steals the breath from my lungs and all I can do is gasp for air.

“You never keep this body from me, you got that?” he grunts as he drives into me again, fucking me so hard I feel

like I'm going to slip into unconsciousness. "You are *mine!*"

"Yes." I gasp out the word as I wrap my legs around him, trying to pull him closer and deeper even as I know it's not possible because there is not even a millimeter of space between us. He bites my neck and shoulders, causing the blood to bloom beneath my skin. These aren't the tiny, delicious bites I'm used to. They are hard. Feral. Driven by his need to mark me as his own.

"You're mine too. You got that?" I gasp, because he doesn't get to be the only possessive one here.

"Always, Angel," he grunts before he bites down on me again and suckles my skin.

I'm going to have a huge bruise there tomorrow but I don't care.

He releases his grip on my throat and pushes himself up onto his hands. "Sit up," he barks and I silently obey.

He reaches for my wrists and unties me, working quickly so that my hands are free and I sigh in relief as I stretch my aching limbs. Then he wraps both of his arms around me, lying us back down and squeezing me tight as he rails into me.

I rake my nails down his back as my walls clench around him.

"Your cunt is so fucking desperate for me," he hisses.

Our breathing is hard and fast, matching breath for breath as we try to take everything we can from each other.

"Conor," I whimper as my legs tremble and my body screams for some release.

"I told you I'd make you beg," he groans as he slams into me one last time and we both come hard, me roaring his name and him whispering obscenities in my ear.

When the final tremors of our climax have ebbed away, we lie together, him still inside me and our foreheads pressed together.

"Wow!" I whisper.

“I know,” he breathes. “Fuck, Jessie. You just turned me into some kind of demon.”

“A super-hot demon,” I giggle. “I thought you were going to lose your mind.”

“I almost did,” he groans as he trails soft kisses over the places where he bit me. “I need to put some arnica on these. Did I hurt you?”

“No.” I place my hand under his chin, lifting his head so I can look at him. “You know you could never hurt me like that.”

He narrows his eyes at me before pressing a soft kiss on my forehead.

“Conor?” I whisper.

“Yeah?”

“I am your good girl, right?” I ask, the words getting caught up in the emotion that wells in my throat. I enjoy being Shane’s brat but that’s not mine and Conor’s dynamic.

“Every second of every day, Angel.”

“Okay.” I smile at him.

“You are going to kill me one of these days though. Like I’m going to have a fucking heart attack from coming so hard.”

“You will not. If anyone is going to die from an orgasm, I think it will be me. But what a way to go,” I sigh contentedly and he laughs. “You might die when Shane sees what you did to his chair though. He’s going to lose his shit.”

“I’ll just tell him it was your fault.”

“Hey!” I swat at his chest. “Don’t I get in enough trouble with him without you blaming me for you hulking out on his chair?”

“Speaking of trouble.” He pushes himself up, pulling out of me as he looks down at where our bodies were just joined. He traces his fingertips over the top of my stockings. “I’m gonna need you to wear these way more often.”

“You like them?” I purr.

“Like them? I damn near came in my pants when I saw you standing there in them, and those fucking panties too,” he growls and his cock twitches against me.

“Then I’ll wear them whenever you want me to.”

“Yeah, you will. Because you’re mine.”

“Yours.”

CHAPTER 27

JESSIE

I wake up with Conor's huge arms wrapped around me. When I squirm a little his eyelids flutter open.

"What is it, Angel?" he asks, his voice even deeper than usual in his half-awake state.

"Nothing. I'm just stretching," I say as I free myself from his arms and stretch my limbs. As soon as I have, he pulls me back to him and buries his face against my neck, tickling me with his beard and making me giggle.

"How is that ass?" he asks.

"Hot and a little sore."

"Sorry." He laughs too.

"Don't be. You know I love it."

"Hmm," he nuzzles my neck and I wiggle my ass against his semi-hard cock. "Stop that or I'll tie you up again."

"Is that supposed to be a deterrent?" I arch one eyebrow at him. "Because you know it's not, right?"

He pushes himself up onto one elbow and takes one of my hands in his, turning it over and inspecting my wrist where he tied me with rope. There is a slight pink mark and he rubs the pad of his thumb over it. "You're a deviant, Jessie Ryan."

"But you love it?"

"Fuck, yes," he groans. "But no more fucking this morning."

“Aw.” I pout and he smiles at me.

“I fucked you so hard last night, Angel, and I’m gonna need you to be able to walk to breakfast this morning or my brothers will be pissed at me.”

My pussy throbs at the memory of him last night – feral and unrestrained. “I’ll be able to walk. Promise,” I whisper as I wrap my arms around his neck and pull his face close to mine. “As long as you’re gentle. You can do that, right?” I arch an eyebrow at him.

He rolls on top of me, settling between my thighs as I spread them wider for him. “With you I can,,,” he whispers.

“Then fuck me, Conor Ryan,” I giggle.

“No.” he shakes his head and starts to trail kisses over my throat, over my shoulders and breasts, peppering feather light kisses over all of the places where he marked me last night.

“Please,” I plead as I squirm with delight beneath his touch.

“No fucking,” he repeats as he moves lower, trailing his teeth, lips and tongue over my breasts and stomach. “But I will make you come.”

He moves lower until his head is between my thighs and I’m panting for breath. “Conor,” I gasp loudly, running my fingers through his hair as he runs his tongue the length of my pussy lips.

“Relax, Angel. Let me take care of you,” he whispers and then his head dips low and he sucks my clit into his mouth. I press my head back against the pillow and concentrate only on him and his magical tongue.

AFTER CONOR TOOK care of me twice with his incredible mouth, we threw on some clothes and are now wandering down the hallway toward the kitchen where the delicious smell of bacon and pancakes is wafting from the kitchen.

“Mmm.” I lick my lips as my stomach growls. “Smells like Mikey is up.”

“Yup,” Conor agrees as he squeezes my hand and together we walk into the kitchen to find his three brothers already in there. Mikey is cooking as usual, with a dish towel slung over his shoulder while he whistles the tune of *You know you want me*, and the memory of us dancing in the club last night makes me smile. Liam is pouring coffee and Shane is sitting at the breakfast bar flicking through his cell phone. Never off duty!

“Morning,” I say with a smile, making them all look toward me and Conor.

“Morning you two,” Liam replies with a wink.

“Morning,” Mikey says gruffly and I suspect he’s still a little pissed at Conor about last night. Shane places his cell on the counter and smiles at us both. Then he holds out his hand and I walk over to him, allowing him to pull me between his thighs before he gives me a soft kiss. “Morning,” he says softly. “I missed you.”

I wrap my arms around his neck. “I missed you too.”

“Coffee?” Liam interrupts us, sliding his hand around my waist and giving me a kiss on the cheek as he slides a mug of coffee onto the island in front of me.

“Thank you,” I whisper. Shane and Liam release me and I pull out a stool and hop on, wincing as I sit on the hard plastic.

Liam has already walked back over to the coffee but Shane notices my discomfort. He narrows his eyes at me. “You okay?” he asks quietly so his brothers won’t hear.

“Yeah. Just a little tender this morning.” My cheeks flush with warmth as I think about the incredible spanking Conor gave me. How hot it was to see him lose a little of the self-control he works so hard to maintain.

“Come here.” Shane pats his thighs. “It’s a softer seat.”

“I’m not sure I’d describe anything about you as soft.” I arch an eyebrow at him but I take his hand and he lifts me onto his lap. I lean against his chest and smile as he runs his hand over the top of my ass cheeks.

We both watch Conor and Mikey at the kitchen counter. Conor has his hand on Mikey's shoulder and the two of them talk quietly. When Mikey laughs loudly, Conor wraps his arm around his shoulder and kisses the top of his younger brother's head before walking to the kitchen island to join Shane and me. Shane smiles at me because we both know their fight from last night is completely dealt with.

When Conor is seated, Liam hands him a mug of coffee too before taking a seat beside him.

"You need any help there, bro?" Conor shouts to Mikey.

"No," he replies with a vigorous shake of his head. "I got it."

"So, Con," Shane says, wrapping his arm tightly around my waist. "Why is that Jessie here has a sore ass when you were supposed to be apologizing to her?" He arches an eyebrow in amusement making Conor roll his eyes while Liam chuckles softly beside him.

"You want to tell them, Angel?" Conor asks me with a tilt of his head.

"No." I blush.

"What did you do, Red?" Mikey wanders over now and leans his elbows on the counter, resting his chin on his hands.

"You been in your office yet?" Conor asks Shane.

"No. Why?" Shane frowns.

"Jessie tied me to your chair," he replies and both Liam and Mikey start to laugh.

"You tied him up?" Shane asks me.

"Yeah," I whisper. "It was his punishment."

"I would pay good money to see that," Mickey chuckles.

"That wasn't really the punishment though, was it?" Conor narrows his eyes at me.

"No."

“What else did you do, Red?” Mikey asks with a devilish grin.

I look at Conor, too embarrassed to describe what happened next myself.

“She gave me a fucking strip tease,” he says with a smile.

“Fuck!” Shane whispers as his hand grips my waist.

“Now that I would definitely pay good money to see.” Mikey grins at me.

“That doesn’t sound like a punishment to be honest, Con,” Liam says with a shake of his head.

“I was tied up, Liam,” he reminds his little brother. “She was standing there in stockings and black lace underwear, peeling it off and I couldn’t fucking touch her.”

“Evil genius,” Shane whispers in my ear making me shiver.

“And that wasn’t all,” Conor goes on.

“Conor,” I say, blushing to the roots of my hair.

“I can’t stop the story now, I’m getting to the best bit,” he replies.

“Which is?” Mikey urges him to finish.

“She sat on the sofa right in front of me and started playing with her pussy,” he says matter-of-factly and his brothers let out a collective groan. “I begged her to untie me and she wouldn’t. So that’s why she got the spanking of a lifetime.”

My ass throbs deliciously at the memory.

“So how did you get out?” Shane asks.

“He hulked out on your new chair,” I say with a grin. “It’s currently in pieces on your office floor.” That makes Liam and Mikey erupt into a fit of laughter. “He was standing there with parts of a chair still tied to him, stomping around like a giant who had just trampled a tiny village.” I snigger and the twins laugh harder.

Liam rests his head on the kitchen island as he giggles uncontrollably while Mikey holds onto his stomach as the tears roll down his face.

“A... fucking...stomping...” Mikey gasps through his tears and Conor shakes his head as he watches the two of them before turning to me. I have to bite down on the inside of my cheek from laughing too hard along with them.

“Sorry,” I mouth.

“Careful or you’ll be getting another spanking later.” He winks at me.

Shane seems completely immune to the hilarity going on around him and is instead focused on the demise of his beloved chair. “For fuck’s sake,” he grumbles. “That chair was custom-made.”

“Yeah, we all know it was, and why, you fucking deviant,” Conor laughs now too and the twins start off again. Shane had an extra wide and reinforced office chair made to accommodate all of the fucking he and I do in his office. We work together almost all day, at least four days a week and there is only so long I can spend in a room with this man before I jump his bones.

“It will take weeks to get a new one,” Shane adds.

I run my fingers through his hair. “We’ll just have to use the sofa for a while. And we can fit on the other chair too,” I remind him.

His hand skims over my ass again and I shiver at his touch. “Well, just to be sure, I think we’d better test your theory this afternoon.”

“Sounds fun.” I smile at him.

Mikey wipes the tears from his eyes. “That was the funniest thing I’ve heard for a long time,” he says as he straightens up. “I’m not surprised you got an ass whooping, Red.” He winks at me before he goes back to his cooking.

I sigh contentedly as I look around the room at my four hot husbands. Nobody is mad at anyone else right now and the

world feels right again.

“So, about this DNA test?” Shane says, abruptly changing the subject and making me groan inwardly. I should have known the calm wouldn’t last.

“I definitely want one,” I say firmly before any of them have a chance to disagree. “I think we need to know one way or another whether Hayden is my half-brother.”

“I agree,” Shane says with a nod and Mikey and Conor voice their agreement too.

“Liam?” I say quietly.

“I know, baby,” he says with a slight nod of his head. “You have to find out.”

I heave a sigh of relief. “Good. I thought we could ask Dr. Lisa to do the tests. Then we know for sure there will be no tampering or anything.”

“Want me to call her?” Shane asks.

“No, it’s okay. I’ll speak to her after breakfast.”

As if by magic, Mikey places a huge plate of bacon and eggs on the breakfast bar in front of us all and my stomach growls noisily, but the sound is masked by Conor and Liam’s loud grunts of appreciation.

“You want me to sit on my own stool?” I ask Shane.

“No, you’re fine right where you are,” he says before bending his head and placing a soft, sweet kiss on the nape of my neck that makes me shiver.

CHAPTER 28

JESSIE

I sit on my bed as I dial Dr. Lisa's number, keeping my eyes on the door in case one of my overprotective husbands walks in while I'm having this conversation, as it's one I don't particularly want them to hear. After a few seconds, Lisa answers the call and I tell her all about Hayden and the tests I'd like her to run. To my delight, she tells me she can squeeze me in this afternoon. That means less anxious waiting because I need answers and fast.

THE ELEVATOR DOORS open as Shane and I stand in the apartment hallway and we're greeted by Dr. Lisa's smiling face.

"Hey," I almost squeal as she steps out, holding my arms open for a hug. I don't get a lot of female company around here and she and I get along so well that I love a visit from her, even if it is going to involve some needles, which I despise.

"Hi, Jessie," she says as she hugs me with one arm, holding her medical bag in the other.

"Here, let me take that," Shane offers and she hands it to him before wrapping both her arms around me.

"I'm so glad you could do this," I say quietly in her ear.

"Anything for you guys, you know that," she says as we release each other.

"You need anything, Doc?" Shane asks.

"Hmm, a coffee would be nice," she replies with a smile.

“Sure, I’ll get Mikey to bring us some. He’s got a new machine he loves to impress people with. We can use my office,” he says as he slides an arm around my waist and we all start heading down the hallway. I glance sideways at Lisa. I have a feeling Shane isn’t going to let me out of his sight and it makes me groan inwardly.

As we pass the kitchen, Mikey is in the doorway and we stop to talk to him.

“Hey, Doc,” he says with a smile. Lisa saved his life not long after the brothers first came to New York and they all have a genuine affection for her, and she for them.

“Hi, trouble,” she replies.

“Could you bring us some coffees?” Shane asks.

“Sure thing,” Mikey replies.

“Can I have some peppermint tea instead please?” I smile sweetly.

“Of course. You feeling okay, Red?” he asks, his eyes narrowed in concern.

“Yeah.” I rub a hand over my stomach. “Just feeling a little queasy. I think it’s the thought of the needles,” I say with a shudder.

“You don’t have to do this,” Shane says, his hand gripping my hip tighter. “A cheek swab will do, won’t it?”

“Yes, but you want to be one hundred percent sure, right? There is no way to falsify a blood test. Cheek swabs can be contaminated more easily. I took the blood directly from Hayden’s arm myself. I just assumed I’d take Jessie’s the same way so I don’t have any swab tests with me. Sorry,” Lisa replies.

“Let’s just get this over with as quickly as possible then,” I say.

“If that’s what you want, sweetheart,” Shane says and then we leave Mikey to make our drinks while the three of us walk to Shane’s office.

Once we're inside, I take a seat while Lisa starts pulling her equipment from her bag.

"What did you think of Hayden then?" I ask her.

"He seems like a nice enough kid," she says with a shrug. "He didn't talk much though. Seemed a little jumpy."

Shane frowns and I see the cogs in his brain ticking over.

"Maybe he's scared of needles too," I offer with a faint smile as I try to diffuse the tension in the room and settle my growing anxiety.

I can't stop looking at the sharp needles that Lisa is pulling out of her bag and each time I see one it makes me feel a little more nauseous.

Sensing my discomfort, Shane perches himself on the desk directly in front of me so I can no longer see Lisa's torture devices and instead I'm looking up at his handsome face.

"It will be over in a few seconds," he says with a wink. "And I'll be right here."

"I'm fine," I say trying to keep my voice as calm and steady as possible because I need to convince him that I'm fine. Preferably, I need him to leave and if I start trembling and sweating like an idiot, he's not going to. "Really. It's no big deal." Even as I say the words I feel an urge to throw up right into his lap.

"That's my girl." He brushes his fingertips over my cheek and my heart starts racing as Lisa moves around the desk with a needle in her hand.

"Can you see where Mikey is with that tea?" I say with a swallow.

"As soon as this is done," he nods.

Fuck!

"You ready, Jessie?" Lisa asks. Her voice is so soft and calm that it should be soothing, but it's not and my breathing comes faster.

Why the hell am I doing this to myself?

Because I need answers and a few moments of discomfort will be worth it for the outcome. My needle anxiety is rooted in the fear of someone drugging and kidnapping me again – and there is no way in hell that Lisa would do that, and even less chance that Shane would let her. I'm completely safe here.

I take a deep breath. “Do it. Just get it all over with quickly.”

“Okay,” she says softly. The next thing I feel is her warm soft hand on my arm.

I stare into Shane's eyes and he smiles at me. I need to keep his attention only on my face. If I can do that then maybe we'll pull this off.

“So, you doing anything later?” I stammer, my voice trembling as I try to distract the two of us.

“Apart from you?” he arches an eyebrow at me.

Lisa half-groans, half-chuckles and my cheeks turn pink.

“Yes,” I whisper aware that Lisa's grip on my arm is tightening signaling she is about to stick me with her giant needle.

“Just a scratch, Jessie,” she says softly as the metal pierces my skin, and I flinch but she holds me steady.

“Almost over, sweetheart,” Shane says as he takes my free hand and squeezes it in his.

“It's no big deal.” I pant out a breath. “So, later? A movie?”

“Maybe.” He narrows his eyes at me as I start to babble about the new Fast and Furious movie. I don't look at Lisa taking blood from my arm but I feel a slight tug and a sharp sting and I know she's filled her first vial.

I wince as Shane turns to her and takes a hold of her wrist as she is attaching the second vial to fill.

“Why do you need more blood?” he asks with a frown.

“I need to attach this right now.” She looks down at the small plastic tube in her hand. “She's still bleeding.”

Shane loosens his grip but he doesn't let go, and she attaches the second tube to the needle in my arm.

"Extra just in case," I say, trying to distract him.

Shane doesn't look at me and instead continues to glare at Lisa who glares right back. "Why?" he asks again. "And don't make me ask for a third time."

Lisa looks between him and me, her jaw ticking as she wrestles with what to tell him. She would never breach my confidence but I know she doesn't want to lie to his face. I also know that he is not stupid and he is so damn overprotective, he's not going to let this go.

"I asked Lisa to run a few additional tests for me, is all," I answer for her and he releases his grip on her wrist and turns his fierce gaze and all his attention to me.

"What kind of tests?"

I suck in a breath as I glance between Lisa and him. "Just to make sure everything is working okay," I whisper.

"Is this about a baby?" he growls.

"Yes!" I snap as I sit up straighter in my chair.

"We discussed this, Jessie!"

"No, you gave me an order and I obeyed like an obedient little puppy." I see the hurt flash across his eyes momentarily but he continues glaring at me. "But now that Lisa is here taking blood, what's the harm in taking a little extra and running a few tests?"

"So you two planned this behind my back?" he snarls as he looks between Lisa and me now.

"It's my body, Shane!" I shout.

"There is nothing fucking wrong with you!" he shouts back while Lisa rolls her eyes in frustration at the two of us.

"You're not having any tests. It is perfectly normal not to get pregnant straightaway. Tell her," he barks to Lisa.

She shakes her head. “I am not getting in between you two, but if Jessie wants the tests then I’m her doctor.”

“Then I’ll find her a new one,” he barks.

“Shane! Stop being such an asshole!”

He turns back to me, his nostrils flaring in temper. “Lisa, can you give us a minute, please?”

She takes the filled second vial and the needle from my arm and places a small piece of gauze over it, fixing it with some tape.

“Sure. I’m just outside when you want me to take the rest of that blood, Jessie.” She winks at me. She knows I’ll win this argument. Shane is grumpy and unreasonable, but I can wrap him around my little finger and she knows it. He knows it too.

“Why are you so convinced that something is wrong with you?” he says, glaring at me.

“I’m not, but I just want to know, Shane. Why can’t you understand that?”

“Why are you putting so much pressure on this, Jessie? You’re driving yourself fucking crazy. You’re driving me crazy!”

I swallow as tears prick at my eyes. “I’m scared I’ll miss my window,” I whisper.

“Your window? You’re only twenty-seven years old.”

“I mean with you,” I admit.

“With me?” he frowns.

“What if this gets too hard and you change your mind? What if you decide that having kids isn’t for you after all?”

I see his Adam’s apple bob as he swallows hard. “That you went behind my back and conspired with Lisa to have tests run without any of us knowing is bad enough, Jessie, but the fact that you honestly believe I’m such a coldhearted bastard that I would do something like that…” He shakes his head as he trails off.

“Shane.” I reach for his hand but he pulls it away.

“Do whatever the fuck you want,” he snaps and then he walks out of the door leaving me sitting alone. A fat tear runs down my cheek and I swipe it away with my hand. Why am I so goddamn emotional all the time?

A few seconds later, Lisa walks back into the room. “Everything okay?” she asks.

“Yeah,” I sniff as I hold out my arm. “Let’s get this over with.”

CHAPTER 29

JESSIE

The door to Shane's office is closed over which is a sure sign he's still in a bad mood. Lisa left three hours ago and I've been sitting in my room since. Conor and the twins are working, leaving Shane and me alone in the apartment. We haven't spoken to each other since this afternoon and I can't get our fight out of my head.

I push his door open and walk inside. He has his head bent as he frowns at the computer screen. I don't know if he's too distracted to have heard me, or he's trying his best to ignore me, but I pad barefoot across the room. He doesn't glance up even as I reach him.

Trying his best to ignore me then!

I perch on the edge of his desk and begin to shuffle in front of his screen, until I am squeezing myself between him and his desk and he's forced to push his chair back slightly to allow me some room. I lift my legs over his and plant them back down between his thighs.

"Jessie!" he sighs deeply. "I'm busy."

"Are you, or are you just avoiding me?"

"I'm busy!" he meets my eyes for the first time since I came into the room. My heart starts to beat a little faster and warmth pools in my core. Damn. No man has any right looking this fine when he's pissed at me.

"I'm sorry," I whisper.

"What for?" He arches an eyebrow at me.

“For hurting you. What I said about you changing your mind about a baby, Shane, that is my deepest fear, but it’s not because I think you’re a coldhearted bastard. It’s because I want it so damn much. I convinced myself that I didn’t but now that I know it’s a possibility, it’s all I can think about. You always put everyone before yourself. I suppose a part of me was worried that you agreed to a baby for the rest of us and not really for you,” I whisper.

He swallows and looks back down at where his computer screen would be if I wasn’t blocking his view. “Like I said, I’m busy.”

Damn! Time to try a different tactic.

“Well, I won’t take up much of your time,” I breathe as I slide forward and straddle him.

He keeps one hand on the desk and one by his side. His knuckles flex and his jaw ticks with the effort of not touching me. This man knows how to push every single one of my buttons, but I can do the same to him. I roll my hips over him as I settle into a comfortable position and his cock is already hardening against my bare pussy.

“Are you wearing any underwear at all?” He glances at my pebbled nipples as they protrude through the thin fabric of the t-shirt I’m wearing, which happens to be one of his.

“No.” I bite on my lip.

“That’s a cheap shot.” He arches one eyebrow at me. “You think I’m that easy that all you have to do is roll that hot pussy over me and I’ll forget about this afternoon?”

Yes!

“No,” I say instead with a flutter of my eyelashes, “but I just got out of the shower and I’m heading to bed, so what would be the point in getting dressed?”

He checks his watch. It’s the one I bought him for his birthday and it’s the only one he ever wears now, despite having an extensive collection of incredibly expensive timepieces. “You’re heading to bed at seven p.m.?”

“Yup. I’m tired.” I fake a yawn although I actually do feel pretty beat. Then I stretch my arms high so that the t-shirt lifts, giving him a glimpse of my pussy and thighs. “And I don’t want to go to bed with you still mad at me, so I thought I’d come in here and apologize to you. I also wanted to see if you’ve had time to reflect on how unreasonable you were today,” I purr as I run my hands through his hair and grind my pussy against his cock.

A growl rumbles through his chest and I clamp my lips together to stop myself from smiling.

“Unreasonable? Me?”

“Kinda,” I say with a shrug.

“Are you looking to get your ass spanked again today? Is that it?” He frowns at me but there is an unmistakable glint in his eye.

“If that will make you feel better.”

“Hmm.” He rubs a hand over his jaw and his wedding ring catches the light as he does. Suddenly I’m overwhelmed with a rush of emotion as I think about how much I love him and his brothers and how much I want to give them a child. I choke down an unexpected sob and blink away a tear as I rest my forehead against his.

“What is it, sweetheart?” He frowns as he rests his hands on my hips, sending warm pleasure coursing through my body.

“I just want to be able to give you all everything you want, just like you do for me,” I whisper. “If there is something wrong, then isn’t it better that we know sooner rather than later?”

“Jessie!” He sighs again. “You are everything we want. You are everything we need.”

“I just want to know, Shane. Why can’t you understand that?”

He leans back and stares at me. “I do understand, but you went to Lisa behind my back and asked her to run some tests.

What if I hadn't found out, Jessie? When would you have told us?"

"I don't know," I admit as my cheeks flush pink. Lying is the one thing that Shane hates more than anything in the world.

"We don't keep secrets from each other, do we?" He frowns at me.

"No," I whisper.

"So why didn't you tell us about your little plan with Lisa?"

"Because I knew you would try and talk me out of it, Shane. In fact, you *would* have talked me out of it. You have this way of making me agree to anything. You tie me up in knots and sometimes it's easier to ask for your forgiveness than for your permission."

His tongue darts out and he runs it along his bottom lip as he continues to glare at me, My pussy walls contract as I think about his magical tongue on me instead. *Focus, Jessie!*

"I swear I never meant to lie to you. But it is my body, Shane, and I have every right to know if there's a part of it not working right."

"No." He shakes his head.

"What?" I blink at him in confusion.

He reaches for the edge of my t-shirt and lifts it and I raise my arms in compliance, allowing him to pull it over my head. Then his warm hands run over my back as he pulls me closer. "This body is mine, Jessie."

Wet heat surges between my thighs. "Really?" I breathe.

"Yes," he growls as he slides his hand between my thighs and he thrusts two thick fingers inside me, making me gasp as I grind against him. "This belongs to me and don't ever forget it."

"God, Shane," I pant as my walls clench around him and the pleasure starts to spread through my core.

“Jesus!” he hisses as he curls the tips of his fingers. “You’re fucking soaking, sweetheart.” Then he looks down at his suit pants. “You have any idea how much my dry cleaning bill has increased since you moved in here?”

I look down too and blush as I see the stain of my arousal on the expensive dark fabric. I run my hands over his chest and onto his biceps, feeling his powerful muscles flexing beneath my palms. “Well, you will insist on wearing these incredibly expensive tailored suits all the time.”

“You think I should start walking around here in just my sweatpants like Mikey and Liam?” He arches an eyebrow at me as he presses his fingers deep inside.

I suck in a breath as specks of light begin to flicker behind my eyelids. Damn this man can do things to me that should be illegal. The thought of him in just his grey sweatpants is certainly appealing enough, but I love the way he fills a suit.

“I love your suits,” I purr, “the way your muscles stretch the fabric.” I lean closer and plant a soft kiss on his throat. “The way you look so polished and respectable on the outside.” I kiss him again and a soft groan escapes his lips as he continues finger-fucking me. “How the soft, expensive fabric hides all of that ink on your hard muscles.”

“Jessie,” he groans as my kisses grow hungrier.

I graze the soft skin of his throat with my teeth and he shudders, making me smile against his skin. When I trail my tongue from the base of his neck, along the thick column of his throat, tasting the sweet saltiness of his skin, his soft groans turn into animalistic grunts as he drives his fingers deeper and harder. I ride them, sinking my hips low enough that I feel his hard cock straining against his zipper.

“You’re so hard for me,” I purr against his ear and that’s when he loses all control. Pulling his fingers out of me, he hisses out a breath before standing and sitting me on the desk in front of him.

“You want to feel how hard I am for you?” he growls as he unfastens his belt and zipper.

I reach for him, squeezing his cock in my hand and making him growl deeper before he takes my hands and pins them behind my back, reminding me exactly who is in control here – who is always in control.

I pant for breath as I wait for him. My body desperate to feel him inside me and sate the constant need that he stirs in me whenever I'm around him. Holding my two wrists in one of his large hands, he wraps his other hand around my throat as he pushes the tip of his cock inside me.

“This is what you want, right? What you always want?” he says, his fiery green eyes burning into mine.

I lick my lips as I stare back at him. His jaw clenched and his fingers flexing as he maintains a firm grip on my hands and throat. He is on the edge just as much as I am, desperate to drive himself inside me just as much as I want him to.

“Tell me what you want, Jessie.” He grinds out the words as though it pains him to say them.

“You inside me,” I breathe and he rewards me by filling me with his huge cock.

I gasp loudly and he tightens his grip on my wrists while the hand on my throat slides to the back of my head where it fists in my hair so he can pull me closer as he nails me on his desk.

He kisses me as he fucks me, claiming my mouth with the same intensity he claims the rest of me and my head spins from the rush of endorphins and euphoria flying around my body. I wrap my legs around his waist, pulling him tighter and deeper as I try to take everything he can give me.

Eventually, he releases my wrists and circles his arm around my waist instead. I snake my arms around his neck until we are pressed so tightly together, I feel his heart beating wildly against my chest.

“You gonna come hard for me, sweetheart?” He groans into my mouth as he tilts my hips back slightly, driving against that sweet spot deep inside me. My legs tremble and my core feels like it's become liquid chocolate as my orgasm rolls

through my body while he keeps on kissing and fucking me until he finds his own.

I cling to him even as he pulls out of me, desperate to maintain the contact between our bodies. He presses his damp forehead against mine, keeping the connection that he knows I need from him.

“I love you,” I whisper.

“I know.”

CHAPTER 30

JESSIE

It's been almost twenty-four hours since my blood tests and as each minute ticks by, I get more and more anxious. Lisa said a day to get the results and I'm holding her to it. I curl a strand of Conor's hair around my fingertip as I sit on his lap watching a movie. Mikey and Liam sit on the sofa next to our armchair while Shane sits opposite.

I spoke to Hayden earlier and he is anxious to get the results of the tests as much as I am. I know that the brothers are worried he can't be trusted, but I kind of like him. And although I've tried to convince myself that I'd be happy with either result, I am secretly hoping that he is my half-brother.

Apart from my husbands, I have no family of my own and sometimes I think about my younger brothers and what they would have been like. I know they would have grown into fine young men and I miss the relationship we should have had as adults – the one that was stolen from us by the psychopath who murdered them when they were just twelve years old. The fact that I have no siblings is even more pronounced because I spend my life with four brothers who would literally die for each other.

So I am feeling anxious too and I know my boys know it, which is why they've all taken time out of their schedules to watch movies with me this afternoon. I wonder if they are anxious to find out the result too. If Hayden is my half-brother then it impacts their lives as much as mine.

When my cell starts to ring they all look at me expectantly. I don't get many calls so we all know this is probably the one

I'm waiting on. Conor reaches for it and hands it to me. I see Lisa's name on the screen and my stomach flutters with excitement. I climb off Conor's lap and walk to the side of the room. It's not that I want privacy, but I want a second to process the news before I tell them and Conor would hear every word if I stay sitting on his lap.

"Hi, Lisa," I say when I answer.

"Hi, Jessie. I have your results."

I suck in a deep breath. "Yep?"

"Yours and Hayden's DNA is a significant match. You are half-siblings," she says matter-of-factly.

"Oh? Wow!" I say as four pairs of eyes watch me intently. "Have you told him?"

"Not yet. I wanted to tell you first."

"Can I tell him?" I ask her.

"Are your husbands with you?" she asks.

"Yeah," I reply with a frown.

"Then it might be better if I tell him. I have a feeling you're going to be busy talking about something else."

"What is it?" I ask as my heart starts to race, but Lisa sounds happy, so it can't be something bad, right?

"I have the results of your blood work too..."

"Already?" I interrupt her because she told me they would take a few days.

"Well, the first test I did was a very straightforward one." She laughs softly and I feel my heart racing faster. "You're pregnant, Jessie."

I reach for the wall, placing my hand flat on its surface for support.

"W-what?" I stammer. "But I had a period three weeks ago."

"Was it lighter than normal?"

“Yes. Quite a bit,” I recall my period at the lake house.

“Probably implantation bleeding. You are definitely very pregnant.”

By this point, the brothers are surrounding me as I take deep breaths. Is she mistaken? Because this feels like everything I’ve ever wanted and that doesn’t happen to people like me, does it?

“How long?” I whisper and a warm strong hand grips my shoulder but I don’t look around to see who it belongs to.

“Well, here’s the thing,” Lisa says with a soft sigh. “Your HCG levels are higher than I’d expect based on your dates that you gave me.”

“What does that mean?” I daren’t look up at my husbands but I feel their eyes burning into my skin anyway.

“It means you’re either further along than I thought...” she pauses.

“Or?” Dammit, Lisa. You’re killing me here.

“Or you’re about five weeks pregnant with multiple babies.”

“Multiple?” I whisper.

“Well, you both have twins in the family,” she chuckles. “Congratulations, Jessie. I’ll set you up an appointment with an OB-GYN I know, Dr. Stein. She’s amazing.”

“Thank you,” I whisper as my stomach flutters with so much nervous excitement, I feel like I might throw up.

She ends the call and I stare at my cell phone wondering if I just imagined that conversation. No. It was real. She said it. It must be true.

“What is it, Angel?” Conor asks and I look up to see it’s him with a hand on my shoulder. I look between his and his brothers’ expectant faces.

“I’m pregnant,” I whisper.

“I knew it! Peppermint tea!” Mikey yells with delight as he and Liam press me into a twin sandwich and they plant kisses all over my face and head, making me giggle.

“Careful, assholes,” Conor warns them good-naturedly and a few seconds later, the twins release me from their hug.

“I’m so proud of you, baby,” Liam whispers in my ear. When they step aside, Conor pulls me into his arms.

“Lisa thinks it might be twins too,” I say, still in a state of shock.

“Yes!” Mikey and Liam say together.

“You’re fucking incredible, Angel,” Conor says as he presses a soft kiss on my forehead. “And you just made us the happiest men alive, you know that right?”

“Yes,” I nod before I press my face against his chest and breathe in the scent of him.

A moment later, he releases me too and steps back to allow his oldest brother to take his place. Of all of them his is the reaction I’m most worried about because I’ve been so worried that he’s going to regret our decision. He slides his arms around my waist and pulls me tight to him.

“I love you so fucking much, sweetheart,” he says as he rests his cheek on the top of my head. “I can’t believe you just made us all a dad,” he chuckles softly and the sound rumbles through his chest.

I look up at him and smile. “I did, didn’t I?”

I lean against him and smile, becoming a mom and a sister again in the same day! I am the luckiest girl in the world.

LIAM (BONUS CONTENT)

I switch off the kitchen light and make my way to bed. Conor and Mikey are working in the club, but they should be back up here soon. We have Jessie's scan tomorrow and I know everyone is nervous as hell, and also excited beyond belief for it.

As I pass the den, the lights are off, but I see his silhouette against the moonlight. He's sitting on the sofa staring out of the window, silent, unmoving. Brooding?

Shoving my hands into my sweatpants, I head over to him, my bare feet hardly making a sound on the warm wooden floor. He hears me anyway, always alert. Always switched on. He turns his head slightly, one corner of his mouth curling up in a greeting before he takes a sip of the glass of whiskey he's holding.

"You okay?" I ask him as I flop onto the armchair.

"Hmm," he murmurs before downing the last of his drink.

I arch an eyebrow. "You sure?" Jessie falling pregnant is by no means a shock to any of us because we've been trying to knock her up for months, but it's still a lot to process. We're going to become dads—at least me, Mikey and Conor are—but this man right here has been a father for a long time.

He gives me his full attention, his brow furrowed in a scowl. "I just said so, didn't I?"

"Actually, you said hmm, which isn't really an answer now, is it?"

He narrows his eyes at me. “Why don’t you go back to bed, kid?”

“Why don’t you talk to me about why you’re sitting here all moody instead of being curled up in bed next to your pregnant wife?”

“I’m not moody,” he retorts.

I arch an eyebrow at him. “No? Sitting alone here in the dark with only a glass of whiskey for company? Staring at the moon?”

I see his Adam’s apple bob as he swallows. He always swore he’d never have kids. But that was until we met the firecracker that is Jessie Ryan and she turned every single one of worlds upside down in the best possible ways.

He doesn’t answer my question so I try a different tactic. “You remember the first girl who broke my heart?”

His lips twitch with the flicker of a grin. “Jodie Maloney. Her dad owned the sweet shop at the end of the road.”

“Jodie Maloney,” I say with a soft sigh. “What was I? Like twelve?”

“Eleven,” he replies.

“You remember how cut up I was because she dumped me for Simon O’Flaherty?”

“I do,” he says with a nod of his head. “All because his Pa had a Rolls Royce and she thought he was going to make her a princess.”

“Fucker dumped her two weeks later,” I snort.

He laughs quietly.

“Hurt like a mother fucker though,” I say with a lean as I sit back against the chair. “She was the first girl who let me touch her boob.”

“You went on hunger strike as I recall,” Shane says.

“I did.”

He laughs a little harder. “For like seven hours or something?”

I frown at him. “I believe it was eight.”

“Seven and a half,” he counters.

“Yeah, well you cooked sausages and chips for tea and you knew I’d cave as soon as I smelled that wafting up the stairs.”

He shrugs. “It was your favorite.”

A ball of emotion gets stuck in my throat. It was. The fact he remembers that chokes me up, but of course he would. The only happy memories of my childhood involve him in some way. I clear my throat before I speak again, to stop my voice from cracking when I do.

“You canceled a date that night to cook our tea and watch a movie with me and Mikey.”

He goes back to staring out of the window. “Did I?”

“Yeah. You remember her name?”

His brow furrows in another frown before he shakes his head. “No.”

“Lainey Uxbridge,” I remind him. “You’d be after her for weeks and she finally agreed to go out with you. Then you went and stood her up.”

“I don’t recall.”

“No. But you remember Jodie Maloney though?”

He looks up at the ceiling as though deep in thought. “She was the first girl to break your heart, kid. Course I remember her.”

“You remember what you told me when you found me sulking on my bed?”

“Probably to stop sulking before Patrick saw you and gave you a smack in the mouth for it?” he says, voice laced with menace now and I regret making him think about our bastard of a father. But I guess it’s inescapable whenever we think about our life back in Ireland.

“No.” I shake my head. He said nothing of the fucking sort. “You put your arm around my shoulder and you told me that broken hearts were a fact of life and a rite of passage. You said it made me a man, and that men weren’t afraid to feel that kind of pain because it was the kind that made life worth living.”

He blinks at me. He remembers exactly what he said.

“I went out and found a new girlfriend two days later,” I remind him.

“Then she broke your heart too,” he says with a smirk.

“She did,” I agree. “I sure knew how to pick them, huh?”

He shrugs. “Well, your taste in women has improved significantly since then.”

With that reminder of our beautiful wife and our unborn baby, I smile at him. “You want to know why I’m not even the slightest bit concerned about becoming a dad for the first time?”

His jaw ticks as he stares at me. “Why?”

I stand and take a few steps until I’m standing right in front of him. Placing my hand on his shoulder, I squeeze gently. “Because I learned everything I need to know from the best fucking dad any kid could ever ask for.” He blinks at me, confusion flickering in his eyes as though he thinks for the briefest of moments that I might be talking about Patrick fucking Ryan, but to be absolutely crystal clear, I add. “The kind who cancels dates and makes his kids’ favorite dinner when he has his first broken heart.”

Tears prick at the corners of his eyes and now a giant fucking sob gets stuck in my throat too. I swallow it down. But I have no idea how he’s so hard on himself when he’s the best fucking man I’ve ever known. “Now for the love of fuck come to bed so that Jessie doesn’t freak out if she wakes up and you’re not there.”

I don’t give him time to argue. Instead I head out of the room and make my way to bed.

JESSIE IS LYING on her side, curled up beneath the covers. I slip in beside her, resting my hand on her stomach as I press myself up against her back. She murmurs softly in her sleep. I enjoy having her to myself for a little while, even as I hope Shane joins us soon. For her sake, but mostly for his.

“Liam?” she mumbles sleepily.

“Yeah, baby. Just me. Go back to sleep.”

She turns in my arms, wrapping hers around my neck. “Where have you been? I missed you.”

I press a soft kiss on her lips. “Just turning off the lights.”

“Where’s Shane?” she asks with a yawn.

“He’ll be here soon,” I assure her, pulling her closer to me.

“Is he brooding?” she asks, a soft smile on her face as her eyes remain closed. She knows him so well.

“He’ll be here soon,” I repeat.

She snuggles into me, her soft body warming mine. Of all the broken hearts I’ve ever had, nothing in my life has ever compared to the love I feel for this woman.

It’s a few moments later when the door creaks open and Shane walks into the room and a smile spreads across my face. He undresses quickly before sliding into bed on the other side of her. “She asleep?” he whispers.

“She was just asking for you,” I whisper back.

He presses his body up against hers and she murmurs softly. I watch him as he pulls her hair to the side and plants a gentle kiss on her neck, but it’s enough to make our girl squirm.

“Shane?” she breathes out his name as she opens her eyes.

He slips his hand over her hip and onto her stomach. “Hey, sweetheart.”

“Hey.” She yawns loudly. “You two want to...” she trails off, her eyes fluttering closed again.

“No, baby,” I say with a chuckle. “Go back to sleep.”

Shane smiles at me as he lays his head on the pillow next to hers.

“We’re gonna see our baby tomorrow,” she purrs contentedly as she snuggles between the two of us.

Shane buries his face in her neck. “We sure are, sweetheart.”

But she’s fallen back asleep with a huge, goofy smile on her face.

I look over her head at my oldest brother. “You okay?”

“I’m good.”

“Good.”

I close my eyes and press my face close to Jessie’s. I don’t think I could ever be happier than I am at the precise moment in time.

“Thanks, son,” Shane says quietly.

Guess I was wrong.

CHAPTER 32

JESSIE

I lie on the bed in the small examination room. I suppose that it's not actually that small, but it's currently filled with four giant Ryan brothers, and their excitement and nervous energy is making me feel giddy. In a few moments we will see our babies on a screen and only then will this feel real to me.

Since Lisa gave me the news of my pregnancy yesterday I've been in something of a daze. I woke this morning to five missed calls from Hayden and two text messages. Lisa gave him our DNA results yesterday and he was so excited when I finally called him back. He wanted to come over today but I don't want to share my other news with him just yet. I want to keep this just between us for now, and besides, until I see those babies on that screen, I can't believe it's true. I invited him for brunch tomorrow instead so we can talk through everything properly.

News of my pregnancy has obviously overshadowed the discovery that I have a half-brother, and so far my husbands haven't spoken about it other than to agree to my brunch invite to Hayden.

As promised, Lisa set me up an appointment with an OB-GYN, Dr. Stein, today and after being shown in by her receptionist, we are waiting for her to join us.

"You okay, baby?" Liam asks as he takes my hand and brushes the pad of his thumb over my knuckles.

"Yeah, just a little nervous," I smile.

“You’re not the only one,” Shane smiles at me reassuringly. “We all are. Especially Conor.” He indicates his head to his younger brother standing at the back of the room chewing on his thumbnail.

“He looks like he’s about to throw up,” I whisper.

“I know,” Shane whispers back.

I’ve never seen Conor looking so nervous before and I’m about to call him over to me but we’re interrupted by the door opening and a woman with honey blonde hair and a huge smile practically bounces into the room.

“Jessie?” she says to me.

“Yeah,” I reply with a smile because her joy is infectious.

She closes the door behind her and then makes her way straight to me, holding out her hand. “I’m Dr. Stein. But you can call me Brooke.”

“Hi, Brooke.” I take her offered hand. “Thank you for squeezing us in today.”

“Well, Lisa is my homegirl, so I’m always happy to help her out,” she says with a smile. Then she looks around the room at the brothers. “And these must be your husbands?” she asks and I heave a sigh of relief that Lisa has explained our situation. It’s not that I feel any shame about our set up, but it can be hard to explain to people sometimes, particularly if they don’t have an open mind about this kind of stuff.

“Yes we are,” Liam answers first and then each of my husbands introduces themselves in turn. As soon as he has, Conor goes back to chewing on his thumbnail and frowning.

Brooke chats away to me while she sets up her equipment ready for the ultrasound. I remove my panties when she asks and Mikey holds onto them for me, a devious look in his eyes as he takes them from my hand.

I lie back on the bed and when Brooke picks up the wand-shaped object, Liam can’t help himself from shouting out. “What the fuck is that?”

“It’s a trans-vaginal wand,” Brooke replies calmly as she starts to roll a condom over it before covering it with lube.

“The babies are too small to see on a normal ultrasound yet,” Mikey adds confidently and his level of research makes me smile.

“Usually I’d have one of my ultrasound technicians do this, but given the unique nature of your case, I’ll handle all of your care,” Brooke says.

“You mean because I have four baby daddies?” I ask with a smile.

“I was thinking more because you’re married to the Irish Mafia, but yeah that too,” she says as though she’s just called them lawyers or something.

“Oh,” I giggle as Shane frowns.

“Of course that information would never leave this room,” Brooke says with a flash of her eyebrows and I have already decided that I love her.

“So you’re gonna put that thing...?” Liam uses his index finger to point upwards.

“That’s the idea.” Brooke laughs softly before she gives me her full attention. “You ready, Jessie?”

“Yep.” I nod as my eyes dart to the screen beside me.

That’s where we’ll see our babies. That’s where they’ll be if everything is okay.

The screen flickers with grainy images as Brooke inserts the wand and we all stare at it. I’m vaguely aware of Conor moving closer, his soft breathing beside me as he reaches the edge of the bed.

I hold my breath as I stare at the small monitor because right now that is where our world begins and ends.

Brooke is quiet as she presses the wand deeper inside me. She presses a few buttons on the keyboard and I keep holding my breath as I wait for her to tell me that I have a baby, or

babies growing inside me and this wasn't just a huge misunderstanding.

"Is everything okay?" I whisper.

Brooke doesn't nod or smile. Her face is completely unreadable. "It sometimes takes a few moments," is all she says.

Conor reaches for my hand and squeezes it in his.

"There they are," Brooke exclaims with a smile and the collective sigh of relief ripples around the room. She points at the screen and I squint until I see the tiny dots that she is pointing at.

"They?" Mikey asks. "How many, Doc?"

"Two," she says as she turns to him and smiles.

"And everything looks good?" Conor asks.

"Perfect," Brooke replies.

Conor leans over and kisses my abdomen softly. "Thank fuck." He swallows hard, his voice thick with emotion. "I thought..."

I run my hands through his hair and can't believe I didn't realize why he's been looking so anxious since we got the news from Lisa.

He stands straight again and lets out a long slow breath.

"Can you tell how far she is?" Mikey asks as he peers at the screen.

"Five weeks and three days," Brooke replies confidently.

"Wow!" Liam gasps. "You can be that specific?"

"Sure can," she says, giving me a smile before she pulls the wand from between my thighs.

She removes the condom and wipes the wand with some tissue before she stands. "I'll let you clean up a little and then I'll pop back in and we can talk through your care and appointments."

“Thank you,” I say with a smile as my heart feels like it’s going to burst with happiness. *I’m pregnant! With twins!*

“You’re welcome.” She snaps off her rubber gloves and then she leaves her office.

As soon as she is gone, Conor leans over me and kisses my cheek. “I was so worried, Angel,” he breathes. “I was too rough with you the other night.”

I place my hand on his cheek. “You weren’t. We didn’t know.”

“No more spankings for you, sweetheart,” Shane says with a chuckle as he sits on the bed.

“What?” I open my mouth, feigning my indignation. “That seems so unfair.”

“Just until the babies are born,” he adds with a wicked grin before he leans down and presses a soft kiss on my stomach.

“We’re having twins,” Liam says, shaking his head as though he’s still in shock.

“Looks like.” I smile at him and he nudges Conor out of the way.

Cupping my face in his hands he bends his head and kisses me softly. “I love you.”

“Love you too.”

“You’re fucking amazing, Red. Right now the babies are just the size of a strawberry seed but next week they’ll be the size of a baked bean,” Mikey says as he muscles his way in between his brothers.

“Are you going to be a pain in the ass with your research this entire pregnancy, Dr. Mikey?” Shane asks with a grin, teasing him good-naturedly.

“Yes!” Mikey replies.

CHAPTER 33

JESSIE

I sit on the sofa with my feet up while Liam rubs them softly. We got back from the doctor's office six hours ago but the excitement still hasn't worn off. Mikey made us all a beautiful turkey dinner, with six different kinds of vegetables, all of which he insisted I eat because it's good for the babies. And he was so sweet and went to so much trouble, how could I refuse? He also made chocolate brownies for dessert and served them with fresh strawberries and ice cream.

All four of my boys have taken the day and night off work and I have to say I am loving being spoiled by them. I could sure get used to another eight months of this. A wave of tiredness washes over me and I yawn loudly just as Shane and Conor walk into the room.

"Bedtime for you, sweetheart," Shane says with a smile.

"No. I'm watching the movie."

He looks at the TV screen and sees *Fast and Furious 4* is on. "You have seen every one of these movies at least two hundred times." He holds out his hand as he reaches me. "Bed. Now."

"You can't order me to bed just because I'm pregnant." I pretend to pout but I love being looked after by him. "Besides, it's early and I'll get lonely."

"Since when do you ever go to bed alone, Hacker?" he growls and my insides melt like butter. He doesn't often call me that any more but it still does something to me, reminding

me of all the angst and tension there used to be between us, and how we dealt with it by having lots of hot sex.

“I’m kind of tired too,” Liam says with a grin as he stands and switches off the TV.

“Looks like we’re all having an early night then?” Conor winks at me.

“Where’s Mikey?” I ask.

“In the shower in your bathroom,” Shane replies as he slides an arm around my waist and we all make our way to my bedroom. Well, it used to be mine but now it’s kind of everyone’s. The bed is large enough for all five of us to sleep in and it is a rare night that there is less than three of us in it.

“We can watch the end of the movie in bed if you like,” Shane says as we walk down the hallway.

“I can think of better things to do,” I breathe.

“Haven’t we all had enough excitement for one day, Angel?” Conor says with a wink.

“But…” I protest but nothing else comes out.

“She’s fucking insatiable,” Conor chuckles.

“Mikey told me some pregnant women get super-horny,” Liam adds.

“Fuck. We’re all done for,” Shane says with a sigh and I nudge him in the ribs.

“I just refuse to believe that we’re all going to bed before ten p.m. and we’re not going to do anything more than watch a movie is all,” I say.

“If you haven’t fallen asleep by the end of the movie, we’ll make you come.”

“If I do fall asleep then you know I’ll just wake you all up in the night,” I say with a shrug.

“We’d expect nothing less, sweetheart.”

MIKEY CRAWLS onto the bed and I spread my legs wider so he can lie between them. Like he usually does, he takes a pillow

and rests it between my thighs before lying on his back so he can watch the movie with us.

“I’m not hurting you, am I, Red?” he asks.

“Nope.” I reach down and run my fingers through his hair. “I’m only pregnant you know. I’m not made of glass.”

He takes my hand and kisses my fingertips. “Let me know if you get uncomfortable anyway. You have more pressure in your abdomen and increased blood flow can make things more sensitive.”

I bite my lip and stifle a giggle. I love how much he has researched pregnancy.

His three brothers laugh though.

“What’s so funny? It’s true. It’s why it can make orgasms more intense too,” he goes on.

That certainly gets my attention. “Oh?” I sit up.

“Fuck!” Shane hisses and Conor and Liam laugh louder.

“I’m not sure we can handle Jessie coming any harder than she already does,” Liam says and then even Mikey joins in with the laughing.

“You’re all arrogant assholes, you know that?” I sigh as I lean back against the pillows and watch the movie.

“Aw, Angel, we’re just teasing you,” Conor says as he wraps an arm around me and kisses my forehead.

“Are you saying we don’t make you come hard, though?” Shane arches an eyebrow at me, a wicked grin on his face.

“I don’t remember.” I sniff. “It’s been so long.”

“Yeah. A whole fucking twelve hours. We should be ashamed of ourselves,” he replies.

“You should,” I agree. “I mean I’m pregnant and everything. I’m growing two human beings as we speak. I need taking care of.”

Mikey jumps up and spins around until he’s on all fours. “I have no idea why we’re not fucking our wife right now. I came

out here and you were all watching a movie so I thought that was the vibe, but seems like our girl wants to be fucked and I'm all about that." He arches an eyebrow at me.

"For fuck's sake," Shane sighs but then he climbs off the bed and starts taking off his clothes, swiftly followed by Conor and Liam.

"You wanna be reminded how hard we make you come, sweetheart?" Shane growls as he pulls down his boxers revealing his cock, already hard.

I swallow. Why do I feel like I just poked four very angry bears?

"Well?" he arches an eyebrow at me.

"Yes," I whisper. I am no longer even the slightest bit tired.

"You think we need to make some new rules?" Mikey asks as he crawls over me.

"Rules?" I whisper.

"Yeah, 'cause you're pregnant, Red."

"No spanking," Conor says as he pulls off his boxers too.

"Aw!" I pout. Shane already said that earlier and it felt unfair then too. "None at all?"

"An occasional slap on the ass is fine," Shane says and Conor nods his agreement. They are the only ones who spank me anyway.

"No double stuffing the Oreo," Mikey says with a flash of his eyebrows and I don't know whether to laugh or shout at him for being so crass.

"What the fuck does that even mean, Mikey?" Conor slaps him around the back of the head as he climbs onto the bed beside him.

"No DVP," Mikey snaps as though his analogy was the most obvious thing in the world.

"Then no," they all agree.

"Can we do other double stuff though?" Liam asks.

“What about ass in general?”

I lie back against the pillows with a smile on my face as I watch them, witnessing another of my husbands’ conversations about my body that they don’t include me in.

“Ass is fine, right?” Shane asks and they all look at me now.

“Oh, you want my opinion now?” I grin at them.

“Sorry, Angel,” Conor leans over me and kisses my stomach. “You know we’d never do anything you weren’t happy with.”

“I know.” I smile at him.

“So butt stuff?” Mikey asks.

“Jesus!” Shane hisses.

“It’s good with me,” I say.

“Although pregnant women are more prone to hemorrhoids so we probably need to be a little more careful,” Mikey adds.

“Mikey!” we all shout.

“What?” He holds his hands up in surrender. “Just a heads up. I’m just looking out for you, Red,” he says with a wink.

“I need to taste some pussy to get the word hemorrhoid out of my head.” Conor chuckles as he trails kisses over my abdomen while Mikey starts removing my panties.

Liam starts unbuttoning my shirt while Shane lies beside me; cupping my chin in his hand, he turns my head so he can kiss me. As his tongue slides into my mouth, Conor’s slides over my clit while Liam sucks on one of my hard nipples.

I moan softly as their hands roam over my skin and when Mikey sinks two fingers inside me, I try to wrench my lips from Shane’s but he holds me in place, swallowing my cries of pleasure. When my cries turn to soft whimpers again, he pulls back and I suck in a breath. “No, we don’t make you come hard at all, do we, sweetheart?” he teases me.

I bite on my lip and thread my fingers through his hair
before I pull him back for another kiss.

CHAPTER 34

JESSIE

The smell of freshly baked croissants is making me feel hungry and I rub a hand over my stomach, smiling to myself as I remember there are two babies inside there.

“Have something to eat, Red,” Mikey says as he comes up behind me, pressing a soft kiss on my shoulder as he places two pots of jelly onto the table.

“No, I’ll wait for Hayden,” I say as I shift from one foot to the other. “He should be here by now.”

“He’ll be here soon,” Shane says as he looks up from his cell phone.

“Maybe he is here and Conor is interrogating him in one of those rooms downstairs,” Liam chuckles darkly.

“What?” I gasp.

“Liam!” Shane warns his younger brother before he turns to me. “He’s not going to do anything but bring him straight up here, sweetheart.”

“Okay,” I whisper, fidgeting with the hem of my tank-top.

“Why are you so nervous, Jessie? It’s not like this guy is anyone special,” Liam grunts.

“Liam!” Shane warns again.

“Maybe one day he might be special to me,” I say as I blink away a tear. Pregnancy has me so damn emotional. I know he’s still struggling with the possibility of allowing

someone else into our family unit, but he doesn't get to be a complete jackass because of it.

"I'm sorry, baby," he whispers as he reaches for my hand and squeezes.

"I know you don't trust him, Liam, but can you at least give him a chance? For me?"

"For you," he says with a sigh. "We're not telling him about the babies though, are we?"

"No. Not yet," I agree.

The sound of footsteps and muffled voices in the hallway makes us all look to the door. My heart starts to beat a little faster as excitement and nerves flutter in my stomach. A mild ripple of nausea rolls through my stomach.

I'm just excited and I need to eat.

Hayden walks into the room and he has a huge smile on his face when he does which tells me that Conor has been perfectly well behaved while he's been escorting him from the basement where he's been waiting for him for the past twenty minutes.

I smile when I see him. I can't help it. He looks so happy. He looks a little like me. He is really my half-brother.

"Hey," he says giving me an awkward wave and I figure he's just as nervous as I am.

"Hey," I wave back and Conor smiles at me, his face full of amusement.

"Come in and sit down, kid. Me and Jessie have made enough pastries to feed a platoon of Marines so I hope you're hungry," Mikey says.

"Yeah," Hayden replies as he walks into the room and then suddenly he is standing right in front of me and I feel like I might cry. Jeez! Am I going to be this emotional this whole pregnancy?

"Hi," he says again.

I laugh at his nervousness and hold out my arms. He laughs too and then suddenly we're hugging. And everything is perfect – until it's not.

I don't know what the lingering aroma is on Hayden's jacket – maybe oregano? But it is suddenly the most offensive thing I've ever smelled in my life. I'm hit by a huge wave of nausea and I push him away and bolt to the kitchen sink where I retch.

Concerned voices chatter around me and then a warm hand is on my back, rubbing softly. "You okay, Angel?" Conor asks.

"Urgh!" I groan as I retch again but nothing comes up. The feeling passes as quickly as it arrived and I stand straight. Conor hands me some paper towels and I wipe my mouth. When I turn around Hayden is staring at me with a look of shock on his face.

"You okay?" he asks.

"She's had stomach flu, haven't you, baby?" Liam says.

"Yeah," I nod.

"Shit!" Hayden shakes his head.

"It's not catching," Mikey adds quickly. "I mean we're all okay, so..."

"Shall we eat?" Shane says and indicates the table.

"Um, sure," Hayden says as he heads to the table, a little uncertain now, understandably when he thinks the food has been prepared by someone with the stomach flu.

As I walk back to the table, Hayden waits for me. "Are you sure you're okay?" he asks as he puts a hand on my shoulder and as he lifts his arm I get another whiff of the smell.

"Fuck!" I hiss as I run back to the sink.

"Maybe I should go?" Hayden offers.

"No," I shout as I hang my head over the sink again. "It's just your jacket. Can you take off your jacket?"

“My jacket?” he frowns.

“Give me the jacket, kid,” Shane says.

“B-but...I...” Hayden stammers.

I stand straight again. “Sorry. It just smells a little...”

Hayden’s mouth opens in horror as he sniffs his jacket. “Do I stink or something?”

“No,” I shake my head. Oh God, he thinks I think he smells.

“It just smells of something,” I say with a smile.

He shrugs it off and passes it to Shane. “Does it? I didn’t even notice. I mean it hasn’t been washed in a week or two but... Have I been walking around stinking?”

Shane sniffs the jacket too and the look on his face tells me he doesn’t smell anything even remotely offensive but he pretends anyway. “Yeah. Stinks,” he agrees and Hayden’s cheeks turn red.

“Shane. It doesn’t stink,” I say. “Don’t make him feel bad.”

“What does it smell like? BO or something?” Hayden sniffs his armpits now and suddenly Mikey is pressing his lips together to stop himself from laughing and Shane is looking at me so I can tell him what it smells of.

“No. Not BO,” I say quickly. “Like oregano maybe?”

“Maybe. It was hanging in the kitchen in work last night. We do a lot of Italian stuff.”

“That explains it,” I say with a smile.

“Oregano made you want to hurl?” he asks with a frown.

“Yes. I hate the stuff.”

“Oh.” He shakes his head and then he takes a seat at the table as Shane takes the jacket out into the hallway.

I take a seat next to Hayden and smile at him. Poor kid looks so embarrassed and I want to hug him again – so I do. Big mistake.

“I can still...” I bolt again as nausea washes over me like a tidal wave. I have never experienced anything like it in my life.

“Fuck, Jessie, you’re gonna give the poor kid a heart attack if you keep doing this,” Mikey chuckles.

“Do I really stink or something?” Hayden asks innocently and I feel so bad for him.

“We have to tell him,” I groan as I stand upright again.

“No.” Liam shakes his head.

“Liam. The kid thinks he has a body odor problem so bad that he’s making people spontaneously hurl,” Shane says.

“What is going on?” Hayden asks.

“It’s not you, kid,” Shane pats him on the back and he and Mikey and Conor start to laugh.

“Then what?” he asks as I walk back to the table and take a seat opposite him instead, in between Liam and Conor.

“She’s just developed a severe aversion to oregano,” Mikey chuckles.

Conor takes my hand and squeezes it gently. “You okay?”

“Yes. Fine now,” I say. “But oregano is banned for the next eight months. Okay?”

“Eight months?” Hayden smiles at me. “Wait! Are you...?”

“Yes. I’m so sorry, Hayden. This wasn’t how I imagined today going at all.”

“Wow! A baby.” He beams at me. “That’s amazing, Jessie. I’m so happy for you.”

“Babies actually. We’re having twins. And thank you.”

“Twins!” he laughs softly and then he looks around the table. “Who is...”

“Don’t even finish that sentence, kid,” Shane warns him. “We all are and that’s all you need to know.”

“Okay. I’m sorry if I offended you,” he swallows.

“Don’t worry about it,” I tell him as I shoot Shane a look. “Our set up is quite unique.”

“Is someone gonna eat some of these pastries I’ve been slaving over?” Mikey says, breaking the tension.

“Yes! I’m starving,” I reply as I take one from the giant pile in the center of the table.

AFTER OUR INCREDIBLY AWKWARD START, we ended up having a lovely brunch. Hayden is funny and sweet. Even Liam joined in the conversation after a while, unable to keep quiet when Hayden mentioned his aversion to tequila following an experience during his first semester of college when he passed out at a party and woke up with no eyebrows and a mustache drawn in permanent marker that took him days to wash off.

It’s late afternoon by the time Hayden is leaving, and that’s only because he has a shift at work to get to. Shane and Conor have agreed to drive him home and I have made them promise to behave themselves.

“You think we can risk a quick hug?” Hayden asks me as he stands outside the elevator. Conor and Shane have gone ahead and Liam and Mikey are in the kitchen clearing up, allowing the two of us to speak alone for the first time.

“I’ll hold my breath,” I say with a smile, doing exactly that as I embrace him quickly.

“Today has been amazing, Jessie,” he whispers in my ear. “I’m so glad I found you.”

I pull back from him. “Me too,” I say with a smile.

“I was feeling so lost since my mom died,” he says as a tear escapes and he quickly wipes it away. “I know you don’t really know me yet, but I hope that we can do lots more of this and maybe I can be a part of your life in some way.”

“Of course, Hayden. I would love that,” I admit.

“Can I see you again soon?”

“Sure. How about Saturday?” I offer.

“I have to work Saturday, sorry. How is Friday?”

Friday is date night, but I suppose I could see him in the afternoon? “Sure. We could have lunch?”

“Great. Where shall we meet?”

“Um.” I bite on my lip. The brothers won’t like me leaving the apartment without them and I’m not sure any of them have the time to take the afternoon off with me, especially as they won’t be working in the night. “Are you okay to come here?”

“Sure. I love it here,” he says with a grin.

“Perfect!” I reply.

And that was how Hayden Chambers came to be an almost daily afternoon visitor to our apartment.

CHAPTER 35

JESSIE

THREE MONTHS LATER

My stomach rumbles and I check my watch. Right on cue! Every day at two p.m. I get ravenously hungry and crave ice cream, specifically butterscotch and pistachio mixed together in the same bowl. I've convinced myself that it's a pregnancy craving, though the truth is I've always loved that flavor combo. But now I get to indulge in it every single day without feeling even the slightest hint of guilt.

"You want a snack?" I say to Hayden with a pop of one eyebrow.

"Ice cream time?" he grins at me.

"Of course. Come on." I stand and walk out of the den and to the kitchen with him following me. Opening the door to our huge freezer, I reach in and pull out the two tubs of ice cream. They feel suspiciously light.

Placing them on the counter, I pull off the lids to find both tubs almost empty.

I frown as my stomach growls in protest. "That's so strange."

"What is?" Hayden says as he comes to stand beside me.

"There's none left." I hold up the empty cartons as proof.

"Maybe one of the guys ate it?" he offers with a shrug.

"No." I shake my head. "They're not huge ice cream fans and even if they were, they're not mean, or stupid enough, to

take the last of it from their pregnant, hormonal wife. They wouldn't have put the empty tubs back either."

"Maybe you ate it and you forgot?"

"Hey!" I nudge him in the ribs. "I don't eat that much of the stuff."

He chuckles. "I didn't mean that. Anyway, it's no big deal. Let me take you out for some ice cream instead. It's a beautiful day and I could do with some fresh air."

I look at him. The brothers are upstate signing some paperwork. They'll be back in a few hours. They won't like me going out with Hayden alone. He's been here almost every day for the past three months and he spends time with all of my husbands as well as me but they still don't fully trust him, and I don't know if I do either.

My stomach growls again. I'm not a prisoner here. I don't need my husbands' permission to go out. I can take care of myself and my babies. "Daisy's is just a few blocks. We could go there?" I suggest.

"Perfect!" Hayden says with a vigorous nod of his head. "Let me just use the bathroom before we go."

"Sure," I smile at him. "I'll wait by the elevator."

Hayden turns on his heel and walks out of the room and I grab my purse. Taking out my cell, I type out a quick text to our group chat to tell the boys where I'm going.

A walk in the sunshine will do me good. Not to mention the delicious ice cream reward at the end.

FORTY-FIVE MINUTES LATER, Hayden and I are sitting at my usual table in Daisy's ice cream parlor. I know it's probably bad that this is my usual table and it speaks volumes about my sweet tooth and current ice cream addiction, but this place is near to mine and Mikey's jogging route too, and we often stop in for a coffee. The place is quiet today but it often is at this time of day, just before the local schools let out.

Hayden is quieter than usual, and he pushes his raspberry swirl around his bowl with his spoon.

“Everything okay?” I ask.

He glances at his watch and it’s not the first time he’s done that since we sat down ten minutes earlier. The hairs on the back of my neck start to tingle unexpectedly.

“Hayden?” I snap.

“What?” He blinks at me. “Oh, yeah. Everything’s fine.”

I narrow my eyes at him. He’s lying. “Do you have somewhere else to be?”

“No. Of course not,” he says with a shake of his head.

The sound of the bell jingling when the door opens makes us both look up. Two huge men dressed in black walk through it and my heart starts beating faster.

“Jessie,” Hayden says and I turn my gaze on him. He swallows hard. “I didn’t know this was what was going to happen.”

I drag my eyes back to the two men who have just walked through the door. They have tattoos on their necks that look vaguely familiar to me. My pulse is racing now too. The bowl of ice cream I just about inhaled is threatening to make a reappearance.

When one of the men starts shouting at the other customers to get out in a thick Russian accent, the bile surges up my gullet, burning the back of my throat as I swallow it down.

“What have you done?” I hiss to Hayden as the customers run out of the door.

“I’m sorry, Jessie. I didn’t know they wanted to hurt you,” he sobs. “They said they were going to kill me.”

I suck in a breath, glaring at the two Russians as they approach our table.

“Miss Ivanov,” the taller one snarls as he holds up a syringe full of fluid.

Damn! I hate needles! Why do people insist on sticking me with those things and freaking kidnapping me?

“It’s Mrs. Ryan, actually,” I snarl back.

I glance sideways and see that Daisy has disappeared and in place of the petite woman with the purple pixie cut and elfin face, stands a tall former Navy SEAL.

Without turning around, I know that another former SEAL is walking out of the back room. At the same time, two men with arms as big as boulders, armed with semi-automatics are coming through the front door. One reaches up as he opens it, taking hold of the bell so it doesn’t make a sound as he and his colleague walk silently into the parlor and make their way toward us.

I keep my eyes on the Russians. “Who sent you?” I snap.

“Please don’t hurt her. I’ll do whatever you want,” Hayden snivels.

“She is what we want,” the tall one snarls as he reaches out his hand to grab my arm.

CHAPTER 36

SHANE

I glance at my brothers as they sip macchiatos and laugh amongst themselves while we wait for our lawyers to finalize some paperwork. We are about to add Jessie's name to the deeds of every property and legal business that we own and it requires all four of our signatures. Jessie doesn't know yet and she would no doubt try and talk us out of it if she did because she has no desire for money or material things.

We got a new team of lawyers in after I fired our previous one, which was headed by my ex-fiancée, Erin McGrath. She made it clear on more than one occasion how much she hated my new wife and our lifestyle and so I couldn't have her working for us any longer. I stopped trusting her and I need to trust my lawyer. This new one came highly recommended but they work for the same firm as Erin, so I'm waiting to see if they can prove themselves trustworthy enough to handle all of our business affairs.

It's not often my brothers and I get out like this these days, at least not for business, but our signatures need to be witnessed by two lawyers, so we have left Jessie to spend some time with her newly found half-brother. The kid seems to adore his big sister, not that I can blame him; she is pretty fucking adorable. I'm still not one hundred percent sure about him but I'm not sure I ever will be.

I am anxious to get back to her, and I know my brothers will be too. We've always been over-protective when it comes to her, but now that she's carrying our babies too, well it just

made my irrational desire to never let her leave the apartment ever again increase one hundred fold. The fact that she has left the apartment to get ice cream with Hayden makes me paranoid and suspicious, but according to Jessie, I'm always paranoid and suspicious and I need to learn to trust people more.

I go back to looking out the window as my cell starts ringing. I take it out and frown as I see Chester's name flashing on the screen. He's one of our most trusted and experienced security personnel, but as such, it's usually Conor or the twins who deal with him. He is also one of Jessie's personal security detail, so if he's calling me, this isn't a regular work thing, this is a Jessie thing. My heart sinks in my chest as I raise the cell phone to my ear.

"Chester?" I bark when I answer the call.

"Code red, boss. Daisy's ice cream parlor," is all he says before he ends the call because that is what he's been instructed to do.

He protects my wife and I want every single bit of his focus and attention to be on her. Code red is the highest threat level and it's the one that makes the blood freeze in my veins. That's all he has to say because all I need to know is where she is and the fact that she's in danger, and any seconds he's spending telling me what's going on are valuable seconds that he's wasting protecting her. I have our best men watching her everywhere she goes and I have to trust that they will protect her with their lives because I wouldn't be able to function if I didn't.

Adrenaline kicks in and I focus on getting out of this office and getting to her because if I think about what might be happening or the fact that she and our babies are in danger I wouldn't even be able to put one foot in front of the other.

"Boys. We're leaving. Now!" I bark as I walk toward the door.

"What's happened?" Conor asks as the three of them fall into step behind me.

“Code red,” I say and I watch as each of their worlds comes simultaneously crashing down around their ears. I can’t deal with it right now though. We have to focus. We have to get to her and pray that our team don’t let her down.

“I knew that piece of shit was bad news,” Liam shouts. “What the fuck, Shane!”

“We should never have let her go anywhere with him,” Mikey adds, his voice cracking.

“You are aware that would never work,” Conor snaps. “This is Jessie we’re talking about. Let’s just fucking get to her.”

“The team are with her. They’ll take care of her.” I try to reassure them, wishing with everything single thing that I have that it’s true.

“What if something happens...?” Liam says what we’re all thinking but he can’t even bring himself to finish the sentence.

“She’s got six ex-Navy SEALs protecting her. They’ll do their jobs,” Conor adds as he glances at me and I know that he’s feeling just like I am. There is conviction in his words but there is still doubt in his mind.

We walk straight past the elevator and run down the three flights of stairs to the basement to our car. Even if we break every speed limit there is on the way, it will still take us forty-five minutes to get to her and that is way too long. Chester will update me as soon as there is something to update, as is the protocol. And until then all we can do is wait and hope that she is safe. The thought of something happening to her and our babies is too much to contemplate. We have lost her twice and even though we got her back, both times it almost broke us. If we lost all of them, it’s not something any of us could come back from. It would be the end of us as we know it.

AS CONOR DRIVES, my mind races with questions. Who the fuck is she in danger from? Is this something to do with Hayden? Or someone else? Is it someone who’s trying to get to us through her? It can’t be a coincidence that it happened

today when we were out of the city. Who knew that we wouldn't be around?

I hold my cell phone in my hand and have to hold back from dialing Chester's number and asking him what the fuck is going on, because that could be moment that he gets distracted and he loses her. But fuck, it is killing me not to know, just as much as it's killing all of us that we're not there when she needs us.

"We should have heard from him by now," Liam snarls from the back seat.

"He'll call as soon as he can," I remind him, the edge in my voice audible even to me.

"What if..."

"Fucking don't, Liam!" Conor barks. "Don't fucking say it."

"We're all thinking it, bro. You don't have to say it out loud," Mikey says quietly to his twin.

"I just..." I hear the strain in Liam's voice and I reach back and put my hand on his knee.

"I know, son. There is not a chance in hell Chester and his team would let anything happen to her," I assure him.

"No, because they know they're fucking dead men walking if they do," Conor growls, his knuckles white as he grips the wheel.

CHAPTER 37

JESSIE

The giant Russian's fingertips have barely brushed my skin when a bullet whizzes through the air and straight through his neck. He crashes against the table as he drops to the floor. His colleague spins around, but another bullet brings him to the same unfortunate end.

I sit back in my chair as my heart races faster and I gasp for breath. The four guards surround me, worry etched on their faces.

"Get her some water!" one shouts.

"Are you okay, Jessie?" Chester asks as he crouches in front of me, rocking back on his heels as he stares at me with concern. With their attention solely on me, Hayden scrambles to his feet and makes a run for the door. One of the SEALs, whose name I don't know, raises his weapon. These four men have been briefed to shoot to kill when it comes to mine and my babies' safety and I don't want Hayden dead.

I jump up and grab his arm. "No! Don't shoot him. Please?"

He turns to look at me and then at his three colleagues, giving Hayden the opportunity to run out the door. "Should I go after him?"

"No." Chester shakes his head. "We stay with Mrs. Ryan at all times."

He nods his understanding and holsters his weapon, allowing Hayden to run to his freedom, albeit temporary. I'll find the little snake before the week is out.

Someone hands me a glass of cold water and I take a sip as my heart rate starts to return to normal. I'm safe.

"You okay?" Chester asks.

"Yes. Thank you all," I say with a weak smile.

"Any time." Chester winks at me.

"Is Daisy okay?" I ask, looking around the room for any sign of the store owner who I'm on first name terms with thanks to my ongoing addiction.

"She's fine. Unharmed and relieved you're safe. Someone is taking her home," Chester replies.

"Good," I nod, feeling a surge of relief that she wasn't caught up in the crossfire.

Chester looks me over once more before he stands straight, barking orders to his men as they all get to work fast. One of them starts closing up the shop's shutters while another makes a call. I listen intently to the plan he instructs his men to follow. Once I'm safely in the armored car outside, where another two ex-SEALS are waiting, one of Chester's team is going to stay behind to organize the clean-up crew to dispose of the two dead Russians currently bleeding all over the floor.

"You ready to go home?" Chester asks.

"Yes, please," I say with a shaky breath.

"Let's move," Chester barks as he takes hold of my arm and the four men escort me to the SUV outside. "I'll call Shane from the car," he says to me and my stomach drops again.

God, the brothers are going to be so mad!

They never trusted Hayden, and with good reason it seems. Liam was right. How could I have been so damn naïve? I thought Hayden and I had formed a bond. I can't believe he could betray me so easily. I wonder if any of his apparent last minute remorse was even real, or simply an attempt to save his own skin.

I sigh heavily as I rub a hand protectively over my stomach. I'm so relieved the brothers designed their protection system and that I actually remembered to implement it. When we came back to New York from Ireland, they would barely let me out of their sights for more than five minutes. But I hated living like that. I felt stifled and claustrophobic. I mean, it's not like I often spend time without at least one of them, and I like it that way, but I still wanted the choice to be able to come and go whenever I wanted.

My overprotective husbands had other ideas though, and we fought about it for weeks until they devised a system whereby I tell them when I'm going somewhere and I have a very discreet security detail. They're so good, I've never met five of them before today, but I know they are there, and something about that is actually quite comforting. It also stops the brothers giving me a hard time.

I have forgotten a few times and I was subsequently punished for it, which isn't all bad, but something about Hayden was off today. That ice cream not being in the freezer was off. There was no way I was leaving the apartment with him alone. I shudder as I think about the fact I could be on my way to anywhere, unconscious and in the back of some Russian's car. But who the hell wants me now? I thought my past was done with. Will I ever escape the burden of being Alexei Ivanov's daughter?

"Can you ask someone to take some pictures of their neck tattoos?" I ask Chester as we climb into the car.

"Sure," he replies with a nod.

I sit in the SUV as it makes the short trip back to the apartment. I listen to Chester's call to Shane and my heart starts racing again for an entirely different reason. "She's unhurt. Nobody touched her," he repeats for the fourth time. "We're on our way back to the apartment now."

"Does he want to speak to me?" I whisper.

Chester shakes his head and my stomach starts to churn. He must be so mad at me!

“I’ll stay with her until you’re back. Bye, boss,” he says before he ends the call.

“Was he super-mad?” I ask.

“No, he just had a poor signal. He’s just relieved you’re okay,” he says with a wink.

“Chester McFeeney, you are a terrible liar!”

He simply laughs in response.

CHAPTER 38

JESSIE

As soon as we got back to the apartment, I got my laptop and started to do some searching on the tattoos I'd seen on those Russian guys' necks. The bodyguard who stayed behind sent some pictures of them to my phone. Chester made us a fresh pot of decaf coffee and has been sitting opposite me the entire time, but I'm too distracted to even speak to him, so distracted that I don't hear my husbands returning until all four of them are in the kitchen with us.

It's Liam who runs to me first, pulling me from my stool at the kitchen island and into his arms. He squeezes me so tightly, I struggle to breathe.

"Jesus fucking Christ," he sighs.

"Liam," I say as I wriggle in his arms.

He takes a small step back from me. "Are you okay, baby?" he asks as he runs his hands over my arms and my stomach.

"I'm fine."

Then he drops to his knees and presses a soft kiss on my growing bump. "We're going to get you all checked out anyway."

I run my hands through his hair and smile. "They didn't even touch me, Liam. There's nothing to check."

He presses his cheek against my stomach and wraps his arms around the back of my thighs as he whispers something I can't quite hear to my rounded belly.

Mikey is beside me next, wrapping his arms around my top half and squeezing me tightly. “Thank fuck you’re okay, Red! I’m going to kill that little fucker with my bare hands when we get hold of him,” he snarls.

Then Conor is at my other side. He cups my chin in his hand and turns my head so I can look into his eyes. He narrows his as he glares at me. “You’re going to give me a fucking heart attack, Angel.”

“I’m sorry,” I whisper.

Liam stands up and steps back and Mikey lets me go too, allowing their older brother to hug me instead. I press my head against Conor’s chest as he holds onto me and that’s when I start to cry. Thinking of what might have happened. Thinking of the pain it would cause them if something had happened to me or our babies. I cling to him as tears roll down my cheeks.

“It’s okay. We got you,” he whispers as he runs his hands over my hair.

“How the fuck did that little prick get away?” Shane asks Chester.

“Max was going to shoot him but Jessie asked him not to,” Chester answers matter-of-factly but I hear the slight tremor in his voice. Shane is going to be pissed at him too, now.

“For fuck’s sake,” he says with a heavy sigh.

“You said to always follow Jessie’s orders, boss,” Chester adds as he clears his throat.

“I know,” Shane snarls.

I lift my head from Conor’s chest and wipe my tear-stained cheeks. Shane really said that? I don’t know why that makes me smile but it does.

“Is there anything else right now?” Shane asks.

“Clean up crew are done. My men didn’t recognize either of the Russians but they had the same tattoo on their necks, but Jessie is working on that.” He looks to me and gives me a faint smile.

“Good. Then you can go,” Shane barks.

“Thank you for today, Chester,” Conor says, and Liam and Mikey voice their agreement.

“My pleasure,” he says before he starts to walk out of the room.

I watch as Shane follows him, stopping him just before he reaches the doorway. I don’t know what he says but Chester is smiling by the time he leaves the room so I assume Shane was expressing his gratitude too.

When he walks back toward us, Conor steps back from me until Shane is standing directly in front of me. My legs tremble in nervous anticipation. I feel like I might throw up again. He’s going to shout at me and I’m feeling so emotional and hormonal I might just burst into tears again. But he doesn’t shout. He pulls me into his huge arms and kisses the top of my head.

“If anything ever happened to you,” he mumbles into my hair.

“I’m sorry,” I whimper.

He pulls back and frowns at me. “What for?”

“Aren’t you mad?” I whisper.

“I’m pissed as hell, sweetheart, but not at you.” He pulls me back to him again and I melt into his arms. “Dr. Stein is on her way here to check you over, just in case.”

“But I’m fine...”

“Jessie!” he snaps and I stop talking.

“Okay,” I breathe as I snuggle deeper against his chest.

“Good girl,” he whispers in my ear and despite the circumstances, wet heat pools in my center. When he eventually lets me go, my cheeks are flushed pink and he gives me a knowing smile before he guides me back to the kitchen island and we all take a seat.

“So do we have any idea what the fuck is going on?” Conor asks, rubbing a hand over his jaw in frustration.

They all look to me for answers, but I can't give many – at least not yet.

“I assume you have a reason for keeping Hayden alive?” Shane adds.

“He can give us answers. We could have got some from the Russians, but...”

“Hard to talk when you have no throat,” Mikey says with a flash of his eyebrows. “Chester sent us those photographs too. Those SEALS are good fucking shots.”

“It's kind of what they're trained to do, dumbass,” Liam adds good-naturedly and Mikey fakes a scowl at him.

“If we could have spoken to one of them though,” I say with a sigh. “We may have to rethink your shoot to kill policy.”

“No!” all four of them reply before I've even finished speaking.

“But we could have got some vital information.”

Conor slides an arm around my waist. “We can get information any time from anywhere, but we can never get you back, Angel.”

“Fair point,” I admit even though it would be so much easier if we could speak to one of those dead guys and find out who they're working for. Especially as the photographs of their tattoos aren't the clearest given that their throats had been torn open by a bullet. Because the fact that someone wants to kidnap and hurt me is pretty terrifying. I mean, you'd think I'd be used to it by now, right? But it's not only me I have to worry about any longer. I look down and rub a hand over my belly absentmindedly.

Shane places his large hand over mine and gives it a gentle squeeze. “So, Hayden. What happened?”

“We were having our ice cream and he seemed kind of quiet and nervous. He kept checking his watch all the time...”

“So you think he told them where you were headed before you even left the apartment?” Mikey asks.

“I think so. He used the bathroom before we left. Maybe he told them then?”

“Maybe.” Shane rubs a hand over the stubble on his jaw. “We weren’t sure if you were followed, but Chester and his men didn’t spot anything to suggest that either. Then what happened?”

I take a deep breath. “Then these two huge Russian guys came into the parlor and started telling the other customers to leave. That’s when Hayden started crying. He said he didn’t know this was going to happen. He didn’t know they were going to hurt me.”

“Anything else?” Conor asks.

“And that they threatened to kill him?”

“But he didn’t say who *they* were?” Liam asks.

“No. He didn’t get much chance to speak because they walked straight over to us and then everything happened kind of quick.”

“What did the Russians say?” Shane asks as he stares at me. This is his process. Firing questions and trying to put all of the pieces together in his head.

“They called me Miss Ivanov and one of them had a hypodermic needle, like he was going to inject me and knock me out, maybe?”

“Anything else?” Shane asks.

I screw my eyes closed, trying to picture the scene from earlier today. I replay the conversation in my head. “I told them my name was Mrs. Ryan,” I say and Conor gives my thigh a squeeze, making me turn to him and smile. “But that was it. Then one of your men shot them. They didn’t know Hayden was involved and when they were focused on me, he made a run for it. One of the guards was going to shoot him, but I asked him not to. I want to know who threatened him and why. I’ll be able to track him down.”

“How quickly can you do that?” Shane asks and I wince.

“What?” he asks with a frown.

“I mean, he’s just a kid. It will be easy enough...”

“But?” Conor says.

“I kind of taught him how to stay off-grid.”

“Jessie!” Liam snaps.

“Well, I didn’t know he was going to pull something like this, did I?” I protest, but Liam narrows his eyes at me. Of all of the brothers, he probably trusted Hayden the least. He would have predicted this if I’d have listened. I love the fact that he doesn’t say this out loud but instead glares at me so intensely that I squirm in my seat.

“Fuck!” Shane hisses.

“It won’t take long for him to make a mistake though. I promise. I mean this whole world is all new to him. And in the meantime, I think these tattoos are the key to finding out who those Russian guys worked for. It’s just a pity that the photographs aren’t great. You think I could get another look at their bodies?”

The brothers all share a look that makes me feel like I’m missing something here.

“That’s not an option, Red,” Mikey answers for them. “They’re already ash.”

I roll my eyes. “Your efficiency at disposing of dead bodies is kinda scary, you know that?”

“You fucking love it,” Conor chuckles as he plants a soft kiss on my cheek.

I can’t help but smile at him. “There is one man who could help me ID these men,” I suggest.

“No Bratva,” Liam and Conor say at the same time.

“But we can trust Vlad,” I insist.

“This could be something to do with Vlad,” Shane says.

“No. Vlad has no reason to want me dead.”

“You’re the legitimate heir to the Ivanov empire that he now reigns over, Red,” Mikey reminds me.

“Still... He could have killed me a long time ago. Why now? It doesn't make sense. At least let me call him. Please?”

Conor and Liam and Mikey shake their heads but Shane speaks. “If you think it could help find out who these guys were working for, then call him.”

I lean over and kiss his cheek softly. “Thank you.”

“Something about this feels way off,” Mikey says loudly with a look of something bordering on disgust on his face.

“Well that's because someone just tried to kidnap me, Mikey. Of course it feels off.”

He shakes his head and waves a hand in the direction of me and Shane. “Not that, Red. *This!* You two being on the same page and us being on another one.” He shivers dramatically as though something has crawled up his spine. “I don't like it.”

“Me neither,” Liam frowns.

“Well, there's a first time for everything,” Shane says with a grin as he slides an arm around my waist and kisses my bare shoulder.

Conor shakes his head and chuckles softly and I smile as I realize how lucky I am to be so loved and protected by these incredible men. For some reason someone wants me and I have no idea who or why.

CHAPTER 39

CONOR

Jessie lies on the bed and we all watch while her OB-GYN, Brooke, rolls the ultrasound machine over her stomach. The black and white screen is fuzzy for a few heart stopping seconds as she tries to get a good angle.

“There they are,” she says after what feels like an eternity. She traces her fingertip over the screen. “You see them lying together? Top to tail?”

“Yeah,” Liam croaks and Jessie giggles as she watches our babies on the screen.

“Heartbeats are strong,” Brooke adds as she turns a dial and the sound of tiny racing hearts fills the room.

“Fuck!” Mikey breathes. “That’s so much clearer than the last time.”

“Well, they’re almost double the size they were since last time. I can tell you the sex if you want to know?”

Jessie looks between us all, her eyes shining with happiness as though she wasn’t just betrayed by her half-brother and almost kidnapped this afternoon. “Can we?” she whispers.

“If that’s what you want, sweetheart?” Shane replies while Mikey and Liam voice their agreement.

“Either way is fine by me. As long as they’re healthy, I don’t care,” I add with a shrug.

“Well, you’re having a boy and a girl and they both look super-healthy to me,” Brooke says as she wipes the gel from

Jessie's stomach with some tissue paper.

"One of each?" Jessie giggles. "That's perfect."

"Perfect," Shane agrees although we all know anything would have been perfect. She is perfect and so are our kids going to be.

"So, we're gonna have a little Jessie and a little Mikey running around here?" Mikey asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

"God fucking help us," Shane groans.

"Why does it have to be a little Mikey? He might be just like me?" Liam says.

"Or a mini Shane," Mikey adds with a shudder and Liam laughs.

"Remember that I can kick both of your asses," Shane reminds them.

"We're just playing, bro," Liam chuckles. "Besides, I mean we could get a mini Conor."

"Fuck!" Mikey gasps, his mouth open as he stares at me in horror. "Our own mini fire-starter."

"What?" Jessie laughs as she looks at me.

"I went through a little arsonist phase when I was a kid," I say with a shrug.

"You were all fucking nightmares as kids, but you were a fucking tornado of trouble, Mikey Ryan," Shane says as he takes Jessie's hand and kisses her fingertips before he adds, "so let's hope they both turn out like their mom."

I frown at him. "What? Stubborn as hell, argumentative little redheads with a raging sugar addiction who refuse to do as they're told?"

"In that case I'd prefer two Mikeys," Shane says as he shakes his head.

"Hey!" Jessie shrieks but my brothers and even Brooke laugh loudly.

“I’m sorry, Angel. I meant sweet and kind and funny,” I say with a wink.

“Whoever they’re like, I just can’t fucking wait to meet them,” Mikey says.

Liam is just smiling so widely that I think his cheeks are going to be hurting later.

“And you’re sure you’re feeling okay, Jessie?” Brooke took her blood pressure when she first got here and it was perfect. Of course it was – my girl has nerves of fucking steel.

“Yes. Never felt better,” she replies with a smile. “Thank you for coming and checking me and the babies over.”

“Any time. That’s what I’m here for,” Brooke smiles back before she stands up and starts to pack her equipment away. While she’s doing that, Mikey wraps his arms around her and gives her a kiss on the cheek and then Liam does the same until she finds herself in the middle of a giant man sandwich. She blushes slightly making Jessie laugh.

“Boys,” she admonishes them. “Poor Brooke can’t breathe!”

“It’s fine,” she laughs as the twins release her. “I’m used to excited parents-to-be, although usually not so many at once.”

“Well, we’re kind of unique,” Shane says as he helps her with her things.

“You sure are.” She reaches for Jessie’s hand and gives it a squeeze. “Take good care of yourself and I’ll see you in two weeks.”

“I will.”

As Shane sees Brooke out, I lie on the bed next to my wife. I place my hand on her gently rounded stomach and suck in a deep breath. “If anything had have happened to you today,” I breathe. Even thinking about her or our babies being harmed feels like someone has my heart in a vise.

“I know, Conor,” she whispers. “I’m so sorry I worried you all.”

“You know you’re never leaving this apartment without one of us ever again, don’t you?” I narrow my eyes at her. If she tries to fight me on this, she will lose.

Liam comes and sits on the bed beside her and nods his agreement.

“Yeah,” she mumbles.

“That didn’t sound all that convincing, Angel?” I frown at her.

“Yes,” she says louder now. “I don’t want to go anywhere without you guys.” She shudders and Liam wraps his arm around her.

“Good girl,” I whisper in her ear and she shivers again, but this time I suspect for an entirely different reason.

“I should get up and start looking for Hayden,” she says with a soft sigh.

“Nope,” Liam replies.

“Not tonight,” I add.

“But the sooner I start looking, the better chance we have of finding out who was behind what happened today,” she protests as she tries to sit up.

“You’re taking tonight off,” I snap.

“The doctor just said I’m totally fine,” she sighs loudly.

“Yeah, but maybe we’re not,” Liam says and she immediately stops struggling.

“Oh,” she breathes.

“We’re all taking a night off,” I growl as I trail soft kisses along the side of her neck.

“Shane won’t like that.” She squirms in my arms as my beard tickles her throat.

“Shane won’t like what?” he barks as he walks back into the room.

“Everyone taking the night off,” she purrs.

He stands at the foot of the bed, glaring at her as he pulls off his tie. “You really think any of us would be going to work tonight after we almost lost you today?” He arches an eyebrow at her as Mikey walks up behind him.

I roll onto my back and look at my brothers. I hear Liam chuckling softly and Jessie’s breathing grows faster and louder. When Shane unbuckles his belt and slides it off, she gasps so loudly that my cock twitches. I look between her and him as she starts to fidget.

“I think we’re going to have to restrain her for this first part,” he says as he hands me the belt and I swear I smell her cream already as her body starts trembling.

“What are you doing?” she breathes. “Am I being punished?”

“No, baby,” Liam replies, kissing her softly before pulls her t-shirt off and over her head. Then he pushes himself up and starts to unbutton his shirt.

“Of course we’re not punishing you, Angel. Now give me your hands.” I hold out the belt and she holds them out to me in compliance. Goosebumps visibly prickle along her forearms as I wrap the soft leather around her wrists.

“Then what?” she breathes.

“You’ll see.” I wink at her before I gently push her back against the pillows as I raise her arms above her head and secure them to the headboard. We had this bed specially made after we got married. It’s big enough for all five of us to sleep in. The headboard is made of solid oak. It has a long rectangular piece cut out across the center which is fitted with polished steel bars. Perfect for handcuffs, rope, belts, or anything else we might want to tie our girl up with.

When she is securely restrained, I run my hands down the soft skin on the underside of her arm and she shivers. “What are you all going to do to me?” she whispers.

“What do you think?” Liam chuckles as he sits on the bed beside her.

“Dr. Mikey,” I shout to my younger brother who is tossing his clothes into the hamper. “Is there a limit on the number of orgasms a pregnant woman should have?”

“Well.” Mikey scrubs a hand over his beard as he looks deep in thought. “You know in all my extensive research I’ve never come across a limit.”

“Really?” I arch an eyebrow at him and Jessie’s thighs start trembling with anticipation. Her breath hitches in her throat. “Are you comfortable?” I ask her.

“Yeah,” she pants.

“You tell us if your arms start to ache or you need to take a breather, okay?”

“A breather from what?” she asks even though she knows what we plan on doing to her. The skin on her chest and cheeks is pink with heat.

At this point, Shane crawls onto the foot of the bed and reaches for her panties. He pulls them gently down her legs and she lifts her ass to help him.

“Your pussy is already soaking, sweetheart,” he chuckles as he tosses her panties onto the floor.

“You still... haven’t...” she gasps as he starts to circle her clit with his index finger.

“Haven’t you figured it out yet, Red?” Mikey asks as he slides onto the bed beside Liam before he starts trailing soft kisses over her rounded stomach.

“We’re all going to make you come, Angel,” I say as I dip my head and start to kiss her neck as Liam gets to work on her gorgeous tits. “Then when we’re done with that...”

Kiss.

“We’re going to untie you and get you some food. Then all get a little sleep.”

Kiss.

“Then we’re going to wake you up and fuck you.”

Kiss.

“Tonight is all about taking care of you, Angel. Because we almost fucking died when we thought someone might hurt you today and we need you to know how much we love you.”

“I do know,” she whispers.

“Yeah? Well, we’re gonna remind you anyway. Just sleeping and eating and fucking and making you come.”

“Oh, holy fuck!” she hisses as Mikey’s mouth settles over her clit while Shane slides his fingers inside her.

“We’re going to take real good care of you, baby,” Liam murmurs against her skin.

I rub my hand over her stomach as she squirms, pulling at her restraints. I can’t believe we almost lost her today – almost lost all of them. I want to wrap her in my arms and never let her leave my sight again. I want to kiss and lick and touch every millimeter of her body so the taste and the feel of her is burned into my brain until the end of time.

“Oh,” she whimpers as the first orgasm hits quickly, her body trembling as Shane holds her thighs open while Mikey carries on eating her pussy.

“You have to let me touch you too,” she breathes as she pulls at the belt binding her wrists.

“You’re touching all of us, Jessie,” Shane says as he pushes a finger inside her and gently finger-fucks her.

“You know what I mean,” she pants as she looks down at him and Mikey worshipping her pussy. I’ll be swapping places with one of them in about thirty seconds because I want to worship it myself but before I do, I turn her face to mine and kiss her softly, swallowing her soft moans as she’s brought to the brink again.

CHAPTER 40

JESSIE

A large hand reaches for me, clawing at my skin, his fingertips grazing my arm as I shrink back from him, pressing myself back against the damp wall as far as I can. Breathing in as though it will make me smaller somehow. I want to scream but I'm too afraid. I want my mom. I want my papa.

The giant man curses in Russian as he pushes his arm deeper into the crack of the door and I shrink back further, my eyes wide and my mouth tightly closed as I peer at him through the gap in the cupboard door that he's reaching through. His teeth are bared like a dog, his eyes wild with fury. He turns his head to the side as he grunts his annoyance, changing his angle so he might reach me.

There is a tattoo on the base of his neck. A bird. With black eyes and orange wings. It wears a symbol on its chest. Zhar-ptitsa – a firebird. My papa tells me stories of the firebird and the princess. Of difficult quests and true love.

The man's hand grasps for me again, curling over the fabric of my pajamas and I let out an ear-splitting scream.

Then he is gone.

MY EYES SNAP open in the dark room as my heart beats wildly in my chest, just like my eight-year-old self in my dream. Except that was no dream. It was a memory. A long-buried one that had been lost in the jumbled collection of fairytales and nightmares of my childhood. But that was real. It

happened. That tattoo was real. And it is the same one I saw yesterday.

There is a hand gripping my waist and I turn to see Conor curled up beside me, a protective arm wrapped around me.

On the other side of me, Mikey and Liam snore softly. Shane isn't here though. I knew he wouldn't be able to resist working even after forbidding me to. I wriggle from Conor's grip, trying to shift from under him without disturbing him.

I fail.

"Where are you going?" he grumbles sleepily.

"I need my computer."

"No. Sleep!" he commands as he pulls me tighter, resting his chin on my shoulder.

"I recognize the tattoo. I've seen it before," I whisper.

He opens his eyes and narrows them at me. "When?"

"When I was little. Some men tried to kidnap me and they had the same tattoo."

Conor sits up and takes my hand and indicates his head toward the door and together we both climb out of the bed without disturbing the twins. He hands me a t-shirt and I pull it over my head while he puts on a pair of sweatpants and then we leave the room and head to Shane's office.

Conor keeps his hand grasped firmly in mine as we walk as though someone might steal me away in the night. I smile up at him. Well, someone might try, but he and his brothers would never let them take me and I have never felt as safe and protected as I do as a part of their family.

"You okay, Angel?" he asks, his brow furrowed in concern.

"Yeah," I whisper as I squeeze his hand.

Shane has his head bent, looking through some paperwork when we walk into his office. He looks up when he hears us. "What are you two doing up?" he asks with a frown.

“What are you doing up when you promised we were all taking the night off?” I ask with a flash of my eyebrows as I pull up a chair beside him and switch on my computer. When I became a permanent resident here, Shane bought a much bigger desk. It’s big enough that the two of us can work comfortably at it all day on two separate computers. Its huge size also comes in handy for the various other things we like to do on it. Even the thought makes my insides warm and tingly and I remind myself I came here to work.

Shane leans over and kisses my cheek and my skin warms at his touch. “I couldn’t sleep.”

“I knew you wouldn’t,” Conor says with a knowing smile as he sits on the edge of the desk beside me.

“I can’t stop my brain from ticking over.” He scowls at the paperwork in front of him. “I was wondering if this deal we struck up with Chicago had anything to do with it?” He rubs his temples and frowns at the papers on his desk.

“I think I know who’s behind this. Well, kind of,” I say and he turns back to me.

“Who?”

I start to pull up some of the records from my hard drive. I have stored everything I have ever found out about my past and my family on here.

“Tell us about the dream, Angel,” Conor says.

“Dream?” Shane’s frown deepens.

“A memory really,” I say as I start to trawl through the files. “I knew I’d seen that tattoo before.” I pull up the image of the guy’s neck from the ice cream parlor and although it’s obscured by his blood and a gaping bullet hole, the image is still recognizable. “It’s a firebird. See?” I point to the orangey red feathers on the screen.

“A firebird?” Conor asks as he peers closely at the screen.

“Yeah, like a phoenix, you know?”

Both he and Shane mumble their agreement.

“When I was little, The Firebird and the Princess was one of my favorite fairytales. My father used to tell it to me all the time.”

I look between both Shane and Conor as they stare at me in confusion and I realize I’m not making much sense.

“There are lots of variations of the firebird folklore, but the one my father told me was of an archer who finds a firebird feather and presents it to the king in the hopes of reward, instead the greedy king forces the archer to steal a princess. But, the princess didn’t want to be stolen and she refuses to marry the king. In traditional variations, the archer marries the princess himself, but in my father’s unique spin on it, the princess steals the firebird for herself and escapes to a faraway land.” I blink away a tear as I think about my papa and his soft, calming voice.

Conor reaches for my hand and squeezes and I smile at him.

“Anyway, because of that story, I think I forgot about the men who came to take me. The men with the firebird tattoos, or at least I jumbled the memory and the fairytales until I didn’t realize that part of it was real.”

“So you think these are the same men who tried to take you yesterday?” Shane asks.

“Not the exact same men, because as far as I recall, my father killed all of the men who came for me when I was a child.” More memories now of gunfire and shouting fill my head and I shake it to clear my thoughts. “But part of the same brotherhood.”

“Brotherhood?” Conor frowns at me.

“Hmm. I saw something about this years ago but because I was so focused on the Wolf I didn’t do a lot of research into them specifically.” I open a document that contains the information I gathered. “Roughly translated as the brotherhood of the firebird.”

“And they are?” Shane asks.

“Well, they used to be the Bratva’s most skilled assassins.”

“Used to be?” Shane frowns again.

“They haven’t been active for over a decade. At least not according to any of the research I did, which is why I never focused on them. They had no connection to the Wolf. In fact, the Wolf kind of put them out of business.”

“So why the fuck are they active now and why do they want you?” Conor snarls.

“Who even knows that I exist?” I shake my head as I stare at the screen.

“Vlad,” Conor growls and I close my eyes. Vlad and his sons are the only people who know who and where I am. I don’t want to believe it of him, but all the signs point straight to him. Still, I can’t wrap my head around it. Vlad had plenty of opportunity to kill me

“I’ll arrange a meeting with him tomorrow,” I whisper.

“The fuck you will,” Conor snaps.

“He might not be behind this,” I place my hand on Conor’s thigh. “And if he’s not, he’ll be our best chance at finding out who is. If you and your brothers go in there and shoot him in the head first then we may never get to the bottom of this.”

“You are not putting yourself or our babies in danger, Jessie,” he goes on.

“We won’t be in danger. You, Shane, Mikey, and Liam will be right beside me. We’ll have the meeting here at the club and have our men here. I won’t be at risk at all.” I look to Shane who has his brow furrowed. “What do you think?”

He rubs a hand over his jaw and sighs. “I think you’re right...”

“Shane!” Conor snaps.

“We can’t keep Jessie out of this, Con, as much as we’d like to. And I don’t know, this doesn’t seem like Vlad’s style,” he says with a shake of his head.

“The Bratva’s elite kill squad try and kidnap our wife and you don’t think the head of the fucking Bratva had anything to

do with it?”

“But they haven’t worked for the Bratva for years, right?” Shane asks me.

“As far as I can tell.” I say with a nod of my head. “But I’ll admit I haven’t looked into them for a long time.”

“So, maybe this is some kind of takeover?” Shane offers.

“Then why aren’t they going after Vlad? Why do they need Jessie?” Conor asks.

“Maybe they are going after him? And Jessie is the only surviving Ivanov – well except for Hayden now, but it’s Jessie who Alexei recognized as his heir. Maybe this brotherhood wants back in power, and what better way to make a power grab than with the true heir?”

“So you think they want Jessie alive?”

I shake my head. “I doubt that,” I say with a sigh. “But if they kill me then they will have a genuine claim to the top.”

Shane wraps an arm around me and plants a kiss on the top of my head. “They won’t get close enough to touch you, sweetheart,” he whispers. “Promise.”

“I know,” I smile at him.

“Hmm.” Conor grunts beside us and I squeeze his hand.

“At least we have a starting point now,” I say. “In a few hours we’ll have some answers, and knowledge is power.”

He brushes the hair from my face. “Power is power.”

“Well, we have plenty of that too,” I remind him.

He rolls his eyes but I know that we’ve won him over. “You’ll make the call on loudspeaker and Shane and I will be in the room with you.”

“I wouldn’t expect anything less,” I say with a smile.

“How do you get me to agree to anything you want?” he says before he kisses me softly.

“She’s got the keys to the cookie jar, that’s why,” Shane says with a soft laugh as he goes back to his paperwork.

“Shane!” I admonish him but he winks at me and I can’t help laugh too.

“He kinda has a point, Angel,” Conor agrees.

“So when are you calling Vlad?” Shane asks as he checks his watch. He’s still wearing the Breitling I bought him for his birthday and it makes me smile.

“Maybe we should wait until the sun comes up?” I suggest. “I’m not sure he’ll appreciate a call at five a.m.?”

“Then how about we wake Mikey up and get him to make some banana waffles instead?” Conor suggests.

“We can’t,” I giggle.

“You can, sweetheart,” Shane flashes his eyebrows at me. “Tell him you’ve got a craving.”

Conor laughs loudly as I feign my indignation. “Are you suggesting I use our unborn children to manipulate Mikey into getting up at the ass crack of dawn to make us food we could probably make ourselves if we tried?”

“Yeah,” Conor and Shane reply in unison.

“Okay,” I say with a nod as I push myself up from my chair. “I just wanted to make sure we’re all on the same page.”

“Good girl,” Shane says, slapping my ass as I walk past him and I smile as I walk out of his office to wake Mikey and Liam. I hear him and Conor talking and know they will be discussing the details of our meeting with Vlad. I hope he agrees to a meeting today, because if he doesn’t, then I suspect my husbands will just hunt him down and meet with him whether he likes it or not.

I push open the bedroom door and smile at the sleeping forms of Mikey and Liam. I feel a twinge of guilt that I’m about to wake them from a peaceful sleep, but this isn’t just about Mikey’s amazing banana waffles, it’s also because we need to brief them both on the latest development and they will want to know as soon as possible. I crawl onto the bed, into the middle of my two sleeping giants.

“Hey, baby,” Liam mumbles.

“Hey, handsome.” I lie between him and his brother and smile as they both snuggle closer to me.

“You need something, Red?” Mikey growls.

“Yes. Your banana waffles,” I giggle.

“Right now?” he groans.

“Uh-huh. The babies are hungry too.”

“That’s a low blow,” he says as he plants a kiss on my shoulder blade and pushes himself up.

“I also have an update about who tried to take me in the ice cream shop yesterday,” I add and that makes Liam sit up too.

“You know who it was?” he snaps.

“Kind of. Let’s go have some breakfast and I’ll tell you all about it.”

CHAPTER 41

MIKEY

I mix the waffle batter as the sexiest sous chef in the world stands right beside me, chopping bananas. When she is done, she dips her finger into the jar of chocolate sauce and then sucks it clean.

“That is very unhygienic, Red. What would your hero, Carl Paxton, have to say about that?”

“I don’t care,” she purrs. “Besides, you have all had your tongue in my mouth at some point this morning, I’m pretty sure if I got any cooties you already got them too.” She arches an eyebrow at me.

“Hmm,” I agree as I lean down and slide my tongue into her mouth again and she moans softly. Fuck, I wish I could take her right here on the counter.

“How are those waffles coming along?” Conor asks as he strolls into the kitchen.

“They would be quicker if your wife wasn’t distracting me every five seconds,” I tell him.

“Oh, so she’s *my* wife when she’s causing trouble?” Conor laughs.

“I am not causing trouble!” she protests.

“You’re always causing trouble,” Shane adds as he walks into the room too. He’s standing before us in a few strides and he wraps his arms around her waist, taking her attention from me. He’s about to kiss her but the change in her face is instant.

She pushes him away from her and steps back at the same time, her hand flying to her mouth as she groans.

“What’s up?” he asks with a frown as I stare at her in confusion.

She sucks in a deep breath but then balks loudly, rushing to the sink. “I feel like I’m going to throw up,” she groans.

I look at Shane and chuckle. He goes to step toward her but I stand in front of him. “You’re making our wife ill, dude. Back off.” I hold up my spatula and he frowns at me.

“Jessie, are you okay, sweetheart?” he asks, ignoring me as he steps closer to her but she holds out her hand to stop him.

“Did you put cologne on?” she whispers.

“Yeah. The one I always wear.”

She shakes her head and goes back to hanging it over the sink. “I’m sorry, I…” She balks again but she doesn’t throw up. “It’s making me…”

“Fuck!” Shane rolls his eyes while Liam and I try our best to control our laughter, but we fail miserably.

“He’ll kick your asses if you don’t stop it,” Conor says with a smile as he walks to Jessie and rubs a hand over her back but he’s barely holding it together either. I can tell by the look on his face.

We’re all used to Jessie’s sudden attacks of nausea now. She’s not often actually sick, but she turns a deep shade of green until the offending smell is removed. First it was oregano. Then tuna fish. Then hot dogs, quickly followed by whiskey – which I found out to my own detriment one night when I had a glass of the stuff at the end of my work shift but directly before bed. I kissed her and she threw up on me after. But now, the offending smell is Shane, so I’m going to enjoy every second of his misfortune.

“I’m fine,” Jessie breathes. “Shane can you…?”

“Fuck me! I guess I’ll go shower then,” he says with a sigh before he walks out of the room to a chorus of sniggers from me and Liam.

“I’m glad you find my discomfort so amusing,” Jessie says as she straightens up, but she arches an eyebrow in that way that lets me know she’s not really mad at us.

“Aw, I’m sorry, Red,” I say as I walk over and kiss her damp forehead. “But if you didn’t have your head in the sink, you would have seen the look on Shane’s face and wet yourself from laughing so hard. I’m surprised we kept a lid on it to be honest.”

“I usually love his cologne too,” she says with a soft chuckle as she leans against my chest.

“Well, looks like he’s gonna have to get himself a new one.”

IT’S ONLY fifteen minutes later when Shane comes back into the room as I’m placing a plate laden with fresh waffles onto the kitchen island. His hair is still damp and he’s changed his clothes too and is dressed in just a pair of grey sweatpants. He makes his way straight to our girl.

“Better?” he asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

She leans close to him, wrapping her arms around him and nuzzling his neck. “Better,” she giggles.

“Thank fuck!” he hisses.

“You worried it was just your general smell that was making her sick, bro?” Liam asks with a snort as he takes a waffle from the plate.

“Asshole,” Shane says with a roll of his eyes, but there is a look of relief on his face that tells me there is a grain of truth in Liam’s teasing. I mean I can’t imagine anything worse than having to keep my distance from our horny, pregnant wife for the next four-and-a-half months.

“Shall we eat and then we can fill the boys in on developments,” Conor says as he takes some waffles and piles his plate high. It’s been nice being in here with them all and acting like a normal family. Being able to forget for a little while that someone tried to kidnap our girl and our babies yesterday, and how terrifyingly close they came to succeeding.

“Yeah,” Jessie says as she pulls out of Shane’s embrace.

I CHEW on the last mouthful of my breakfast as I listen to Jessie telling us about some weird fucking brotherhood. I won’t lie, it sounds like something out of Harry goddamn Potter to me. The fact that these maniacs have tried to kidnap our girl twice now is enough to make me want to slit their throats right now.

“So, Vlad has to know something about this then,” I agree, because how can he not? I also agree with Shane that maybe this is part of some kind of grab for power, but I’m not sure if that’s better or worse than Vlad wanting her dead. At least we know who we’re dealing with if it’s him. A brotherhood sounds all kinds of fucked up.

“Yep. So, let’s hope he agrees to meet with us,” Jessie replies as she takes her second waffle.

“He will.” I reach over and take her hand. “We’ll make sure of it.”

CHAPTER 42

JESSIE

My hand trembles as I dial Vlad's number. At least it was his number over twelve months ago and I hope he hasn't changed it. I glance at Shane and Conor who sit at the desk opposite me. They are here with me but they have agreed to let me handle this.

He answers after a few rings. "Jessica?"

"Jessie," I remind him.

"Of course. My apologies. Old habits die hard," he says softly. "What can I do for you?"

"What do you know about the brotherhood of the firebird?"

He sucks in a breath and there is a few moments pause before he answers. "As much as you do, I suspect. But why are you asking me this?"

"Because they used to be the Bratva's elite assassins."

"Used to be," he interrupts me.

"And they tried to kidnap me yesterday."

"What?" he snarls and I feel like I have his undivided attention suddenly. He curses in Russian and talks to someone in the room with him, who I assume is one of his sons.

"What do you know about them, Vlad?" I ask again.

"They have been dormant for years..." he says with a sigh.

"But?"

“Recently we have heard rumors that they are active again.”

“Active? But they are the Bratva’s assassins? And you are the Bratva.”

“This is not the kind of conversation I want to have over the telephone, Jessie,” he snaps.

“Of course,” I say with a shake of my head as Conor and Shane bristle at the change in Vlad’s tone, but I understand his reasons. “Neither do I. Can we meet?”

“Yes, I think that would be wise,” he says immediately and it makes my stomach drop, because that means he knows something bad is going on.

“Can you come to the club? After what happened yesterday, I don’t really feel like leaving the safety of this building.”

“I assume your husbands are listening?” he says.

“We are,” Shane snarls.

“I know you are a man of your word, Mr. Ryan. Can I have your assurances that we won’t be ambushed if I agree to this meeting?”

“You have my word if I have yours that you will come in here unarmed and without your army,” Shane replies.

“My sons will be with me and they will carry a weapon each. I can’t travel unarmed. But they will not use them unless my life is in danger.”

“Fine,” Shane snaps. “Can you be here in two hours?”

“Yes,” Vlad replies and then he abruptly ends the call.

I lean back in my chair and look between Shane and Conor. “He knows something about the brotherhood to agree to meet us like that.”

“Yeah.” Conor nods his agreement.

“Let’s tell Mikey and Liam and get ready for this meeting then,” Shane says as he pushes himself to his feet. “You’ll let

me handle it, Jessie?”

“Yes,” I reply with a nod. He’s much better at this kind of stuff than me. I mean it’s kind of what he lives for.

“You know I’m not going to play nice?” He arches an eyebrow at me. “At least not until I know for sure he’s not behind what happened yesterday.”

“I wouldn’t expect any less.”

“Good girl.” He winks at me and I thank the heavens that I have these four incredible men in my life.

TWO HOURS LATER, I’m sitting in the brother’s nightclub, with Conor and Liam on my left and Shane and Mikey on my right as we sit opposite Vlad and his sons. He was true to his word and only his sons are with him. Their armored car is in our basement, signaling that Vlad trusts us too, not that he would admit that yet.

“Who have you told that Jessie is Jessica Ivanov?” Shane snarls as his opening question.

“Nobody,” Vlad replies.

“So how the fuck does some kid we’ve never heard of turn up here, claiming to be Alexei’s son, looking for his half-sister?”

“Alexei’s son?”

“Yes,” Shane snaps.

“I had no idea he had a son.” He blinks and he’s either a very good actor or he’s telling the truth.

“Well he does. And the slippery little fuck set Jessie up yesterday.”

“Tell me what happened.” Vlad looks to me but Shane goes on talking.

“Two of the Bratva’s elite assassins tried to kidnap my wife is what happened,” he growls. “Now how the fuck do they even know who she is?”

“They are not working for me.” Vlad turns his attention back to Shane. “And we have not told anyone of Jessica’s existence. Why would I?”

“Because you want to eradicate any threat to your position of power.”

“Jessica is no threat to me,” Vlad replies coolly and Shane’s fists clench by his side, “because she does not exist. And I have no intention of causing Jessie any harm.”

“So who activated this brotherhood again?”

Vlad narrows his eyes at him. “I don’t know.”

“Sure it wasn’t you?”

“Yes, I’m sure,” Vlad snaps, the vein in his temple bulging.

“Care to tell me why the fuck I would believe you?”

Vlad leans forward in his chair, his hands on the table in front of him as he stares down Shane Ryan. Shane stares right back and the atmosphere in the room becomes so thick, I swear I can taste it as the two of them face off, each ready to declare war on the other if they have to.

“With respect, Mr. Ryan,” he snarls. “If I had wanted Jessie dead, I wouldn’t have fucked it up. It would be already done.”

The vein in Shane’s neck pulses as he clenches his fists tighter. I sense Conor and the twins bristling beside me too and I swallow hard. This is going to turn into a bloodbath if things get any more tense. “Is that so?” Shane snarls.

“Yes,” Vlad snarls back. “But as I said, I have no intention of causing her any harm.” He turns to me then and gives a slight nod of his head as though to reassure me and I shake my head.

“So why are the brotherhood after me then, Vlad? Any ideas?” I ask, needing to ease the tension before someone gets their face blown off. I see Mikey twitching from the corner of my eye and worry that his trigger finger is going to get just as

twitchy if we don't ratchet the tension down at least twenty notches.

He runs a scarred hand over his beard and some of the tension slips from his shoulders as he addresses me. "There have been rumblings of a takeover. We have been trying to deal with it for some time now. It seems that some people believe I am not the rightful head of the Bratva."

"And so who is?" Shane snaps. "Who else knows that Jessie is alive?"

"I have already told you that I don't know. The information of her existence did not come from me or my sons," Vlad barks. "If I wanted..."

Conor cuts him off before he can finish his sentence. "Yeah, if you wanted to cause her harm you would have already. You kinda told us that, but the thing is, no the fuck you wouldn't because I would fucking kill you and every person you have ever so much as spoken to before I would let you harm a single hair on her head. And besides that, I just don't buy it."

Vlad narrows his eyes at Conor.

"If you're so shit hot at what you do, why didn't Alexei send you to find his daughter? He sent the brotherhood and they fucked it up. Then he sent the Wolf, and he didn't exactly cover himself in glory either." Conor leans forward now too. "So if you are so fucking good that you think you could take our girl out if you wanted to, why didn't Alexei ask you to find her?"

"I did find her," Vlad shouts back. "I found her before any of them!"

"What?" I stammer as I look between him and my irate husbands. "You can't have."

"I did, Jessie," he says softly. "About six years after your parents left Russia."

"But..." I blink at him.

“You were living in a trailer park in Idaho. Your trailer had a bright green door. Your mom had a herb garden on her window ledge. And you had a cat called Nugent,” he says.

I shake my head in disbelief, but there is no way he could have known that if he wasn't there.

“Why didn't you tell him?” I whisper.

“Because you all seemed so happy. Your parents had the twins by then, and I knew what Alexei would do to them. So, I warned your father and I told Alexei that you could never be found.”

“I remember we left that place in a hurry. We even left Nugent behind because he'd gone on one of his wanders and he wasn't there when we were leaving. I cried for days.” I swallow hard at the memory.

“Alexei called off the search for two years after that, before the brotherhood persuaded him you could be found,” Vlad goes on.

“Why didn't you tell me this before?” I frown at him.

“It was insignificant,” he says with a shake of his head.

“Not to me,” I whisper.

He nods, his Adam's apple bobbing in his throat as he swallows hard before he turns back to Shane and Conor. “You see, I have no reason to want Jessie dead. I have looked out for her whenever I could and I would do so until my last breath. She is a light in this world of darkness and demons, just like her mother before her.”

A sob catches in my throat but I swallow it down.

“Well, I can't argue with that,” Shane says as he takes my hand and laces his fingers through mine and suddenly the tension in the room has dissolved and we are all on the same side.

“How can we get hold of this brotherhood?” Conor asks.

“My sons have some leads.”

“Hmm,” one of them grunts in agreement.

“They will be planning an...” he searches for the right word, “encounter with some of the members very shortly. Perhaps you would like to assist us?”

“Maybe.” Conor frowns, still suspicious of Vlad’s motives.

“It seems right now they are our common enemy.” Vlad raises an eyebrow at Shane who nods his agreement.

“It makes sense. But we want our time with them first. I need to know what they had planned for Jessie and who told them she was even alive.”

“Of course.” Vlad nods his head.

“Then you can kill them in whatever fashion you desire, preferably the most painful one imaginable,” Shane adds and that is met with smiles and grunts of assent from Vlad’s sons.

CHAPTER 43

SHANE

I lean back in against the leather bench in the booth of the Black Bear. It's a small, rundown bar in Newark and it's the place where Hayden says he was told of Jessie's existence. It only opened up again a few days ago after the cops closed it down. I have a feeling its renaissance is going to be short-lived. Picking up my glass of Scotch, I swirl the ice and amber liquid around my glass.

"They sure look like they're having fun," Jakob Mikhailov laughs. He is Vlad's oldest son and Conor and I have been working with him and his younger brother, Rudolf, to find the brotherhood.

I look around and smile at the carnage unfolding as Conor and Rudolf embark on a violent rampage through the bar.

"You think we should give them a hand?" he asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

I look again as Conor is using one guy's head as a weapon to beat another guy senseless, while Rudolf has someone crushed under his boot while he punches another in the face.

"Nah. I think they got it," I say as someone is thrown toward our table and lands in a crumpled, unconscious heap.

"They are kindred spirits, our brothers? No?" Jakob laughs and I nod my agreement as I take a sip of my whiskey.

"You know much about this brotherhood?" I ask him. "Because it sounds all kinds of weird and fucked up to me."

Jakob laughs softly. “They aren’t as mysterious as they sound. They are like a branch of an army.”

“But they haven’t operated for years?” I frown at him. “At least not for the Bratva?”

“No.” Jakob shakes his head. “But they come from a proud line of soldiers. You don’t just become a member of the brotherhood. You are born into it. The strongest son from every family must give his life to the order. They take it very seriously.”

“But why do they still exist if they don’t work for the Bratva?”

“Ah.” Jakob runs a hand over his beard. “It is complicated but I will try to explain. They first fell out of favor when Alexei’s father, Viktor, was in charge. They failed him and he demanded they all be hunted and killed so they went underground. When Alexei came to power, he liked the idea of his own army of elite assassins, so he found them again and reinstated them.”

“And he sent them to search for his missing daughter?”

“Yes. But they had been out of practice for some years by this time. They did some mercenary work across Europe but it was easy money and nothing that honed their skills the same way.”

“They got lazy?” I ask.

“And fat,” he says in his thick Russian accent before he starts to laugh.

“So they failed Alexei too?”

“Yes, and so they were forced underground again and we didn’t hear of them for many years.”

“Until recently?”

“Yes. Shortly after my father became the new head of the Bratva we discovered they had resurfaced. It seems they do not approve of his appointment.”

“Why not though?”

Jakob downs his vodka in one and smacks his lips together. “Because my family are not Russian royalty like the Ivanovs. My great grandfather was a poor farmer and my grandfather was a lowly Bratva foot-soldier.”

“But why the fuck does that matter?”

“It matters when there are true Ivanov heirs alive,” he says with a tilt of his head. “The brotherhood can claim the throne for themselves if they have an heir.”

“So you think they want Jessie alive?”

“No.” He shakes his head. “I think they want her dead.”

His words are like a knife slicing through my heart. “She’s too headstrong and smart for them to manipulate.”

“Precisely. She would no doubt disagree, but she is a lot like her father.”

“Yeah, well I won’t tell her you ever said that.”

“But the kid...” Jakob tilts his head again.

“The perfect puppet,” I say with a sigh right before another body comes crashing into our table.

“*Otva`li!*” Jakob snarls as he pushes the intruder away with his boot.

I down the last of my cheap Scotch. “Maybe it’s time to give them a hand before there’s nobody left alive to give us any information?” I suggest.

“Yes.” He laughs and together we head into the carnage.

CHAPTER 44

JESSIE

I have a trace on Hayden's credit cards and his bank account as well as eyes on his apartment and the bar where he works. It's been three days since the incident at Daisy's and I haven't seen anything of him yet. I must have taught him to cover his tracks well. A bitter wave of sadness and disappointment washes over me when I think about the time we've spent together in the last three months. Was everything he ever said and did a lie?

I swat away a tear as it rolls down my cheek.

"You okay, baby?" Liam asks as he sits beside me on the sofa in the den.

"No," I whisper. "I feel like an idiot for trusting him."

He pulls me onto his lap, forcing me to put my laptop down. "You are not an idiot. Not even a little bit. He is a fucking cold-hearted snake to do what he did, Jessie."

"You weren't fooled by him though."

"I wouldn't trust anyone around you. I never will. It's not because I'm any more perceptive than you or my brothers."

"You never give yourself credit," I say as I push his hair back from his forehead and look into his deep brown eyes. "You are one of the most insightful people I've ever met, Liam Ryan."

"You haven't met all that many people then," he chuckles as he pulls me to his chest.

“I miss him, Liam,” I whisper as he wraps his arms around me.

“I know, baby,” he says softly, pulling me tighter.

We sit like that in silence for a while. My cheek pressed against his hard chest as he smooths my hair with his hand. I listen to the soothing sound of his steady heartbeat and for a few moments I forget that someone out there is trying to hurt me and my babies.

Shane and Conor have been scouring the city looking for anyone connected to the Hayden or the brotherhood. Ironically, they have teamed up with Vlad’s sons Rudolf and Jakob – the Irish Mafia and the Bratva working together would have seemed unthinkable once given that they have previously kidnapped both Conor and Liam.

An alert pings on my laptop and I sit up, taking it from the sofa and keying in my passcode.

“Is it him?” Liam asks.

“Yes,” I nod. I’m running his image through facial recognition software too and he has been good at hiding his face from view - until now. “He’s going into an apartment building in Newark.”

“Then let’s go get him,” he says as he helps me stand.

“Okay,” I breathe as my heart starts to race.

“You can stay here if you want to. I can get Chester and the guys to sit up here with you,” he offers. I insisted that I go along when we find Hayden. The boys refused at first, but I wouldn’t back down. I need to look him in the eye myself and ask him why.

“No. I’m coming.”

“Okay. Mikey!” he shouts and a few seconds later Mikey comes running into the room. “Jessie found him,” he snarls.

“Then let’s go get the piece of shit,” Mikey snarls back.

“Where are Shane and Conor?” I ask.

“Out with Rudolf and Jakob. We can call them from the car,” Mikey replies.

“Okay,” I nod my agreement. “But boys...”

“Yeah?” They both turn and look at me.

“Can you let me handle this? Please?”

They both frown at me.

“Please?” I ask again.

“Okay, Red,” Mikey finally agrees. “But he puts one toe out of line and I will tear his head off his shoulders.”

“Thank you,” I say and then the three of us head to the basement to the armored SUV.

CHAPTER 45

SHANE

A call comes through from Mikey, and Conor presses the button to answer it. Our younger brother's voice fills the car. "We found Hayden."

I glance at Conor beside me in the driver's seat. "Where?"

"Some apartment building in Newark. He must have been hiding out there or something. We're on our way to him now."

"All three of you?" I ask.

"Yeah."

I swallow down the ball of anxiety that forces into my throat. "Be careful," I warn him.

"We will, bro," he says with a sigh.

"I mean it, Mikey. If anything happens to her..."

"You really think we'd let anything happen to her, Shane?" he barks at me and I close my eyes and take a breath. We're all feeling the tension and the frustration of the last three days.

"Sorry," he mumbles. "We'll take good care of them all. Promise, bro."

"I know, son."

"Where are you and Conor anyway?"

"On our way to have a chat with a few members of the brotherhood," Conor replies.

"Fuck! You found them then?"

“Yeah. We finally got a good lead and we’re heading to meet Jakob and Rudolf now.” Our efforts at the Black Bear were pretty fruitless but then Jakob and Rudolf had plenty of other contacts we could shake down and eventually we found someone who had seen a guy with the firebird tattoo at a motel on the outskirts of the city.

“You two be careful, too,” Mikey warns.

“We will, kid,” Conor replies.

“Keep us posted,” I say.

“Ditto.”

“We will. Speak soon.”

“Bye,” I say and end the call.

“They’ll all be okay, right?” Conor asks me with a worried look on his face.

“They all know what they’re doing, Con,” I remind him but I share his anxiety. I don’t believe for one minute Hayden was the mastermind behind all this. It’s someone much smarter than him. I think the brotherhood are working with someone else too. They have been content to sit on the sidelines for decades. They are assassins not leaders. But who and why? Hopefully, we’ll have some answers soon and I can end every single fucker who thought they could try and take her from me.

“You have any idea who the fuck might have got to Hayden?” he asks, I know he suspects the same as I do because we have done nothing but talk about it for the past three days. “Unless the brotherhood did just suddenly decided to make a power grab?”

“Maybe.” I rub a hand over my jaw. “But how do they even know she’s still alive? I don’t think it came from Vlad or his sons.”

“Me too,” he agrees.

“And who the fuck else knew?” I shake my head.

“Someone obviously did. So let’s go get some names.”

Fortunately, it's not often that Conor has cause to let his sadistic side loose and I know he would sooner keep it under lock and key these days, preferring to explore the darker side of himself in a much more controlled way with Jessie. But today, he is ready to do whatever it takes to protect our girl and I almost feel sorry for the poor bastards who are going to be on the receiving end. Almost.

WHEN WE ARRIVE at the motel, Jakob and Rudolf are already waiting for us. Conor rolls our car to a stop and we jump out to meet our new colleagues. It's hard to believe we're working with the Bratva, but Vlad's sons have proven to be smart, ruthless and trustworthy – at least so far. They are exactly the kind of guys I like to work with.

“They in there?” I nod toward the motel.

“Yeah. Room 204,” Jakob replies.

“How many?” Conor asks.

“Four of them.”

“Perfect. One each,” I say with an arch of my eyebrow.

“That's what he said,” Jakob laughs as he points to his younger brother who rarely speaks.

“Anyone on either side?” I ask.

“Nope. Place is a shit-hole and it's pretty empty but they each have a room each along that bottom floor, so nobody will hear us as long as we don't make them scream too loudly.”

“I find if you cut out their tongues first it really helps keep the noise levels down,” Conor says matter-of-factly.

“Yes,” Rudolf grunts and smiles at my brother.

“Let's not cut out all of their tongues until one of them has told us what we need to know, eh?” I suggest.

“Shall we?” Conor says with a tilt of his head.

“Let's do this,” Jakob replies and we walk toward the motel room.

“These guys are hardcore, Con. It’s not going to be easy to make them talk,” I say quietly as our Russian colleagues walk ahead.

“I know, bro. Don’t worry. I got this.”

“I know you do.”

CHAPTER 46

CONOR

Standing straight, I spit the piece of the Russian fucker's nose out of my mouth. The coppery tang of his blood seeps onto my tongue and I spit again.

"You taste like fucking shit!" I snarl as I tower over him. He has his hands pressed over the gaping hole in his face as he cries and begs for his life.

We have been in this tiny shit-box of a room for two hours. We had the element of surprise and we had all four of the brotherhood members overpowered and restrained within five minutes of getting through the door. But Shane was right about them being hardcore. For the first hour, they all refused to speak at all, no matter what we inflicted on them.

We're pretty limited in terms of weapons, but both Shane and I, as well as Jakob and Rudolf know plenty of ways to cause pain. It was when we decided that we only needed one of them alive to get information that the real fun began.

So, we chose this poor fuck as the one who would sit and watch as his three colleagues were tortured to death. Even when they begged to be allowed to talk, we didn't let up. They had their opportunity and they wasted it. So now their mutilated bodies lie scattered around the room.

"Are you ready to tell me why you tried to kidnap my wife and babies?" I snarl at him.

He mumbles something but he nods his head. I grab his blood-matted hair and pull him up from the floor before tossing him onto the bed.

“Who told you that Jessica Ivanov was still alive?” Shane asks him. He was asked this question once before when we first arrived and he told us to go fuck ourselves – in Russian – and earned himself a broken jaw. Now he has a hole in the middle of his face where his nose is supposed to be. His jaw hangs at an odd angle and he chokes from the blood running down his throat, but he will give me answers. I’ll make him write them down if I have to.

“She...told...us,” he sputters the words.

“*She* told you?” I snarl at him. “Who? Jessie?” I bring my face closer to his.

“She... said... take back power...” he says before he starts choking on his own blood.

I grab his throat and squeeze. “Who is she?” I snarl.

“Conor!” Shane’s hand is on my arm and I loosen my grip on our captive’s throat as Shane holds his chin up and presses a bottle of water to his lips.

“Drink!” he barks. “It will help.”

The Russian looks up at him gratefully as he swallows some of the cool liquid. When he has taken what he needs, Shane takes away the bottle and releases his grip on his chin. “I can end this right now if you tell me what I want to know.”

The Russian nods softly.

“Who told you to take back power?”

I watch my oldest brother’s face crumple before my eyes as the Russian says her name.

CHAPTER 47

JESSIE

My hands tremble as I knock on the apartment door. Mikey and Liam stand either side of me and I feel anger radiating from their bodies like heat from an open fire. I hope that Hayden's friend doesn't come back any time soon.

We wait for a moment and I knock again.

"He's not going to come to the door," Mikey says.

"Then let's go to him," Liam snarls.

Mikey wraps an arm around my waist and pulls me back from the door while his twin raises his right foot and kicks it open in one swift move.

"You're so fucking good at that," Mikey says appreciatively, but I don't think Liam even hears him as he storms into the apartment. I rush in after him just in time to see Hayden scrambling into what I assume is the bedroom.

Liam and Mikey run in after him, while I try and close the apartment door as best I can given that it's now hanging by one hinge.

A few seconds later, Hayden's high pitched shriek pierces the air as he is dragged from the room by Liam, who is holding onto him by his hair.

"Shut the fuck up, or I will shut you up," Liam snarls as he throws Hayden roughly onto the sofa. "Just give me a reason to rip your throat out right now."

Hayden holds his hands over his head and pulls his feet up to his chest, curling up in a fetal position as he whimpers.

“For fuck’s sake, kid, I’d have expected more balls from someone in league with the Bratva,” Mikey snarls as he slaps Hayden across the head before pulling him up into a seated position. “Now sit up straight and look my wife in the eye while she asks you some questions. And if you tell the truth, I won’t cut off all your favorite body parts and make you eat them.”

Hayden clamps his thighs together as he looks up at me, tears running down his face and his lip trembling. “I’m sorry, Jessie,” he whimpers.

I sit on the armchair opposite him. “I’m not interested in your apologies, Hayden. I want answers.” I turn to Liam. “Can you watch the door?”

“Why me?” he frowns.

“Because I’m worried you’re going to rip his throat out and I need him to talk first,” I say with a flash of my eyebrows.

“Fine. Mikey...”

“I’ll rip his cock and balls off if he tries anything, bro. Don’t worry,” Mikey interrupts him.

“I’m not in league with the Bratva,” Hayden whispers, drawing my attention back to him.

“I know that, because the head of the Bratva wants you dead as much as my husbands do. But you are working for the brotherhood, right?”

“No.” Hayden shakes his head. “I didn’t know what they were planning until it was too late. She told me that all I had to do was get close to you...” he wails.

“She?” both Mikey and I say at the same time.

“Yeah. The woman who dragged me into all this,” he sniffs, wiping his nose with the back of his hand.

“You’d better start talking, kid,” Mikey snarls.

He nods his head vigorously. “She came into the bar one night. I waited on her and then she started talking to me about my father and who he was. How he was this super-rich businessman who had died and left all this money to my half-sister and how she was living this rich extravagant lifestyle while I was working fifty hours a week to live in a shitty one-bed apartment that stinks of piss.”

I narrow my eyes at him. “So it *was* all about money?”

“Not just money, Jessie. Do you know how it feels to have to work so hard every damn day and never see an end in sight? Never see a way of paying off your debts and being able to live the life you deserve?”

Mikey slaps him around the back of his head. “You have no idea what it means to struggle, you entitled selfish prick,” he snarls.

“Let him finish,” I say.

“She lied to me, Jessie. She told me I was entitled to this inheritance but that you had stolen it all, and all I had to do to stake my claim on it was to prove we were related. I didn’t know our father was the Russian Mafia until I’d already agreed to do it and by then it was too late to back out. She came up with the story that my mom told me before she died, but I never knew. I saw an easy way to get rid of my debts and finally have some money for once so I went along with her.”

“But Shane offered you the money to pay off your debts.” I frown at him.

“I know, but the deeper I got in with her the more I realized she was never going to let me go. She introduced me to the brotherhood and told me that the way to get my inheritance was to help them take over, and when I refused they threatened to kill me. I was in way over my head, Jessie. But I never thought they’d hurt you, I swear.”

“So, what did you think they were going to do, Hayden?” I snap at him because his sniveling self-pity is starting to annoy me. If he was going to betray me like that, the least he can do is own it.

“She seemed so nice at first. She said she just wanted to talk you into signing over my inheritance to me. What was rightfully mine. By the time I realized she was lying to me it was too late. She had them tie me to a chair and threaten to *rape* me,” he whispers the word as though it’s an excuse for what he’s done.

Mikey grabs him by the throat and squeezes so hard that Hayden’s eyes bulge out of their sockets. “And just what do you think they would have done to my wife if they had gotten their hands on her, you pathetic piece of shit?” he snarls.

“Mikey!” I snap. I need him to let Hayden go because we still don’t have the most vital piece of information.

Mikey releases Hayden from his grip.

“Who is she?” I direct my question to my half-brother.

“She’s some shit-hot lawyer. Erin McGrath.”

CHAPTER 48

SHANE

Conor kills the engine and I look up at the house on Long Island. We got ourselves cleaned up in the motel bathroom and left Jakob and Ruldolf to deal with the disposal of the four dead Russians. With the information they got before I put a bullet in the head of the last one standing, they are going to seek out the rest of the brotherhood and put an end to any potential future takeovers. Conor and I have no interest in helping them with their venture and they don't expect us to. I'm satisfied that any threat to Jessie and our children is going to end with what we're about to do now.

It's strange how many times I visited this place as a welcome guest, and yet today, while I may be welcomed, what I'm about to do would have once been unthinkable to me. But that was a long time ago.

"You okay, bro?" Conor asks, snapping me from my thoughts.

"Yeah," I say, the word catching in my throat. "I knew she hated her, Con, but I can't believe she'd do this."

"It's fucked up, bro," he says with a sigh.

"If she'd succeeded..."

"She didn't though, and this is not on you. None of it."

"So why the fuck do I feel so fucking guilty?" I swallow hard.

"Because despite the grumpy asshole exterior that you have going on, which you have down pat by the way, you're

really a big pussycat, aren't ya?"

I know he's trying to make me feel better about what I'm about to do and I love him for it. I give him a half-smile. "Asshole," I grumble.

He unclips his seatbelt and together we climb out of the car. I walk up the familiar porch steps while Conor heads to the back of the house in case she makes a run for it.

I ring the doorbell, my heart racing in my chest as I wait to see if she has the front to answer and pretend like she didn't try to have my wife and unborn children kidnapped and murdered.

A familiar shadow at the door confirms my suspicion that she's going to try and front this out. I have no doubt she'll be in tears within five minutes.

She opens the door and I suck in a deep breath.

"Shane?" She blinks at me as though she's surprised by my presence. She's a good actress, I'll give her that. But then she always was adept at lying.

"Erin?" I say as I place my hand on the door. "Can I come in?"

She looks past me, no doubt wondering where my brothers are. I push against the wood with force causing her to stumble backward.

"Shane!" she whines as I step into her house and close the door behind me.

"I didn't realize you were back in the States?"

"I came back last week," she whimpers. "I didn't think you'd want to see me."

"Well, you're right about that," I snarl. "But you're lying about how long you've been here, Erin. I had a chat to some of your Russian friends earlier."

Her face pales but she stands tall, glaring at me in defiance. "I don't have any Russian friends," she insists.

“Well, you’re probably right about that too,” I agree, running a hand over my jaw as I enjoy watching her squirm. She is a smart woman and I can almost see the cogs working in her brain as she tries to think of a way out of this. No doubt she has at least half a dozen excuses ready to trip off her tongue. “They threw you under the bus at the first opportunity so I guess to call them your friends is a bit of a stretch. Your acquaintances, then?”

I step closer to her and she backs away from me toward the wall.

“I – I don’t know what you’re taking about,” she stammers.

“Really? You don’t know Hayden Chambers either?” I scowl at her.

“No,” she shakes her head. “Whoever has told you that I do is lying to you Shane. I don’t know what this is about, but I would never do anything to hurt you.”

“Liar!” I snarl.

“Shane, please listen to me,” she pleads as she places a hand on my arm and I shrug it off.

“I have to admit, I would never have suspected you in a million years. You played it so well. But it all makes perfect sense now. You worked for the Ivanovs years ago. You have the contacts. You also have the know-how to make sure those contracts needed all of our signatures and I have no doubt you used some of your old legal contacts to make sure that meeting with our new lawyers happened on the date and time that was convenient for you.”

She glares at me but she doesn’t speak so I go on.

“You knew Alexei Ivanov. You found out about his other kid and saw him as the perfect pawn in your little plan. How did you get him on board? Offer him money? Threaten him?”

The slightest smirk plays on her lips and I have to stop myself from snapping her neck right now.

A sound behind us makes us both turn and I nod to Conor as he makes his way along the hallway toward us. “For someone in bed with the Russians I’d have expected you to have slightly better security,” Conor says as he pockets the small knife he uses to pick locks. He’s never come across one he couldn’t beat.

“Are you going to come with us quietly, or is Conor here going to have to carry you to my car unconscious?” I ask her.

Her lip trembles and right on cue, here come the waterworks. “Please, Shane,” she wails.

“For fuck’s sake.” I shake my head at Conor and he steps closer to her, more than ready and willing to knock her out.

“I’ll come with you,” she shrieks as she shrinks back from Conor. “Don’t touch me!”

“Gladly,” Conor snarls.

“Let’s go then,” I say as I nod to the door.

She swallows hard but then she starts to walk to the door. She looks around the house before she leaves and I wonder if she’s thinking she’s never going to see the place again.

She’d be right.

“Where are you taking me?” she whimpers as we walk toward my car.

“I think my wife and my brothers might have some questions for you, don’t you?” I snap as I push her forward. She stumbles on the gravel path, falling to her knees. She looks up at me, tears in her eyes as she waits for me to help her.

“Get up. Now!” I hiss.

“Shane. Why are you doing this to me?” she sniffs as she pushes herself to a standing position and brushes the dust from her knees.

“Because I finally realized what an evil, selfish bitch you are,” I snap. “Now get in the fucking car or I will let Conor

break your neck right now and bury you in your own fucking yard.”

Suddenly the fake tears are gone and she goes back to glaring at me. “You’re making a huge mistake,” she hisses.

“We’ll see about that.”

Once Erin is inside the car, I climb on the back seat beside her and lock the doors. As Conor is pulling the SUV away from the curbside, my cellphone rings. Glancing at the screen I see Jessie’s name flashing on the screen and I press the cell to my ear.

“Hello, sweetheart,” I answer.

“Shane. It’s Erin. She’s the one behind it.”

“I know. Conor and I have her. Are you with the twins?”

“Yes. We have Hayden. We’re bringing him to the basement so we can decide...” She trails off. “He’s just a kid, Shane.”

“I know,” I say as I look at Erin and wonder what promises she made to Hayden – or what threats.

“We’ll meet you there.”

“Okay. See you soon. I love you.”

“Love you too,” I reply and don’t miss the look of disgust on Erin’s face. I end the call and put my cell back into my pocket.

“How did you even find that kid?” I ask her.

“I’m good at my job,” she says with a shrug. “You always underestimated me, Shane.”

“I obviously did,” I say and she smiles, mistaking that for a compliment.

“How long have you known about him?”

“Since I worked for the Russians.”

I frown at her. “That was over ten years ago.”

“I know. Alexei always knew he had a son, but he had no interest in him. He was only ever focused on finding that slut of a daughter of his,” she cackles.

Conor slams on the brake, bringing the car to a screeching halt as he turns in his seat.

“You ever call her that again and I will cut out your fucking tongue,” he snarls.

Erin rolls her eyes and leans back in her seat, giving me a smirk. I take a deep breath and squeeze my fists together. She will pay for every slight against my wife soon enough, but right now I want information and she is so damn arrogant and pleased with herself, she’s going to give it.

“So you always knew about Jessie then? Who she really was?”

“Not at first, no.” She shakes her head. “Not until you came to my office with her and asked me to start looking into the Ivanovs.”

“So it was you who told Alexei where she was?” I snarl at her.

“He already knew anyway. One of his men had recognized her. So bloody careless of her to work against the Bratva when you’re supposed to be hiding from them.”

“Well, she didn’t know she was supposed to be hiding from them,” I snarl, unable to stop myself from defending her.

“Hmm,” Erin sniffs as she looks out of the window.

“And the brotherhood? What were they getting from all of this?”

“Power, of course. I met one of them while I was doing some work for Alexei and when I told them that there were not one but two Ivanov heirs out there, they were more than happy to help me rid the world of one of them so they could use the other to take over.”

“So your grand plan was to replace Vlad with Hayden so that the brotherhood had someone at the top they could control?”

“I don’t care what the Bratva do. Whether Vlad or the brotherhood are in control is of no consequence to me.”

“You did all this just to get rid of Jessie?”

“Bingo!” she says with a cackle and I stare at her. She must be having some kind of psychotic episode. “So what is your grand plan now, Shane? Kill me and bury me in an unmarked grave?” she laughs.

“Bingo!” Conor pipes up.

“Shane could never kill someone he loves,” she replies coolly.

I swear she is unhinged. “I don’t love you, Erin,” I remind her.

“But you did. And a part of you always will, Shane. You can’t deny that no matter how much you want to.” She flutters her eyelashes at me and I shake my head in bewilderment.

CHAPTER 49

JESSIE

After Hayden had told us about Erin's plans to assist the brotherhood to take back control of the Bratva, Mikey and Liam bundled him into the SUV. Liam drove while Mikey sat in the back with my half-brother, because we both agreed that Liam couldn't be trusted not to kill Hayden on route. I have never seen him so angry. He is a ball of pent-up rage and aggression and if his brothers don't get back here soon, then I don't know if Mikey and I will be able to control him.

Liam parks the car in the basement of the apartment building and jumps out, opening the back passenger door and pulling Hayden from the car. He pushes my half-brother toward the far side of the basement while Mikey and I climb out of the car.

Hayden's hands are tied and he stumbles to the floor. He is still crying. He has cried all the way here. At first he kept telling me how sorry he was, how much he came to care for me, how terrified he was that Erin was going to have him killed. I have no doubt that she would have, too. Evil bitch.

I knew something was off about her from the moment I met her. If everything had gone to plan and the brotherhood had managed to get me that day in the ice cream store, I have no doubt she would have pinned everything on him. He would have been killed anyway, but by the Irish Mafia instead of the Bratva.

My heart hurts a little as I look at him cowering on the floor. He was right when he said this is not his world and

while he has no experience of the struggles that I've endured, I am glad about that. If my brothers were still alive, I would want them to live a life free of pain and fear. Hayden was broke and all alone in the world when Erin found him and offered him an easy way out. Who can say what we would do if we were in a position like that? And I do believe he has a good heart in there somewhere.

Hayden is sprawled on the floor. Liam grabs hold of his hair, gripping it tightly as he pulls my half-brother's head back, exposing his neck so that I can see his thick vein pulsing. Snot and tears run down his face.

"No," he whimpers as Liam raises his clenched fist, preparing to bring it crashing down onto Hayden's face.

"Liam!" I shout, about to run to him but Mikey grabs hold of me. I struggle in his grip but he holds me firmly in place.

Liam doesn't hear me, or if he does, he ignores me as he punches Hayden in the face and I hear the sickening crunch of bone.

"Liam. No!" I scream as I try to wrench myself from Mikey's arms.

"I can't let you go over there, Red," Mikey hisses in my ear. "He's lost it. He could hurt you."

I see Liam preparing to punch Hayden again. "Mikey, please. If he kills Hayden, he'll never forgive himself. Please let me go to him?"

Mikey sighs deeply but he lets me go and I run to Liam and my half-brother, with Mikey on my heels.

"Liam!" I shout as I reach him, still holding Hayden in his grip as he pummels him with his fist.

He ignores me, completely lost in the grip of his rage. "Liam, please!" I try again, conscious of Mikey hovering beside us. With no option left, I jump on Liam's back.

"Jessie! What the fuck are you doing?" Mikey roars but I tune him out, wrapping my arms around Liam's neck.

"Liam, please. It wasn't his fault," I say in his ear.

He tries to shake me off but I hold on as Mikey joins us too, trying to pull me off his twin while berating me for acting crazy.

Beneath us, Hayden cowers on the floor, his arms over his head as he tries his best to protect himself from Liam's onslaught.

"Liam, please, baby," I plead with him as tears run down my cheeks. "Please don't do this. I love you so much. Don't kill my little brother."

I cling to him as Mikey tries to wrench me free, but Liam stands straight, dropping his fists to his sides and I'm left dangling from his neck like a soap on a rope. I let go of him and slide to the floor.

He turns around to face me, his handsome face full of anger. "He really means that much to you?" he snarls as he wipes the sweat from his brow.

I blink at him in confusion. He thinks I only did this for Hayden. I place my hand on his cheek and his face softens just a little. "You mean everything to me," I whisper. "You would never forgive yourself if you killed him, because this wasn't his fault. Erin manipulated him."

"He could have gotten you and our babies killed, Jessie!" he snaps.

"I know. But he didn't."

His shoulders drop slightly and I feel the wave of relief washing over me. I wrap my arms around his neck again and rest my head on his chest as he pulls me into his huge arms.

"Looks like you just got yourself a reprieve, kid," Mikey says to Hayden as he helps him up from the floor.

"Thank you," I whisper to Liam.

"I did it for you, not him," he growls.

"I know you did."

We're interrupted by another SUV pulling into the basement. We stand and watch as Shane and Conor climb out,

before Conor reaches onto the back seat and pulls Erin out too. My blood freezes in my veins at the sight of her.

Conor holds onto her arm as they walk toward us. He pushes her onto the floor at my feet when they reach us and she shrieks her disapproval.

Liam releases me from his embrace, but he wraps a protective arm around my waist.

“You okay, Angel?” Conor asks with a frown as he gives me a quick hug.

“Yes. I’m good. And the babies seem good too,” I add, skimming my hands over my rounded belly and Conor rests one of his large hands over mine before stepping back and training his glare back on Erin.

“Thank fuck for that,” Shane says with a sigh as he hugs me tightly and presses a soft kiss on my forehead. Erin looks up at us and pain is so clearly etched on her face that it almost makes me smile. Nothing that happens from here on in could possibly hurt her more than what Shane just did.

“What happened to him?” Conor indicates his head to Hayden, who is practically held up by Mikey with blood pouring from his mouth and nose.

“Liam almost killed him but Jessie asked him not to,” Mikey says matter-of-factly.

Shane and Conor both look at me.

“It wasn’t his fault. He had no idea what Erin was really planning. She wanted you to think it was Hayden who was behind it all, so then you two could run off into the sunset.” I say that last part to Shane and his face contorts with anger before he looks at Erin who sits on the floor, looking at us all like we’re something she just stepped in. Even in defeat she thinks she’s better than everyone else.

Shane crouches down so he’s at her eye level. “Tell me that this wasn’t all just some ploy to get me back,” he hisses.

She sits straighter, brushing imaginary dust from her clothes as she looks him straight in the eye. “We belong

together, Shane. I can give you babies. Lots of them. And you could guarantee every one of them would be yours,” she sneers as she looks at his brothers and me.

Bitch!

Liam winces beside me as though he expects Erin to get a punch in the mouth for what she just said, but Shane would never hit her. He’s not that guy. Besides, he knows a much more effective way to cause her pain that involves nothing other than his words.

“I thought I made it clear, back in Ireland, that you mean nothing to me, Erin. Less than nothing. You are insignificant,” he spits.

She narrows her eyes at him. “You don’t mean that. You love me. We’d still be together if it wasn’t for your needy little brothers! I’d have fucked them all too if I’d known that was what it would take.”

Liam pulls me tighter as Mikey screws his face up in disgust.

Conor scowls at her. “I wouldn’t touch you with a fifty-foot pole, you piece of shit.”

Shane laughs. “Nobody in this room wants you, Erin. Nobody likes you. Jessie could be carrying a complete stranger’s baby and I’d still love her and her babies more than anything or anyone else in this entire fucking world.” He pulls a handgun from the waistband of his suit pants and presses it against her temple.

Her lip trembles. “Shane! You don’t have to do this.”

“You tried to murder my wife and our children.”

“You can’t kill me. You loved me once. I know you did. This isn’t you,” she pleads.

“You have no idea who I am,” he snarls at her then he looks up at me. “You want to do this, sweetheart?”

I shake my head. I hate Erin but I don’t want to blow her head off.

“She doesn’t have the balls to shoot me,” Erin spits as she glares at me, her face so full of venom and jealousy that it distorts her once beautiful features. “She’s a fucking whore and a slut and I hope her babies are born deformed and screaming in pain because what she does with you all is sick and unnatural.”

The anger that ripples through my husbands is so pronounced that I feel it in every fiber of my being. Shane grabs her by the throat and Mikey, Liam and Conor edge forward but their anger pales into insignificance compared to mine. “Stop!” I hiss, holding up my hand and Liam, Mikey and Conor freeze on the spot. “Let her go,” I say to Shane.

He releases his grip on her throat and stands straight. Anger bubbles through my chest like a mini volcano just erupted in my gut.

I lean over her. “You are an evil bitch!” I hiss. “Our babies are going to be strong and beautiful. They will be given more love than you can even comprehend. You think I don’t have the balls to kill you? I have killed men much bigger, stronger and smarter than you, Erin. I could rip your throat out now and I wouldn’t feel a shred of remorse, but I won’t. You want to know why?”

She glares at me, her eyes burning into mine as though she’s hoping I’ll burst into flames just from the heat of her gaze.

“I want you to look into the eyes of the man you love. The same man who despises you and who adores me and our babies, as he ends your pathetic existence.”

Her eyes flicker to Shane and the change in her face is instant. Tears roll down her face.

“Shane!” she pleads. “I love you.”

She’s a smart woman and she knows her best odds are to try and talk her way out of this. To try and reason with the man standing beside her, who indeed did love her once. I reach for Shane’s free hand and lace my fingers through his.

He frowns deeply and I see the emotions flicker over Erin's face. The soft sigh escaping her lips as she believes he's going to let her go.

Seems like Shane was right. She doesn't know him at all. The sound of the gunshot rings around the small room and Erin drops to the floor. Blood pools around her head and her lifeless eyes stare up at me accusingly.

I blink at her. I don't feel a shred of remorse. She tried to kill me and my unborn children. She was going to pin the blame on Hayden and I can't even begin to imagine the pain my husbands would have forced him to endure if she had succeeded.

Shane stands and wipes the spatters of Erin's blood from his hand while Conor takes the gun from him.

"Fuck!" I hear Hayden whisper behind me.

"You're definitely one of the family now, kid," Mikey laughs. "Now we've beat you up and made you an accessory to murder."

I turn and glare at him. "Mikey!"

"I'm just playing, Red." He arches an eyebrow at me.

I turn my attention back to Shane who is staring at Erin's lifeless body. I wrap my arms around him. "Are you okay?"

He slides his arms around my waist again, squeezing me tightly as he buries his face in my hair. "Yes, but I'll feel a hell of a lot better once we get you upstairs and checked out properly, so let's move."

"What about me?" Hayden asks as he wipes the blood from his nose.

All four of my husbands look at me. "It's your call," Liam says with a sigh.

"Come upstairs and we'll get you cleaned up. And then we can talk," I say and Hayden nods, giving me a small grateful smile.

“She just saved your fucking life,” Liam snarls at him and Hayden flinches making Mikey chuckle.

“I’ll call someone to clean this up,” Conor says as he takes his cell out of his pocket and dials a number. He walks ahead, barking instructions to someone as I walk between Liam and Shane, each of them with an arm wrapped around my waist while Mikey walks with Hayden to the elevator.

CHAPTER 50

JESSIE

Mikey takes Hayden to the bathroom to fetch the first aid kit and help him get cleaned up while Shane, Conor, Liam and I sit at the kitchen island.

“What the fuck are we going to do about that kid?” Shane asks with a sigh as he looks at the doorway. “He has seen and knows far too much.”

“I agree,” Liam says.

“You can’t kill him,” I warn them.

Shane rubs a hand over his jaw. “I know.”

“So what then?” Conor asks.

“Can you let me handle it?” I whisper.

The three of them look at me. They are used to making the decisions like this and ordinarily I have no problem with that, but like it or not, Hayden is my family.

Liam lets out a long slow breath and Conor shrugs his shoulders as they wait for Shane’s answer. He will always be the head of our family unit.

“Do what you think is best, Jessie,” Shane finally agrees and I throw my arms around his neck and kiss him on the lips.

“Thank you,” I whisper.

“Hey, we agreed too,” Conor says with a laugh and so I pull him and Liam to me too and wrap my arms around all three of them as far as I possibly can.

HAYDEN IS CLEANED up and has some butterfly bandages on the cut above his eye. He is wearing one of the twins' t-shirts and it dwarfs him but at least it's not covered in blood. He sits opposite me at the kitchen table while my husbands hover nearby but they at least give us the illusion of privacy.

"I'm so sorry, Jessie," he says again.

"I know," I reply, placing my hand over his because I do believe that. "You're a good person, Hayden. You don't belong in this world."

He swallows hard. "I want to make it up to you though. I want to be your brother, and an uncle." He looks down at my rounded belly and I rub a hand over it protectively. Maybe if I didn't have these two little babies to think about I would handle this differently, but I do. And they are the most important things in this world to me. I wanted him to be my brother so much. I was desperate for some family I could call my own, but I realized that I already have the best one I could have ever hoped for.

"I can never trust you, Hayden. I know you had your reasons, but you betrayed me."

He chokes down a sob. "Jessie!"

"This is hard for me, too." I wipe a tear from my eye. "But I can't have people I don't trust around my children. They won't allow people they don't trust around their children." I look over at my husbands. "I would never be myself around you, Hayden, and that is not the kind of relationship I want. It would be unfair to all of us."

"But I can prove myself, Jessie. Please let me," he sniffs as tears roll down his cheeks.

"You don't have to prove anything to me, Hayden. I love you just as you are, but I can't have you in my life."

He blinks at me but he nods his understanding.

"I've paid off your mom's medical bills and there is fifty thousand dollars in your bank account."

“What?” he shakes his head. “No. Please don’t. I don’t deserve that.”

I squeeze his hand in mine again. “You deserve a good life without the worry of a debt that should never have been yours. Go do some of that traveling you dreamed about.”

“Thank you,” he sniffs as he wipes his cheeks.

Conor walks over to us and places a hand on Hayden’s shoulder. “Time to go, kid.”

“I’m so sorry,” he says to me again and I stand up and pull him into a hug.

“I know. I forgive you. Go live your life without any regrets. Okay?”

“Okay.” He nods and then he turns and walks away, with Conor escorting him.

“Kid,” Shane says as he walks past.

“Yeah?” Hayden stops and looks at him.

“Your sister is the best person you will ever meet. She saved your life today, because every single one of us would prefer to carve you into pieces and toss you into the Hudson.”

Hayden swallows hard.

“She is also the smartest person you will ever meet, and make no mistake, if you ever speak her name to anyone, or discuss anything of what happened here, she will find out, and I will kill you.”

“I w-won’t... e-ever...” Hayden stammers.

“Good. Now have a nice life, kid,” Shane smiles at him and then Conor escorts him out of the room.

“You think I did the right thing?” I ask once Conor and Hayden are gone.

“Yes,” Shane, Mikey and Liam say in unison.

AFTER HAYDEN LEFT and we all took a shower – separately to my disappointment, we are sitting in the den waiting for our take-out to arrive.

I'm sitting on Liam's lap and he is holding on so tightly to me, I can barely move.

"Liam," I squirm in his grip but I smile at him. "I'm not going anywhere. You can relax a little."

"Sorry, baby," he whispers before he kisses my forehead.

"I think we can all agree, you are never leaving the apartment again without at least one of us, Jessie," Conor says as he flops onto the sofa beside us and his brothers mumble their agreement.

I suppose they expect me to refuse and to assert my independence like I usually would, but I'm kinda over getting kidnapped. Besides, there's not just me to think of now.

"Fine by me," I breathe as I snuggle against Liam's chest.

Mikey snorts laughing while Conor stares at me. "Did you just agree to that with no arguing at all?" he asks with a flash of his eyebrows.

Liam places a hand on my forehead. "She's delirious," he says with a smile and I nudge him in the ribs.

"I am not. I'm just not overly keen on being kidnapped by some psycho again is all. I mean three kidnappings is enough for any woman to take."

"And that's not including the times we kidnapped you," Mikey adds with a chuckle.

"Exactly." I grin at him.

"I've already decided I'm sticking a tracker in your ass," Shane says with a completely straight face.

"The hell you are!" I snap.

"Now, there's our little firecracker," Mikey chuckles.

"Yes, the hell I am, sweetheart," Shane goes on.

I look at Mikey, Conor and Liam and they're nodding their agreement. "Fine! If I'm having a tracker in my ass then so are all of you."

"Fine by me," Liam says.

“Me too,” Mikey agrees.

“Seems like a good idea,” Conor adds.

“You’ve already decided this then?” I fold my arms across my chest in feigned indignation but actually a tracker is a great idea.

“Yep,” Shane says with a nod.

“And you’re getting one too?”

He winks at me. “Yup.”

“It’s not going in my ass though!”

“I agree. Jessie’s ass is like a work of art. What if it causes a lump or something?” Mikey agrees with me.

“Your arm then,” Shane says with a shrug. “I don’t care where, as long as it is somewhere in that hot little body of yours.”

The heat between my thighs makes me squirm in Liam’s lap again.

“Careful, Shane,” Liam chuckles. “You know it literally takes nothing to have our girl on the edge these days.”

“Hmm,” Mikey says as he walks behind the sofa and bends down to kiss the top of my head. “Pregnancy makes you even hornier than normal, Red.”

“I am not horny,” I insist.

“You are,” Liam whispers against my ear before he presses a kiss against the spot on my neck that makes me weak at the knees.

“Well, I am now that you’re kissing my neck,” I moan softly making him laugh. “You all tease me about being horny but that’s because between the four of you walking around here half-naked, the kissing, the filthy talk, the ass grabbing, it’s like I’m being constantly edged.” I pant, blowing a strand of hair out of my eyes.

“Edged?” Shane arches an eyebrow at me. “You’re never kept waiting long enough to be truly edged, sweetheart.”

“True,” Conor agrees. “We all love making you come too much.”

“But if you want to keep complaining about being edged, we can make that happen,” Shane adds with a wicked grin.

“No thank you,” I whisper. “I’m pretty sure orgasm denial is bad for the babies. Isn’t that right, Mikey?” I smile sweetly at him.

“If you say it is, Red, then it is,” he winks at me.

“Thank you,” I whisper.

“Orgasms in general are good for the babies though, right?” Shane asks.

“Actually, there is some research that suggests the babies experience the positive feelings of an orgasm,” Mikey says. “And they can also strengthen the pelvic muscles which is good preparation for labor.”

“Fuck! Jessie’s pelvic muscles must be strong enough that those babies will just slide out with no effort,” Liam chuckles and I give him another nudge in the ribs.

“Where the fuck do you read all this, shit, Mikey?” Conor asks.

“On the internet, dumbass.”

“Oh, well it must be true then,” Conor replies.

“I don’t care where he read it, I’m willing to believe it,” Shane chuckles too.

“Are you planning on giving me plenty of orgasms then, Mr. Ryan?” I narrow my eyes at him.

“Not just me.” He stands up and walks over to me, cupping my chin in his hand. “We’re all taking a week off and going to the lake house. So, you’re gonna be on bed-rest, sweetheart.”

Warmth and wetness floods my pussy at the thought and I actually gasp out loud making all four of them chuckle.

“We’re all taking a week off?” I whisper.

“Yeah, baby,” Liam whispers.

“I figure we all need it,” Shane says as he straightens up and the sound of the intercom signals our take-out is here.

“I’ll get it,” Mikey runs toward the door.

“I’m starving,” I say as my stomach growls in agreement.

“Me too,” Liam groans.

“Food and then bed, Angel,” Conor says with a grin.

“Sounds perfect to me,” I sigh as I snuggle against Liam’s chest again. The events of the day are heavy on my mind and this is the perfect way to deal with them.

Shane strolls to the window and I wonder how he is holding up after what happened with Erin. He always takes care of everyone else so well.

I climb off Liam’s lap and walk to stand behind him. Wrapping my arms around his waist, I rest my cheek against the warm skin of his back. “Are you okay?” I whisper.

He turns around and wraps his arms around me too. “Yes,” he says before kissing my forehead.

“It’s okay if you’re not,” I remind him.

“I know,” he says with a nod. “It’s never easy to take someone’s life, Jessie.” He brushes my hair from my face. “But it was the only decision to make. I cannot have my family put at risk. I am one hundred percent okay with the choices I made today and I would make them every damn day to make sure you and our babies are safe.”

I feel a huge kick in my abdomen and to my surprise, Shane looks down at my rounded belly. The babies are constantly kicking me but they haven’t been felt by anyone else yet.

“What the fuck?” he whispers.

“Did you feel that?” I giggle.

“Fuck, yeah I did,” he laughs, his eyes shining as he steps back and puts his hands on my belly and they kick again, right where he is touching me. He keeps one hand on my stomach and places the other on my cheek, rubbing the pad of his

thumb softly over my skin. “I can’t believe you’re making me a dad, sweetheart.”

“I can’t believe it either,” I breathe.

“I hope you know you are stuck with me for all eternity, because I will love you to the end of this lifetime and into the next. We really are from the same star,” he says, his voice cracking with emotion.

I have never seen him so raw and vulnerable and it makes my heart sing. “I love you so much,” I say as a tear rolls down my face and he brushes it away.

“Boys,” he shouts. “Get your asses over here.”

“What?” they shout back as they come running over.

“I felt the babies kicking,” he tells them with the biggest smile I have ever seen in my life.

“Fuck! For real?” Mikey asks as he stands beside his older brother.

“Yeah, right here,” he takes Mikey’s hand and places it on my stomach and then he does the same with Liam’s while Conor stands behind me and slides his arms around my waist, resting a hand near his brothers’.

“Hey babies,” Mikey shouts. “It’s your daddies here.”

We wait a few seconds and they kick again and the looks of pure joy on their faces makes me start to cry.

“This will never get old,” Liam says as tears fill his eyes too. “Do they do this all the time?”

“Yeah. Kind of,” I sniff as I smile at him.

“I’m not gonna be able to keep my hands off you now, Red,” Mikey grins at me.

“No change there then,” Conor mumbles in my ear.

Shane cups my face in his hands. “You are so fucking beautiful, you know that?”

“You’re fucking incredible, baby,” Liam adds.

“You fucking are, Red,” Mikey agrees.

Conor kisses my neck softly. “I’m so fucking proud of you, Angel.”

My cheeks flush red at their praise. I spent so long trying to fade into the background. Trying not to draw attention to myself. Making myself look small and unremarkable. But from the moment these four men laid eyes on me, I have been neither of those things. So when they tell me I am beautiful, or incredible, or any of the other wonderful things they say, I believe them.

“Thank you,” I whisper.

CHAPTER 51

JESSIE

4 MONTHS LATER

I grab the tomatoes from the refrigerator and hand them to Mikey. “I wish I could help chop them for you,” I chuckle, rubbing a hand over my gigantic pregnant belly. “But it’s kinda hard to reach the counter top.”

He slides a hand onto my behind. “You just go sit your beautiful ass down and leave dinner to me. Besides, you need to keep up your strength for later. I mean it is date night.” He arches an eyebrow at me.

Being heavily pregnant has not dampened my sexual appetite one bit, and in fact pregnancy hormones have made me hornier than ever. Group sex isn’t quite as easy or straightforward as it used to be, but I have to give it to my boys, they sure are creative.

“I can’t wait,” I purr.

He squeezes my ass in his large hand before bending his head and kissing me. The sudden and unexpected splash of water at our feet makes both of us pull back and look down at the floor.

Instinctively, I place a hand on my stomach. “Oh, God!”

“Did you just squirt because of how good my kiss was, or...” Mikey asks, his eyes wide.

I punch him playfully on the chest. “My water broke, dumbass.”

“Fuck!” he breathes.

“Come on, Mikey. This is not a drill. You’ve been in training for this for nine months. What do we do?” I ask, completely forgetting everything in my birthing plan except for the fact that I am not going to hospital. No freaking way!

“Shane!” Mikey hollers and a few seconds later Shane comes running through the door closely followed by Liam and Conor.

“The babies,” I say.

“Her water just broke,” Mikey adds.

“Call Brooke and get her out here now,” Shane say calmly to Conor as he walks over and takes my hand. “Come on, sweetheart. Let’s get you somewhere comfortable.”

“You think she’ll get here in time?” I ask, starting to panic now. We’re having a last weekend at the lake house before the babies arrive. We should be in the city for this.

“We got plenty of time,” Shane assures me. “You got any contractions yet?”

“I don’t think so,” I say with a shrug. “I’ve been having twinges all day but nothing that I’d call a contraction. But I have no idea what one feels like.”

“Let’s just get you to bed,” he says and we walk out of the kitchen with Liam hovering anxiously behind us while Conor calls my OB-GYN and Mikey cleans the kitchen floor.

“No needles, Shane. Promise me,” I say as we walk through the house.

“No needles.”

“Even if I’m screaming in pain. Do not stick one of those things in me! You got it?”

“I got it,” he assures me.

“I will never let you touch me again if you let anyone stick me with a needle.”

“I won’t,” he smirks at me.

“What’s so funny?” I ask.

“Just thinking about how much fun I could have teasing you while you tried to keep that promise.”

“You’re an arrogant asshole, have I ever told you that?” I grin at him.

“Many, many times.”

“I love you though.” I suck in a breath as a sharp pain slices through my abdomen.

“I know,” he says before he sees me wincing and his brows furrow in concern.

“Fuck, that hurt!” I hiss.

“Then that was a contraction, sweetheart. Come here.” Before I can protest, he scoops me into his arms and carries me to the bedroom before laying me down on the bed.

“Brooke is on her way,” Conor says as he walks into the room.

“Let’s meet some freaking babies,” Mikey shouts excitedly as he walks in straight behind him.

He high fives Liam and the two of them start to chatter like excited toddlers while Conor comes to sit on the bed beside me.

“You know those two are going to fall to pieces the minute they see me in a little pain, right?” I say to Shane and Conor.

“Yup,” Conor nods his agreement.

I’VE BEEN in labor for eight hours now. I’m tired. I’m in pain. I’m hot. And everything anyone does to help cool me down or soothe me just makes me want to rip their head off. Why the hell did I decide on no decent pain relief? Oh, yeah. Needles.

“You’re almost fully dilated, Jessie,” Brooke says, her voice soft and calm. “I’m going to need you to push soon.”

She looks around the room at my four anxious husbands hovering nearby and rolls her eyes.

“Hey, I know this is exciting, but there are kind of too many people right here in the loading dock area, you know

what I mean?"

"Sorry, Doc," Mikey mumbles.

"Two of you is perfect. One each side of Jessie to give her what she needs. Okay?" Brooke offers.

"You two take the first one and we'll take the second," Mikey says to Conor and Shane.

"They're babies not taxi-cabs, Mikey!" I hiss as a contraction squeezes my abdomen, and he slopes away from the bed.

"Okay, firecracker," Shane says softly as he brushes my damp hair from my forehead and places a cool cloth there.

"Thank you," I whisper as my contraction subsides. "I'm sorry, Mikey."

"Don't apologize," Brooke admonishes me. "You're about to give birth to two babies, honey, You scream and curse as much as you want to. Right?"

"Right," the boys agree.

I SWEAR, pushing a baby's head out of my vagina is the most intense pain I have ever experienced in my life. I squeeze Shane's and Conor's hands so tightly I worry I might break their fingers, but then it would be nothing compared to squeezing out a giant-headed Ryan baby.

"One final push, Jessie," Brooke says as Shane and Conor tell me how well I'm doing and brush my hair from my sweaty face.

"Argh!" I scream, making a sound I didn't even know I was capable of and then it happens. Our beautiful baby is out.

"It's a girl," Brooke cheers as our daughter takes her first breath and her cries fill the air. Mikey and Liam are there, cutting the cord and helping Brooke clean our baby girl up a little so she can lie on my chest. Conor and Shane stay by my side as tears of pure happiness run down my face.

"Look at her, Momma." Brooke holds up the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life and I swear my

heart is about to burst out of my chest with pure joy.

She hands her to Mikey who places her on my chest and I wrap my hands around her tiny, perfect body as I stare down at her perfect face.

“Ow!” I hiss as another contraction squeezes my uterus in a vise.

“I got her,” Conor says as he lifts our daughter and cradles her in his arms. Shane kisses my forehead before he follows Conor, and Mikey and Liam take their places.

“One more baby and we’re all done,” Brooke says with a reassuring smile.

“Didn’t you say the boy was bigger than the girl?” I swallow as I look at Brooke.

“Uh-huh, but that doesn’t mean the birth will be any different.”

“Unless he has a giant head,” I breathe as the pain starts to subside for a few glorious seconds.

“His head is perfectly proportionate to his body. Now let’s do this,” Brooke says and I swear she was a cheerleader in high school.

I hang onto Mikey and Liam’s hands and scream as another contraction hits.

“Should it really be hurting this much, Doc?” Mikey asks.

“Have you ever tried to push a coconut out of your penis, Michael?” she snaps.

“No.” He winces, his free hand instinctively flying to his crotch.

“Isn’t there anything you can give her to stop the pain?” Liam asks.

“No. It’s too late for pain relief now,” Brooke replies.

“I feel sick,” Mikey mumbles.

“I thought you were the one who was all prepared for this birth?” I pant as he turns a strange shade of gray.

“Fuck!” Liam breathes out as he wipes sweat from his brow.

“Yeah, I think we’re going to need a rotation,” Brooke says, turning to Conor and Shane. “I’m not sure these two are prepared for this next part. Can one of you step back in?”

“Yeah, Shane will take care of you, baby,” Liam says, kissing me softly before he and Mikey step away from the bed.

Shane walks back over to me and takes my hand in his while Conor is holding our daughter.

I cling onto him, my fingers digging into his forearm as another wave of pain sears through my body. I’m so damn tired. Every part of my body is screaming in agony.

“It hurts,” I whimper.

He brushes my sweaty hair back from my damp forehead. “I know, sweetheart,” he says softly. “All the best things do.”

I suck in a breath and close my eyes.

“But you are the toughest person in this room and you got this, Jessie.” He squeezes my hand in his. “I’m gonna be right here every second. Okay?”

“Yeah,” I gasp as another contraction almost floors me.

“It’s time to push again, Jessie,” Brooke says and I nod my understanding because to speak feels like it would take up far too much energy. A few seconds later, Conor is at my side again and I look up to see Mikey holding our daughter as Liam stares at her adoringly.

“I guess I’ll just take the next one,” Conor says with a wink.

“Fuck!” I screech as I give another huge push.

EPILOGUE

JESSIE

6 Months Later

It's dark when I wake. My breasts are heavy and tender. I need to feed my babies. I can't believe I haven't heard them crying already. I reach out, expecting to feel one of my boys' hard bodies, but there is nothing but cool cotton sheets.

I sit up, blinking at the clock on the nightstand. It's nine a.m. Damn blackout blinds make me so disoriented sometimes. I switch on the bedside lamp and confirm I'm alone in the huge bed. Pulling the covers back, I climb out of bed and look at the monitor for the camera over the twins' cribs. They are empty. The icy fingers that grip my heart are never far away. They have been there all my life and I suspect they'll never leave.

My babies are fine though. Obviously being taken care of by their adoring daddies. The icy fingers melt away and I change out of my nursing tank top and pull on one of Liam's soft cotton t-shirts instead.

The smell of bacon wafts from the kitchen, making me smile as I wander down the hallway. When I walk into the kitchen the sight makes me stop and stare for a few moments. The rush of pure joy I feel almost overwhelms me.

Mikey is wearing his 'Kiss the Chef' apron while he cooks but Conor stands beside him, holding baby Ella and the two of them are singing to her. The fact they are singing along to a

hip hop song and the lyrics are entirely inappropriate doesn't bother our daughter one tiny bit and she giggles at her daddies.

On the other side of the room, Finn is sitting on Shane's lap while Liam feeds him some baby oatmeal. They have just started weaning and I'm relieved I'm no longer their only source of food. Not that my gorgeous husbands haven't done their share of night feeds because I pump every day, too. The twins sleep until six a.m. now though and we've moved them to their own nursery. It has a camera and security system that the White House would be proud of, and for the first week they were in their own room, we all sat up half the night watching them.

"There she is," Mikey says with a grin as he sees me.

Conor turns with Ella in his arms and waves her chubby little hand at me. "There's your beautiful momma, baby."

She giggles and I swear my heart is going to burst.

"Morning, sweetheart," Shane says.

I walk to the breakfast table and sit beside him while he and Liam finish giving Finn his breakfast. Leaning down, I give our son a kiss on his plump cheek and he wipes some oatmeal on my face as a thank you, making us all laugh. "Why didn't you all wake me? I slept so late," I say as I wipe my face.

"You deserved a lie in," Shane says with a shrug.

"Yeah," Liam agrees. "And you were snoring when I woke up so I didn't want to wake you."

"I was not snoring. Was I?"

"Not that I remember," Shane shakes his head. "You sure it wasn't her moaning my name that you heard?"

"Shane!" I admonish him and my cheeks flush pink as I remember him waking me up with his hand in my panties and then five minutes later he was fucking me while his brothers slept around us. It's not an unusual occurrence. We all gave up on the idea of separate rooms and sleep in the same bed every night now. I am often woken by one of them, or sometimes I

do the waking. Sometimes another brother will join us, or if I'm very lucky they all will.

“Oh, I heard that too,” Liam chuckles softly. “I was planning on joining you both but you took your sweet time making her come, bro. I fell back asleep.”

Shane covers Finn's ears. “I took my time on purpose. Asshole!” he whispers and I giggle.

Just then Conor comes over with Ella and I take her from his arms and bury my face in her neck, inhaling her sweet-smelling, baby skin. Conor gives me a quick kiss on the forehead before he goes to help Mikey bring the food over for breakfast. At the sight of the pancakes, Ella squeals and giggles.

“She's sure got her mom's sweet tooth,” Mikey chuckles as he slices a small piece off and hands it to her.

“Mikey, she's too young!” I admonish him.

“Relax. It's low sugar. Low salt. She only sucks on it,” he says with a shrug.

“Here let me put her in her chair so you can eat,” Conor says as he takes her from me again and places her in her high chair next to me. Liam puts Finn in his too and Mikey hands our son a small slice of pancake.

Then we all sit and eat our breakfast, talking about our plans for the day and later tonight. Whether we should take the twins to the park this afternoon or to the zoo. What movie we might watch when they go to sleep and we've all finished work for the day. The twins have brought a sense of balance to our lives. Nobody works at night anymore unless there's an emergency. The brothers have employed managers for the club and their security business. Shane sometimes works for a few hours in his office during the evening, but he's always done by eight p.m.

I look around at my wonderful family and wonder if any person in the entire world has ever been so happy as I am right now.

TWO WEEKS LATER

Pulling the hem of my short dress down over my thighs, I take a final peek at the twins. I stand staring at them, listening to their baby-soft snores and my heart feels like it's about to burst with happiness. Ella frowns in her sleep and when she does she looks just like Shane. When she smiles she looks like Mikey and then there are times when she looks just like Liam or Conor. Finn looks a little more like my side of the family with his bright blue eyes, but I see his daddies in him too.

I tiptoe away with my heels swinging in my hand, slipping them onto my feet once I've closed the door to the nursery. I can hear the sound of muffled voices as I reach the den and when I walk inside I swear I almost melt on the spot. My four husbands stand waiting for me. Every single suit they own is custom-made and fits their bodies perfectly, but there is something extra special about the ones they wear for our date nights.

They are each dressed in a dark navy one and a white dress shirt open at the collar. I have never seen four finer specimens of men. I mean any one of them would be a dream come true and I get all four. Wet heat floods my pussy and I'm beginning to regret my decision not to wear panties.

We've had some date nights since the twins were born, but none with all five of us like this. There is no one we trust enough to leave with our babies – well except for the woman who is standing beside them.

“Jessie, love, you look beautiful,” Em says with a smile. She flew in two days ago and is staying with us for a month so

she can spend time with her nephews and her new great-niece and nephew.

“Thank you,” I whisper as Liam walks toward me. He slides his hands around my waist onto my ass. “You look fucking incredible, baby,” he whispers as he pulls me to him. “And that dress is goddamn dangerous.”

“I hope so.” I grin at him.

“You know where everything is, right?” Shane says to Em as he checks his watch.

“Yes,” she replies with a soft sigh and I can only imagine how many times he has gone through everything with her. He’s always been overprotective of me and his brothers and the twins’ arrival has made him one hundred times worse – or better depending on how you choose to look at it.

He spent so long worrying he’d be an awful father but he is amazing with our children. All of my husbands are and if it were possible, seeing them with our babies has made me fall in love with them even more than I already was.

“Now you lot get out of here and enjoy your date,” she says, pushing them toward me and the door.

“They shouldn’t wake until about six a.m.,” I say as I’m surrounded by my four husbands. The heat from their bodies makes me clench my thighs together. Was I always this horny? “But if they do there’s plenty of milk in the fridge.”

“Jessie has expressed enough to last the week,” Mikey chuckles.

“I’m sure I’ll cope until tomorrow. Now go,” she says with a smile.

“Thanks, Em,” the boys say and we walk out of the room.

“Tomorrow?” I whisper.

“Yeah. We’re staying in a hotel suite tonight,” Conor replies.

“What?” I blink. “Then I need to grab some clothes.”

“It’s all taken care of, baby,” Liam replies as he squeezes my ass before he looks down at his hand on my behind. “Are you wearing panties?”

“No,” I whisper.

“Conor is going to lose his shit when he finds out,” he chuckles.

“When I find out what?” Conor growls from behind us.

“That I’m not wearing any panties,” I offer. I don’t understand why it’s an issue because I’ve done it plenty of times before. Is it because I’m a mom now?

“Shane!” Conor groans.

“It will be fine,” Shane replies as he presses the button for the elevator and then he arches an eyebrow at me. “You’re a fucking sexual deviant, Mrs. Ryan.”

“She *is* a deviant and that’s what I’m afraid of,” Conor snaps.

“What’s going on? Where are we even going?” I ask, confused by Conor’s reaction. Ordinarily he would love me not wearing underwear.

“The Peacock Club,” Conor replies.

“What?” I turn and blink at him.

“Yes, Angel. So you want to go put some panties on?”

Before I can reply, the elevator doors open. “Too late,” Shane says as he steps inside and holds the door.

As soon as we’re inside the elevator I’m surrounded by the four, hard, hot bodies of my husbands. Heat pools in my core as I think about the place we’re going to and all of the possibilities that may lie before us. Conor is standing behind me and he slides a hand beneath my dress. “Fuck, Jessie,” he growls as he skims my bare ass. “Why the hell aren’t you wearing panties?”

“I thought it would be fun. I didn’t realize we were going to The Peacock.”

“And if you had?” Shane turns and grins at me.

“Stop it,” I whisper. But he knows me so well, I still wouldn’t have worn panties.

“Are you sure you’re okay with this?” I ask Conor.

“Are you excited to go?” he breathes in my ear.

“Yes,” I whimper as his fingertip grazes my pussy.

“Then, yes, I’m okay with it.”

“That’s if we make it out of the limo,” Shane chuckles.

“That’s if we make it out of the damn elevator,” Mikey adds.

The limo is nearing the club and I finish the last of my champagne. I can’t drink too much because it makes me giddy and I’m already overexcited at the thought of going to a sex club with the four sexiest and most attentive men on the entire planet.

Liam takes my glass from me as Mikey slides a hand between my thighs. “I love that you’re not wearing panties,” he breathes as he presses a soft kiss on my throat and I giggle.

“Enough,” Conor warns him. “Don’t have her on the edge before we even get into the place.”

“I was just confirming the absence of panties,” he protests. “You are wearing a bra, right, Red?”

“Of course I am. I think you’d notice if I wasn’t.”

“I would,” Shane chuckles.

“Everyone would,” I giggle. “I’d have milk stains all over my dress.”

“I bet there are loads of perverts who are into that as well,” Conor grunts.

“I can get why though,” Mikey says. “Jessie’s milk tastes amazing.”

I press my lips together as Conor rolls his eyes. “Why am I not surprised that you’ve tasted it, Mikey? You deviant.”

“Um, I have too,” Liam admits.

“Really?” Conor stares at him.

“How have you not, bro?” Shane laughs loudly and Conor stares at the three of them.

“Take no notice of them, big guy. You don’t have to taste it if you don’t want to,” I whisper as I curl my fingertips through his hair.

“I didn’t know it was a fucking option. I thought boobs were off limits until the babies don’t need them?”

“Well, yeah. But sometimes things just happen,” Mikey says with a shrug.

“It’s not like we fucking suckle on them or anything,” Liam adds.

“Well...” Mikey says and then he ducks as Shane throws the cork from our champagne bottle at his head.

“You really are a fucking deviant, Mikey Ryan.” He laughs harder and even Conor is smiling now.

I slide onto his lap and wrap my arms around his neck. “Do you feel left out, big guy?” I purr.

He smiles at me. “Kinda.”

“You can try some later,” I giggle.

I have seen The Peacock Club during the daytime before, during non-business hours, but to see it at night is something else. It is elegant and classy, all chrome and black and gold and shimmering lights. I gasp out loud as we walk through the huge mirrored doors into the main room.

The place is a kinkster’s dream. There are people dressed in regular clothes just like us, mixed among people wearing collars and leashes, bondage gear, masks and feathers and capes and glitter.

I freaking love it here!

“Good evening, Mr. Ryan. Mrs. Ryan.” All of the bouncers greet us as we pass, before the manager comes over and does

the same. Then she tells she has reserved us the best private booth and assigned us their best waiter too.

“We’ll go find our booth,” Liam says and Shane nods to him.

“I just want to show Conor and Jessie the main floor,” he winks to Liam and Mikey who chuckle in response. Mikey, Shane and Liam have been here at night before to do some club business but it’s Conor’s first time here too.

Shane gives Conor and me a brief tour of the club. Conor keeps his hands on my waist at all times, as though he’s worried someone might run off with me, but the people here are for the most part a very respectful community who adhere to the strict code of conduct that the club has in place.

On one side of the club there is a dance floor but it’s obviously not for dancing. There is a huge bed in the center and currently there are three people on it. Two guys and a girl. Guy one is eating the girl’s pussy, while guy two is railing guy one.

“Wow!” I stand and stare unashamedly. “This place is amazing.”

“It’s something,” Conor says.

“Hmm.” Shane rubs a hand over his jaw.

“You don’t want to take Jessie there?” Conor glares at his brother.

“No,” Shane replies with a laugh. “But only because you wouldn’t be into it, would you, sweetheart?” He snakes an arm around my waist.

“No. I mean I quite like a little exhibitionism, but I’d feel too exposed doing it right there in front of a crowd.”

“Thank fuck!” Conor mutters.

“But the rooms downstairs,” Shane arches an eyebrow at me. I remember them from our visit. There are twelve rooms in the basement. They can be private if patrons choose for them to be. Alternatively, each of them has a two way mirror where a small group can watch the activities.

“I like the rooms downstairs,” I say biting on my lip and looking at Conor.

“Yeah. Me too. I’m gonna lock you in one and fuck you all night while we leave these three deviants up here.”

“Conor,” I giggle as he presses a soft kiss on my neck. “Come on and let’s catch up with the twins.”

As I turn to move, Shane stops me, standing behind Conor and me, he wraps an arm around each of us and pulls us closer so we can hear him whisper above the noise. “One day, Con, we are going to take her together in one of those rooms. We’re going to let people watch and you’re going to fucking love it.”

The very idea of that, along with the closeness of his and Conor’s bodies, makes me almost pass out and I sway on my feet. Both of them wrap an arm around my waist.

“We got you, sweetheart,” Shane breathes in my ear

“You liked the sound of that did you, Angel?” Conor asks as he bends his head low and his breath skitters over the shell of my ear.

“Uh-huh,” I murmur.

“Fuck!” he hisses. “You two are gonna fucking kill me.”

“But what a way to go, bro,” Shane says with a wink.



If you’ve loved Jessie and the Ryan brothers as much as I have and you don’t want to say goodbye – or if you just want to find out if Conor ever does go through with it, then look out for them in my super spicy short stories.

[A Ryan Reckoning](#)

[A Ryan Rewind](#)

[A Ryan Restraint](#)

[A Ryan Halloween](#)

[A Ryan Christmas](#)

[A Ryan New Year](#)

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I couldn't do this without you!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sadie Kincaid is a dark romance author who loves to read and write about hot alpha males and strong, feisty females.

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