



NO CROSSES
COUNT

RORY IRELAND
TATE MONROE

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*For the girls who wanted a fierce heroine and her obsessed
stalker anti-hero*

People aren't always what they appear to be. Don't forget that.

— RAY DUQUETTE - WILD THINGS

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CONTENT TROPES AND TAGS

This is a dark romance and as such can and will contain possible triggering content.

For a list of content tropes and tags please visit our website [here](#)

REESE

“Oh, absolutely fucking not,” Regina gripes, pushing her wavy brown hair over her shoulder and smoothing her hands over the plaid skirt. I don’t get to ask her what has her panties in a bunch today, because she’s already mumbling under her breath, “Oh, of course it would be him. This is why I don’t fuck with anyone. I should have insisted on a single room.”

“Who? What are you talking about?” I start to swivel my body to look behind me, but she frowns, shaking her head no. My first week here has been an absolute whirlwind, and a little overwhelming, if I’m honest. The photos I saw before coming here in person don’t do any justice to the looming stone buildings and neatly manicured landscapes. The students, despite being in college, wear a strict, regimented uniform that I hate. I much prefer my ripped jeans, fishnets, and slasher tees to the pleated skirts, crisp white button-down shirts, and navy blazers.

“The worst thing you can do is look. Keep walking. I’m not dealing with his ass today,” Regina says, never faltering a step. Unfortunately, I’m not that coordinated in the dress shoes that are Hillcrest mandated. I lose my footing and reach out, grabbing Regina, and make us both topple over.

“Fuck, I’m sorry.” I reach out to brush her hair back because it’s thick and curly and currently covering her face. The more I try to help, the worse I seem to be making things and we’re attracting attention on the main walkway through campus because we’re a pile of limbs and expensive clothes.

“Enough!” Regina snaps, swatting me away and pushing to her knees. She leans in close and speaks quietly, “Vaughn King has been staring at you since we left the dining hall, and I will absolutely under no circumstances...”

I cut her off, asking, “Who?” Instinctively, I look to the right exactly where she told me not to, and it feels like I’ve been kicked in the teeth. My whole body feels heavy, and I wouldn’t be able to push myself up off the ground even if I wanted to.

He’s tall with broad shoulders that fill out the dark blazer he wears. His hair is jet black and his eyes are stormy and intense. He’s glaring at me like he wants to strangle me, like I’ve personally victimized him in some way. His full lips are pursed as he takes a drag from a cigarette that isn’t permitted on campus. I get the feeling just by looking at him that Vaughn King doesn’t adhere to any rules or regulations. He makes them.

He’s the most attractive man I’ve ever seen in my entire life, but that isn’t the reason he’s stolen the breath right out of my lungs. He looks exactly like I imagine my twin brother, Andrew, would have looked if he hadn’t been murdered when we were ten years old.

“Are you trying to get us into a full-on fistfight?” Regina hisses, yanking me out of my haze, and I realize that she’s already standing up and reaching down to help me to my feet. “He’s the most ruthless motherfucker on this campus.”

I try my hardest to focus on what Regina is telling me and shake off the thoughts of Andrew. I’ve worked so hard over the last ten years to push away the dread that fills me up when I think of my brother. I miss him every single minute of every day, and for the longest time, I didn’t think I’d be able to live without him. He’s my other half, and truly the only person I’ve ever loved. I care for my adoptive parents, but I’ve never felt the connection I had with my twin with anyone else.

Hillcrest is the most elite college this side of Violent Peak Mountain, and it’s unheard of for someone like me to attend. I don’t come from old money or new money, for that matter. I

was adopted when I was ten years old by the sweetest couple, who gave me everything they possibly could. They weren't wealthy, but my life was comfortable, and they did their best to soothe the trauma I'd experienced as a child. They tried to heal me, and I'll forever appreciate them for that, but it isn't possible. There's only one thing, one person, who can make me whole. The night Andrew died, he took me with him. I feel like nothing but an empty shell most of the time. I thought maybe this would be a fresh start, something to keep my mind occupied. Instead, I spend most of my time in my room rewatching my favorite horror movies and sketching in my notebook. Regina doesn't push me to get out of my comfort zone, and I appreciate that about her.

A few months ago, nearing the end of my sophomore year, I received an invitation to attend Hillcrest with a full-ride scholarship. My grades and extracurriculars have always been at the top of my class, but I was baffled that I would be on their radar. I was skeptical at first, but my adoptive parents encouraged me to take the leap. They were proud, never questioning how it was possible. I'm not naïve, I know it was a mix-up because even with my grades, I don't meet the other requirements to be a student here. I don't really believe in luck, so I've decided that I must have benefited from whoever's spot I took misfortune.

I must not be moving fast enough for Regina once I'm on my feet, because she shoves my backpack in my hand and whispers, "He's in that fucked up little group of hockey players that everyone is afraid of. They have no issues with murder, rape, or blackmail. You name it, they'll do it to get what they want. I don't know what the hell you could have done to grab his attention, because he looks like he wants to snap you in half. We need to leave, and you need to hope he fixates on someone else soon."

I should listen to her. From what I know about Regina, she doesn't get rattled by many things, and I can sense how nervous she is right now. All the guy has done is glare at us, but I can tell by the way that she's acting that she's not playing around. A swift breeze whips through campus, blowing my long straight blonde hair around my face. I can't help it; I need

to look at him one more time and convince myself that he doesn't look like Andrew would have if he'd grown up like he should have. I feel a knot forming in my stomach and I feel like I might burst into tears, because looking at this guy, despite his dark hair, I can't imagine Andrew looking any other way.

“Okay, bye. I'm not about to get caught up because you think one of the four biggest psychos on campus is nice to look at. I'll see you back at the room if you make it out alive,” I hear Regina say, but my eyes are locked on the guy who is clearly not happy that I'm on his campus. I know nothing about him, other than the few bad things Regina has spewed, but I can't tear my attention away from him. I breathe in deeply, taking in the sight of him, reveling in the opportunity to pretend I have Andrew back even for just a few fleeting moments. Just as I hear a commotion of loud voices, suddenly everything goes dark.

“Holy shit, I'm sorry. I didn't see you there,” a blonde guy with a warm smile and golden skin says, stooping down to check me over. He's holding a football and if I had to guess, I'd say plowed me down when he was trying to catch the ball. “What's your name? Are you a freshman?” He sounds sincere, but even with all the chaos of being knocked down for the second time this evening, I see the way his eyes are raking over my body. He probably wouldn't speak to me if he knew that I wasn't like him and his friends. If I told him my last name, he wouldn't be able to place my lineage in the gaggle of people who have walked the hallowed halls of this school.

I try to step back from him because he's hovering and making me uncomfortable, but he shifts, wrapping his arm around my back and trying to pull me closer to him. I put my hands up and press my palms against his chest, trying to prevent this literal stranger from pulling me intimately into his body.

“Speechless?” he coos, probably thinking he's cute, and to be fair, I'm sure this works for him. I don't find it funny or cute. I don't like being touched, especially by people I don't know. I wish I could say I've healed and learned how to cope

with the death of my father and brother, but I haven't. I think about Andrew every minute of every day, it seems. I'll never love anyone the way I loved him. "Come on, what's your deal?" The blonde guy frowns when I shove harder to push away from him, and I realize that his friends that he was playing football with have congregated, watching our interaction with interest.

I'm starting to feel panicked, but that's quickly overshadowed by confusion when I'm ripped away from the blonde who doesn't understand personal space. It's all a blur as I watch him get knocked to the ground by Andrew's angry dupe. The blonde looks absolutely frightened and doesn't push back at all. He crawls backward and gets to his feet, leaving his football on the ground where it was knocked out of his hands when he collided with me.

I shift nervously when the dark-haired guy turns to light me up with a glare. My body responds to him in ways I haven't ever felt before. I try to tell myself that it's because he reminds me of Andrew and my body is misinterpreting the excitement my brain feels. Even I don't buy that. I've never found someone so attractive that it quite literally takes my breath away, yet here I am, standing in the middle of campus like a fucking clown instead of power-walking away from all of this bullshit.

"She looks like she's going to drool, Vaughn," one of the spectators chuckles and I feel my face burn with embarrassment at the assertion. I've been standing here ogling this guy I don't know because I have the fucking delusion that he could be my brother that I watched die ten years ago. My stomach rolls. I can smell the copper scent of Andrew's blood and I imagine the knife that was plunged into him several times while I left him as he lay there and died. I feel the familiar pulling of my tongue. I'm going to be sick if I don't get back to my room and shake the images out of my head.

"Nah, she looks like she's going to hurl," another guy chimes in, and I realize that I have to get out of here before I break down in front of them. Showing weakness in front of anyone at this school would put an even bigger target on my

back than I already have. I have to play it cool. I've met people like this before. They find your weakness and thrive on it. I straighten my back and try my best to look unaffected.

“You just look like someone I used to know. It's uncanny really,” I say to Vaughn. When I speak to him directly, his sharp jaw flexes with tension, like the sound of my voice makes him angry. I don't know why I'm telling him this other than maybe I want to hear his voice. I want to know what Andrew would sound like.

“Who does he look like?” My eyes cut over to another guy wearing a blazer. He's not part of the football crew, and he seems rather amused. I suspect he's one of the hockey guys that Regina warned me about. I don't answer him because Vaughn walks closer to me, his intense brown eyes boring into my soul when our eyes meet.

I shouldn't give any of these guys the satisfaction, but I find myself answering Vaughn's friend. “My brother. He looks exactly like my brother would have if...”

“If what?” Vaughn speaks to me for the first time, and it feels like I've been punched in the gut. He doesn't sound like Andrew at all. In fact, his English accent is jarring enough to pull me out of whatever asinine fairytale I'm trying to crawl into and grasp onto the last memories of my brother.

He's not coming back, and I need to suck it up and accept it.

“I have to go,” I say quickly and turn to leave, but I'm stopped by a rough hand around my throat. Vaughn turns me to face him and squeezes enough to let me know he has the strength to hurt me with one flick of his wrist.

“That's fine, Reese. Run along. I'll be seeing you soon.” His accent makes the threat sound inviting, but the fact that he knows my name has the tiny hairs on the back of my neck standing up. It's as if he can read my mind because he smiles cruelly before he adds, “This is my domain. I see everything. I know everything. Everything I touch is mine. You'll do well to remember that.”

With those parting words, Vaughn King releases me without another glance in my direction. He smooths his hands over his blazer and walks away from me like I'm nothing.

VAUGHN

TWO MONTHS EARLIER

Ten years ago, I watched as Rebecca Marin murdered my father, Henry Marin, in cold blood.

My twin sister and I had just celebrated our tenth birthday two weeks prior before our mother snapped.

We watch as she lifts the carving knife from the table and plunges it right into his heart.

Over and over.

The only sounds to be heard are her grunts, and the rattle forced from Dad's throat.

In shock, we just sit there unmoving as the blood splatters across the table and streaks our faces.

It feels like an eternity before she stops her erratic movements and turns her eyes to us.

Whoever I am looking at isn't my mother. At least not the one I know.

"M—Mom?" my sister stutters out, hesitant to break the silence.

"Shush, honey. Everything is fine. Marin men must be cleansed from us. They will rot us from the inside out. Your father can't harm us any longer." My mother's voice is calm, as if she were talking about the weather.

I'm quiet, refusing to say anything as I search my mother's face. I don't like what I see, and I need to get away.

My mind is working overdrive on how we can escape.

My only thoughts are on getting us out of here. There is no hope for my father and honestly, I don't care that much. My twin is the only person I'm concerned with. I have to protect her. I'm her big brother, even if only by three minutes and I take it seriously.

"May we be excused?" I ask, hoping she waves us away, but her eyes narrow at me.

"Marin men. Marin men. Marin men," my mother repeats over and over, clearly in some kind of psychotic loop.

I don't have time to process what is happening because it feels like I've left my body.

Glancing down, I see red seeping through my gray t-shirt before I finally realize my mother just stabbed me, repeatedly.

I'm falling out of my chair, and I hit the rug beneath the dining room table as I slowly feel the blood leave my chest.

I'm dying. I can feel it.

"Marin men. Must burn them out of our lives. You'll see, dear girl. I did it for you. Your brother was a Marin man, and he would have corrupted your soul." Her mumbling fades from my ears until it's just background noise.

I feel hands in my hair, and something splatters on my face.

I move to try and speak but all I taste is salty liquid.

Tears.

Blinking my eyes until they start to focus enough, I see my twin sister's bright blonde hair wrapped like a crown around her head. Almost like a halo is staring at me.

I reach a hand out, dragging my fingers down my twin's face. "Run. Run and don't stop until you get somewhere safe. Don't forget me, fire starter. Prom—?" All energy has left me, and I choke on the blood, but I notice she understands what I'm trying to say.

“I promise. Just stay alive. I’m gonna go find help. I love you, Andrew. Please, just stay alive.”

I lived, but the price was steep.

When I finally regained consciousness, all I heard were beeping machines and low murmuring voices with thick British accents.

I would come to find out that these people were my mother’s family from England, and I had been left in their care.

My mother was safely locked away from society, receiving help for whatever issues plagued her that caused her to murder her husband and attempt to kill her son.

My sister was nowhere to be found, or at least that’s what my aunt and uncle told me.

Missing, dear boy, but if they find her, we will be first to know.

That’s what they told me, but it was pretty lies wrapped up in a distinguished cadence.

I spent the next ten years being the golden boy of the King family, never forgetting her and always asking about her. Just before I turned eighteen, they finally told me that my sister wasn’t missing. She’d been adopted and when we were thirteen, they reached out to her asking if she wanted to reunite with me, even for just one meeting. She’d declined, saying she wanted to keep her new life and not be reminded of the horrific things we’d been through. What my mother did to me didn’t break me, not even close, but knowing that my twin chose not to be with me was enough to snap what little resolve I’d maintained over the years without her. Once I turned eighteen, I convinced my family to let me come back here to the States.

I’m supposed to be attending University and preparing to ingrain myself into an American society that I was always meant to flourish in if my mother hadn’t taken my life into her own hands.

None of that fucking matters because I found her.

Reese Clemson.

She goes by that name now, but that's not what I knew her as.

Reese. It fits her so much more than Allison.

I've done nothing but obsess over her for the last ten years since we've been apart, and she's done everything she can to forget the night she abandoned me.

It's time for my little sister to come back home to her brother.

Hillcrest University is about to have two Kings on campus.

I can't wait to play.

VAUGHN

Getting into my sister's room was disgustingly easy.

I couldn't help myself after our *accidental* meeting in the quad an hour ago.

I've been watching her since she's been on the campus, but only from afar. The need to learn her routine, the unflinching habits that made her into the person she is today stopped me from making myself known right away. I'm far too dangerous, too full of rage to approach her now. I want to toy with her, and I can't do that if I snap her neck. She'd looked at me with those big brown eyes and if I still had any semblance of a soul, she would have stirred something inside me that's long been dead. I dyed my hair black in preparation for her arrival to Hillcrest on the off chance that my English accent isn't enough to twist her mind into thinking I can't possibly be her long-lost brother she wants nothing to do with. I saw the recognition in her eyes though, and even if it's only subconsciously, she recognizes me to some degree. It should make me nervous, make me more cautious, but it only turns me on. She was always meant to be mine. She may have walked away from me, but I certainly never would have left her side. Maybe our mother was right when she said I would corrupt her soul, because that's exactly what I intend to do.

Reese's room is dark even at the brightest part of the day, and I love that she has these blackout curtains hanging from the window. It makes it so much easier to come and go undetected from her room, and I need to be in here. I hate to admit it, but being here, surrounded by her things and

reacquainting myself with my little sister, has a peaceful feeling flooding my chest that I haven't felt in ten years.

She was always sunflowers and sunshine. She was yellow in my world and sometimes it was the only thing keeping me going, but looking around there is no trace of the bright girl I knew. She's completely different, and that has my anger welling up inside me like the flick of a switch. I feel cheated. I wanted to ruin her, punish her for leaving me all those years ago, but now I realize that the memory I have of her, the one I've held onto for dear life, isn't alive anymore.

Pulling my phone out, I use the flash to illuminate as I make my way around the small dorm, running my fingers lightly over her things until I get to her bed.

I can't help myself as I lean down, sticking my face in her pillow and breathing deeply. The sweet smell of vanilla hits me and I feel myself harden in my athletic shorts. So pure and innocent as she fucking should be.

She better not have let anyone touch her, because I'll hunt each and every one of those motherfuckers down and make her watch me torture them. No one can protect her from me now that I've found her, no matter how hard they try. That was always my job, to look after her and make sure her every need was met. When she was scared, she didn't run to our parents. Instead, she'd come to me, and I fucking loved that. It clearly didn't mean the same for her, because given the first chance, she threw me away like I was nothing but an afterthought. All of those years it ate away at me thinking that she was out there somewhere trying to find me, worrying about me, begging to see me.

But in the end, she betrayed everything I thought we had.

I pull myself away from the bedding before I fucking come in my pants at the mere scent of her and look at her nightstand.

Photo frames and collages cover every surface, showing Reese with her *family* and her friends. I stop at a picture of a group of teenagers in formal wear that must have been *prom*. I think that's what they call it here in America. Narrowing my eyes on the smug-faced boy standing behind her, I commit his

face to memory. I don't know who he is, but I'll find out and he'll have a painful demise. I don't know if he touched her, kissed her, held her fucking hand, but I'm seething just thinking about it. I already hate him just because he stole experiences that should have been mine.

The fact that she's chosen to erase me from her life and instead opted to showcase a photo of him in her room is the main reason I need to kill him. One day when I find out who he is, I'll make him regret ever laying eyes on her. No one touches what's mine.

Something on her desk catches my eye, and I move to get a closer look.

A stack of books appears before me and on the top is one called *Slashed*. *Best-selling companion novel to what is undeniably the top horror movie of the last decade*. It also happens to be Reese's favorite scary movie that we used to sneak and watch when our mom and dad were in bed and asleep. Fucking nice to see something of our childhood in this damn room.

Nothing else is reminiscent of that time. I hate the searing pain in my chest when I come to terms with the fact that it's like she's forgotten all about me. All about us. There is nothing in here that has anything to do with me except for this goddamn book.

Throwing it behind me, I see an odd cover with a hooded figure paired with the words *Pandemonium* splashed across the front. Flipping through the pages, I find it interesting the books my little sister is into. A lot of murder and mayhem in this and I only skimmed it. Definitely not a literary work I would expect her to consume, but I think that's why I can feel my blood boiling just under the surface.

I expected her to be different from when we were kids, but not this different. You don't watch your mother kill your father and then your brother and remain the same person. The amount of trauma that's inflicted on you causes shockwaves for everything else. I've been experiencing that same trauma.

Voices float through the door from the hallway and it's not until I hear the key in the doorknob that I know it's Reese about to come inside. I must have lost track of how long I've actually been in here and her class should be over.

I should panic, but every emotion I have has been muted. I can feel them, but the intensity is low. I move swiftly to the abysmally small closet and squeeze myself in, shutting the door as much as I can.

I can only hope her visit is a quick turnaround and she'll be on her way, letting me finish my perusal before I vacate the area myself.

"Yes, Regina, I know. It was a momentary lapse in judgment. Meet back at the room in twenty and go get coffee?" The sweet lilt of my sister's voice reaches my ears as she responds to Regina fucking Jones. I don't hear Regina's shit and thank fuck for that. She's too sharp and I know she looks at me and it's like she can read everything I've carefully and craftily hidden.

I'm completely still as Reese moves about the room, flipping on one of her lights until I hear, "God, I need a shower. I've got sweat in places there shouldn't be. I don't know why O'Neil has to keep his room at eighty degrees."

Well, my dick was starting to go down from earlier, but now it's at full attention once again. She's about to be naked and wet just feet away from me, and I'm desperate to see her. To feel connected to her. I was always obsessed with my sister in a way that most people would say wasn't normal, but now that we're older, it's more intense. Despite my anger, I have the insatiable urge to hold her against me and sink inside her body until neither one of us can tell where I end, and she begins.

A King belongs with a King. My twin sister belongs to me.

The saying reverberates through my head as I move just enough to peer out of the cracked door.

My not-so-sweet, unassuming sister doesn't even realize she's giving me a show as she sheds her clothing until she's

naked. Realistically, I know that she's doing a simple task, but my mind has delusions of how her little strip show was for me.

She's enticing me.

Wanting to bring me to the edge until I can't hold back anymore, and I take her in my arms and snatch her soul.

Despite how angry I am, my sister has grown into the most gorgeous fucking thing I've ever seen in my life. I'm salivating to get my mouth on her, to feel her in my hands, to pin her beneath me and hear her soft moans while I fuck her and make up for lost time.

I muse about all the things I want to do to her and abruptly I'm cut off as she turns, and I spot a tattoo on her ribs just under her left breast.

A black and gray dandelion with wispy petals floating following the natural curve of her body. The words *eleven* : *eleven* run down the length of the stem. I can barely breathe as another piece of me lingers in her life. We spent half of our childhood blowing the weeds and making wishes in the field near the lighthouse at the inlet at the end of the street we grew up on. I can still hear our younger selves promising to never tattle on the other, no matter the consequence. *A swear is a swear, sweet sister. No crosses count.* Words we would say to each other every time we made a lighthouse wish. To always be there for each other. To never grow up. I promised I would protect her. She promised to marry me because nobody could be her husband except for me—her literal other half. Silly wishes and promises of youth, but I remember them. Every last one. She might not have my photo plastered around her room, but a memory of me is etched into her skin permanently. Did she have that done to assuage her guilt for refusing to see me? My hands ball into fists when another thought comes to mind. Did she replace me? Did she do all the same things we used to do, sitting around making wishes and dreaming of the future with someone else? Is it the guy in her prom photo?

I have to shove down my roaring anger at the thoughts spinning in my mind because if I give myself away now, it'll all be over in a blink of an eye. She grabs her phone and

fiddles with it as she walks to the bathroom and music starts playing and she sings along. I don't recognize the artist, but there's a haunting quality to it, and not at all what I expected her to choose musically.

Once the water turns on and I know she's not coming back out, I leave the confines I've been stuck in. Turning back around to get a better look at her room, something catches my eye. Something that might help me get into her head and might even contain some things I can use against her to get what I want. I reach up to grab the sketch pad and a small towel she has tucked up on the top shelf of her desk and a small shoebox catches on my hand and falls to the floor, causing the Polaroids inside to spill out. I crouch down and start sifting through them until I realize they are all of me, or both of us.

Not a single photo contains anyone else.

Not her friends or adoptive parents.

Not even our parents.

Not the neighbor kids we played with every day.

She only has the ones of us. She kept them.

She kept them.

I've been obsessed over her forgetting me. Sweeping me away as a fever dream. Someone to never have existed, but she didn't. She hasn't.

All of this is showing me that she does remember who the fuck I am, but why did she refuse to see me? I knew that she was still out there. I don't know if this makes things worse or better. On one hand, I'm hard as a fucking rock knowing she keeps me like some dirty little secret no one else can know about. On the other hand, it somehow makes it worse that I was important enough to her to hold on to these photos, and yet she turned down the opportunity to see me after I almost died.

I shove the photos back in the box, the square images mocking me. If things had been different would these and more be displayed? Or would she still keep me tucked away in the back of the closet like a dirty little secret?

Turning my back against the wardrobe filled with her things, I gaze at the bathroom door. I can hear her quiet sounds as she washes.

Unable to resist, I palm myself through my shorts. It's a heady feeling knowing she's ten feet away, dripping wet and her brother is on her mind, always. She might not want to be near me or to remember what happened, but this just proves to me that I take up space in that pretty little mind of hers. It's going to make toying with her all the more satisfying.

Slipping my hand in the waistband, I tug my length out and start fisting my shaft over and over, rushing to come before she finishes her shower.

I grip onto the doorframe hard for balance as I beat my dick furiously with the mental images of her lush body laid out before me. I'd tie her up so she couldn't move an inch as I took every emotion I do have out on her. She didn't cry for me when she turned down our visit, but I will have every last tear she has to give from this day forward.

I can feel my orgasm on the horizon, and I tug hard twice until the come starts spewing out of me. I barely recover enough to aim just enough that the towel I set down when I was looking at the photos catches it all.

My chest is heavy from the exertion, but I hear the shower turn off and I know I have to hurry and get the fuck out of here. I tuck my dick back in and then squat down, grabbing the small washcloth.

The towel covered in my jizz is balled up in my hand, and I don't even think before I shove the fabric under the pillow on her bed.

I don't fucking know why I do that, but it gives me a thrill, and that's all I care about. The shot of adrenaline is addictive.

I reach into my pocket and pull out a small snow globe I picked out specifically for my sister and set it on her desk. The lighthouse peering from the globe taunts me and I hope it does the same to her. I wish I could stay here and watch her find it, see her expression when she sees it and her mind starts to

spiral. I leave the present for her and quickly exit her room, making sure to close the door quietly behind me.

After all, the lighthouse is where she got her first kiss.

It was mine also.

REESE

I look over at Regina while she's hastily packing her bag. Her long hair is wadded up in a messy bun, and she hasn't even taken her glasses off after class. We haven't spoken much since I didn't fall in line with what she told me to do with Vaughn yesterday. I've kind of given up on caring what people think of me or my choices, but I do care what Regina thinks. Something tells me she's not the type to want some sort of long, drawn-out talk about our feelings though. I suspect she's already made her mind up about me, and I can only hope that the way I faltered with Vaughn yesterday won't change her opinion of me.

"Hey, you didn't leave a snow globe in here for me, did you?" I flop down on my bed and instantly regret asking her when she turns to look at me. I know she didn't, but I need to talk about it because it's been weighing on my mind since I noticed it this morning. Regina is a good roommate and she's a good friend, but she cannot hide her feelings from showing on her face even if she wanted to.

And Regina never wants to.

"Why the fuck would I leave a snow globe for you? That is the weirdest fucking thing to ask me right now." She puts her hand on her hip, and I see her eyes dart to the horror memorabilia lining my side of the room. As morbid as it sounds, I find comfort in it. Living through what I did, seeing my twin brother covered in blood is horrific, but watching the movies or reading the books depicting violence and over-the-top bloody scenes only brings me comfort. It tones down the

memories somehow, makes them feel less real to me. I'm fucked up that way. My roommate's lips press into a thin line. Regina thinks I'm odd, I can see that in the way she handles me. Because that's what she does. She handles people just like she handles obstacles. That's all they are to her. She has a goal and pointless conversations might be necessary to get what she wants, but in the end, people are just a check mark on her to-do list.

"It was probably mine and I just forgot," I make up the dumbest lie imaginable because I'm starting to feel like maybe it *is* me. I still see my brother, I mean, fuck, now I'm seeing him in other people. I felt like I'd been kicked in the gut when I saw Vaughn yesterday. It was like I was staring right into my brother's eyes, and I still can't shake the feeling. It's obviously not him. He's dead and buried and Vaughn King is full of hate, and still very much alive. I know the snow globe wasn't here when I moved in because I've never seen it before, but it does look just like the one Andrew and I used to play in front of as kids. Our mother was like a helicopter, policing everything we did, said, ate, or played with. But sometimes when she'd have one of her episodes where she'd sleep for days at a time, we'd sneak down to the lighthouse and confess all of our secrets that weren't really secrets because we already knew everything about each other. It was our safe place, it was just ours, no one else's.

Regina's arms cross over her midsection and she appraises me. It's like she's trying to figure out how much time she wants to devote to figuring out the snow globe mystery. She's getting ready to leave campus with her boyfriend, Alan. He's older, rough around the edges, and from what she told me, he's usually away for work two months at a time. Whenever he's back in town, she sneaks off campus to hang out with him. Regina doesn't seem to be impressed by many things, so I guess if she deems Alan worthy of getting in trouble with the president of Hillcrest University, he must be pretty special in her eyes. She said she'd be gone a few days, but she's packing like she's going to be gone for months.

"Did you give anyone your key to our room for any reason?" She side-eyes me, turning around halfway to zip up

her bag.

“Nope.” I shake my head.

“If I find out one of those raggedy ass hockey players has been in here touching my things—” she cuts herself off, clearly aware if she keeps talking about it, the thought of Vaughn King trying on her shoes, rolling around in her bed with his hockey stick or whatever other stray thought has her lips pursed that way, is going to make her spiral and set our room on fire. Regina stomps over to our heavy wooden dresser that is as archaic as the school we attend and shuffles some things around in the top drawer as if she’s making sure everything is in its place rather than looking for one specific thing.

“Why would you think it was one of the hockey guys that left that in here?” I ask her because she’s really given me no information on why she had such a strong reaction to Vaughn. I can’t tell her about Andrew or what that lighthouse means to me because she’ll think I’m even more of a basket case than she already does. My eyes dart past where she’s standing to see my sketch pad has been moved from the shelf where I stash it. My stomach sinks because I know Regina isn’t the type to go through my things. She has the outlook that the less baggage she knows about someone, the less bullshit she’ll have to deal with. Someone moved it, which means they probably saw all of my drawings. Most of which are of Andrew and that lighthouse that I wish I could just go to sleep and wake up there with him. I shake away the thought because I clearly have a big problem. If someone is cunning enough to sneak in here, look through my things, and then return with a lighthouse snow globe to—what? Fuck with my head? Let me know they’ve seen my most intimate thoughts through my drawings? I watch as she inspects the trinket, turning it upright and letting the flecks of fake frost float to the bottom.

“Vaughn was acting weird as fuck around you. He ignores everyone except his little hockey fuckers.” Regina unzips her Hillcrest skirt and tosses it across the room into our laundry basket. She’s halfway into her skinny jeans that aren’t permitted on campus when she says, “Just stay away from

him. He's looking for trouble and from what I can tell, he thinks he found it in you."

"How would he have gotten in here to leave this? And why would he go through my stuff closely enough to know that lighthouses—" I break off my words because even though I like Regina and she's the closest thing to a friend I've got, I realize that I'm not ready to tell her about my brother or the lighthouse or any of the things we shared together. I think unrequited incestuous longing for my dead brother might be her hard limit.

She tosses her bag strap over her shoulder and gives me a grimace. "That's the thing about Vaughn King. There's nothing he can't do or accomplish. Everyone always makes jokes that if half the shit people say he's done was true, that he'd be buried under a prison. I don't subscribe to that. He's an unholy terror and I don't put anything past him. Do with that information what you will. I saw the way you were looking at him, and I'm telling you right now that he's not a good idea. He'll ruin you." She's halfway out the door when she looks back at me. "Do you have anyone you can stay with or are you going to be okay while I'm gone?"

"Nope, I'm good," I lie again because that's what I do. I'm a liar. I'm not okay, or good, or fine and I never will be, but people need me to say that I am, so I do. "I'm going to go to the library and get out of this room for a while." I'm not sure why I volunteer that information. I decide to lighten the mood by telling her, "Don't worry, if any hockey boys break in tonight to try on your underwear, I'll pepper spray them."

She frowns, and says with the utmost seriousness, "I will burn this school to the ground if they do." Which makes me laugh because I don't think she's exaggerating in the slightest. It's only after the door is shut behind her that my stomach sinks with dread. I think Regina is probably right about most things, I mean, I've seen her in action. She can call something before it even happens, but she's wrong on this front. There's no way that even the great and powerful Vaughn King would know the significance of the lighthouse between my brother and me. If it was him or one of his friends, they might think I

have some weird obsession with lighthouses, but that's all they could know. My name was changed when I was adopted, and it feels very much like Allison Marin died with her twin brother Andrew. I like to think of it that way anyway because I want them to be together.

Maybe I really am losing my mind finally. I figure that ten years after the fact I should be getting better, but it feels like I'm getting worse. I unbutton my white blouse and toss it on the bed revealing my Camp Crystal Lake tank top. I leave my skirt on, because I'll need to have it on if I'm going to the library to study. I look through my closet and chew my bottom lip trying to find something that won't get me kicked out of Hillcrest, but also won't make me feel like I'm being choked and smothered all at the same time.

I grab a Hillcrest embroidered crewneck sweatshirt and pull it on. I'd rather have my fishnets and ripped jeans, but I was lucky enough to get a scholarship here, so for once in my life I'm playing by the rules. I don't have anything else but this going for me right now. I don't feel close to my adoptive parents, and I never have. They put me in therapy for a while, but once I hit sixteen, I think they could tell I was faking every emotion the therapist thought I should have. It was easier than fighting it because the bottom line is that without Andrew, I'm just an empty shell. I like them, they're good people, but no matter how perfect they are or how much they try to make me forget, I'm only left with the memory of a boy who has haunted me for what seems like forever.

I roll my skirt up at the waist twice because most of the faculty should be back in their lairs by now, and I'm so sick of wearing this frumpy shit. They clearly think it makes Hillcrest look cohesive, more polished than other universities, but I'm five-foot-seven and this skirt overwhelms my frame at the length they want me to wear it and quite honestly makes me look like I belong on a prairie for naughty schoolgirls. I reach down and pull my stupid white socks up to my knees and then grab my backpack off of my desk. I could work in here, but I'm still shaken up over the snow globe. My mind wanders to our mother as I leave my room, checking the lock twice before venturing down the hallway. She's locked away for the rest of

her life, but I can't help but wonder if she could have found out where I am. Could she have had someone bring it here and leave it for me to find? Surely if she escaped, someone would have notified my adoptive parents and they would have let me know. We don't talk often, but I try to make an effort to call them once a month. I owe them a lot, even if I can't be the jubilant, excited-about-life daughter they wanted. I suppose some of the blame falls on them too because they chose to adopt a severely traumatized girl and thought that simply loving me would take away the pain I was in.

I railed against them for the longest time because it felt like they were trying to wash Andrew away completely and I'd never let that happen.

Not for anyone.

I shake the thought away and turn around, making my way back to my door and checking that it's locked again. In fact, I triple-check it because I can't get rid of the feeling that someone is right behind me, breathing down my neck. It's a conflicting feeling that I have because while it's unnerving because I know it's my mind playing tricks on me, I don't hate it. It's wishful thinking, but it's the same feeling I used to get any time Andrew was near. I could feel him as if he were actually touching me, and I know that I'll never feel that with another person in my lifetime. It's my imagination probably sparked by seeing Vaughn and imagining how Andrew would look as a twenty-year-old man. I don't give a shit about any of that, I want to revel in the feeling for as long as possible because it brings me a peace that I haven't felt in any of my teenage or adult life.

I make my way down the spiral, stone staircase that will lead to the front exit of our dorm. Everything in Hillcrest is ancient, but so pristine it makes me feel like I'm living in a time when all of these buildings were first constructed. It's drizzling and I fucking love that. The gray clouds move slowly over the campus, and I breathe in the wet air. I love the smell of it, the way it sounds as it drops on the cobblestone walkway, and the way it feels as it hits my face. I should probably head back and see if Regina has an umbrella I can

borrow or at the very least grab a jacket with a hood, but it feels too good. This was Andrew's favorite kind of weather, which meant it was mine too. Mom's moods seemed to ebb and flow with the undercurrent of the weather and on days like this she'd hibernate, burrow beneath the heavy duvet on her bed and sleep for hours, sometimes even days. That meant we could get a little freedom down by the lighthouse, picking wishes and promising to keep them forever.

I hear heavy footsteps behind me, but when I spin around, there's absolutely no one nearby. I look around to see if perhaps it was an echo from someone further away, but I see and hear nothing except for the delightful sounds the rain is still providing. I purposely chose this time to go to the library because most of the students will be back at their dorms relaxing after a day of classes or heading to the dining hall for dinner. The rain starts falling a little faster, so I decide right then and there to let it go and pretend the only logical answer is that the footsteps were another figment of my imagination. I turn back to head toward the library because the last thing I want to do is make a spectacle of myself in soaked clothes. Hillcrest's entire campus is flawless, but the library is really something spectacular. It's grandiose in a way that appeals to me, and since I moved on campus, I've spent most of my free time there scouring the shelves for something that might let me escape, if only for just a moment. I don't participate in any sort of extracurricular activities or teams, but I love to skim old books that might spark a sketch idea, and the library is the perfect place to hide out while I doodle.

That was something Andrew and I used to do together, always drawing and coloring because it was something we could do quietly with one another.

Always fucking together.

I'm constantly breaking my own heart all over again thinking of him and I need to stop it. I start second-guessing my choice of going to the library, but the rain starts pouring and I realize that heading back to my dorm isn't an option.

"Hey, you're soaked!" the guy with the football from the other day says, running up beside me and tossing his letterman

jacket over me and holding it there, protecting me from the downpour. There's no time to protest because he's grabbing me by the arm more forcefully than I expect from someone who looks like he plays the part of the golden boy, down to the docksiders he's wearing with his school-mandated slacks.

I walk faster, but don't try to wrench away from him because I know there's no use with the way he's holding me. When we make it up to the top of the stone staircase, he pulls the heavy door open. When he lets go of my arm, I take the opportunity to step away from him, but he places his hand on the small of my back as he ushers me inside. Instead of pulling his jacket away from me, he shakes his shaggy blonde hair and wraps it tighter around my shoulders, pulling me to stand closer to him even though I'm planting my feet, trying to prevent him from doing so. I avert my eyes because I know exactly where this is going. Football guy isn't the first one to take an interest in the new girl on campus, and I'm sure he won't be the last. Guys like the closed-off wounded aesthetic, I guess. It probably helps that I can't really dress how I want at Hillcrest or wear dark eyeliner, or even pull my hair up how I like to wear it. He probably thinks I'm some sweet angelic priss that needs him to swoop in, show me the ropes, and protect me from the likes of Vaughn.

I shimmy my shoulders, trying to wiggle out of his hold and the heavy leather that he's using as a cape on me. His light green eyes widen when he realizes that I'm not about to cuddle up with him and swoon. He clears his throat, and his lips press into a thin line. I'm seeing the real him right now. The one who grabbed my arm so roughly because he wasn't actually concerned with me getting drenched in the rain, but instead his only thought was about getting me where he wanted me. I can't let on that I see through him because I don't need another enemy on campus. Although, judging by their interaction yesterday, it seems to me that he and Vaughn don't like each other. Maybe if I play my cards right, they'll fight each other, and I can sneak off somewhere and be forgotten.

The way his eyes are raking over my face twists my stomach and I realize that my little fantasy of him and my brother's look-a-like fighting to the death and leaving me to

read my books in peace is probably not going to come to fruition.

“Thanks,” I say because I’m a fake ass bitch at this school and it’s the only way I’m going to survive my stay here. I hate this. I hate all of it. I can’t be the real me and it’s not that I want to be mean to this guy, but if he knew the real girl standing in front of him, he’d run the other way. The one who would never cheer him on at a football game, the one who gets some sort of sick enjoyment watching cheesy 80’s horror movies because it feels like her dead twin brother is right there with her. Showing this guy my real personality is the worst thing I can do. He might not have an interest in me anymore, but I can guarantee I’d have a huge target on my back. I don’t know what to say to break the awkward silence, so I go with, “I picked the worst time to come to study, I guess.” I hate the way my voice sounds perky. I’m trying too hard, but he doesn’t seem to mind. The intense look on his face melts away when he hears my tone. I guess we’re both pretending to be someone we’re not right now. I turn so he can take the jacket from around me because guys like him want to feel useful, I suppose.

“That’s not true. It’s perfect timing. You got to see me,” he says and smiles. He doesn’t bring up our first meeting, and I suspect that’s because he got knocked on his ass by my current fixation. “I’m Kody, by the way. I know you’re Reese, so you don’t have to tell me.” I snap my eyes up to meet his gleeful ones when he opens the interior door that leads into the library. I love the way this place reeks of archaic books and silence.

“Yeah, that is something isn’t it?” I say, my real tone slipping out, but he doesn’t seem to notice the sarcasm.

“Hey, why don’t you let me take you to dinner or something? I’ve got enough pull around here we could even leave campus without having to get permission.” Kody leans in and doesn’t seem to notice that I match him, leaning away. “You could come to one of my games...” he trails off and I tune him out because if he mentions a wedding or babies, I’m going to drop to the ground and crawl out of here on all fours until I find the nearest busy street to roll into the line of traffic.

“I have a boyfriend,” I blurt out before I realize what I’m saying. Saying no should be enough. Telling him that I’m not interested in him or any of the things he’s offering me right now should be accepted without further explanation from me, but I know real life doesn’t work that way.

He frowns yet again. “Is it Vaughn?” He says it loud enough to get shushed by the librarian and to have the sparse number of students side-eyeing me from behind their books.

“No, it’s not Vaughn King,” I have enough courtesy to whisper because his royal highness’s name has been said twice now, and I’m fairly certain if it’s uttered again, he’s going to appear in front of us like Bloody Mary or Beetlejuice and glower at everyone within his eyesight.

Kody hums his disapproval and by the look he’s giving me, it’s obvious he doesn’t believe me. He believes wholeheartedly that I have a boyfriend, but I get the impression that nothing I say to him will convince this guy that Vaughn King will never be my boyfriend.

“I saw the way he was looking at you the day we met, so I assumed that he’d made a move,” Kody says in a normal speaking tone, clearly not caring that he’s making a spectacle of both of us by not whispering on purpose. He’s either trying to embarrass me or get me to conform to what he wants from me. I’m meant to blush, pull him in close and shush him and plead with him to stop, but even I can’t sink that low. I want to be here. I want to be at this school where I’ll have a fresh start and no one knows what happened to me, but I don’t want it this bad. “You should be afraid of him. You don’t know what he’s capable of doing to you,” Kody finally says when I don’t shift to leave the library. I narrow my eyes, trying to determine if he’s playing me. I assumed Regina was making Vaughn out to be worse than any college hockey player could be because she doesn’t want to see me get hurt. If Vaughn is so terrible and apparently fixated on me, why would Kody be putting himself at risk by flirting with me? I decide that everyone at this school has several screws loose and I don’t need an explanation on why or how.

“You’re the second person today who said that to me,” I tell him, no longer whispering. The librarian shushes us again. “Maybe Vaughn King should be afraid of me because I’m certainly not afraid of him.” I pat Kody on the shoulder and turn to walk out the front door, rain or not, because I just want to go back to my dorm and put a scary movie on and decompress. That plan is shot to shit when I shove the heavy door open myself this time and smack right into the rock-hard chest of the devil himself. Vaughn’s hand immediately shoots up and wraps around my neck, but it’s not painful. He’s holding me there, balancing me so I don’t fall over from the sheer force with which I hit him. His black hair is soaked and falling down over his forehead and his eyes seem to stare right through me. My nipples harden and I’m thankful for the fact that I’m not wearing that thin white shirt anymore. I hate the fluttering sensation that glides through my stomach and settles at the apex of my thighs. I don’t want to feel this way toward this literal stranger, but I do, and I know it’s only because of my fucked-up fixation on Andrew.

I watch as Vaughn tears his eyes away from mine and turns his head to look disdainfully at Kody who is now standing in the doorway, his mouth open like he was going to call after me until he found me in Vaughn’s clutches.

“You’re not afraid of me,” Vaughn says, finally meeting my eyes again. I would think he heard my declaration earlier in the library, but there’s no way he could have caught that through the heavy door that separated us. He seems more curious than pleased at his observation, and that isn’t lost on me. Vaughn King is used to being the biggest menace around, and he’s puzzled that I don’t find him all that scary. “You don’t even beg me not to grab you,” he says, making his point clear by tightening his fingers around my throat. I feel my pussy clench and my nipples twist tighter, begging for his attention. I don’t have much experience with men, but I’m not surprised that I like this. The idea of someone like Kody laying me down on a bed of roses he paid someone to set up and then rutting into me three times and acting like he rocked my world is not something I dream about. I suspect nothing about him is ordinary, or even pleasant.

Vaughn leans down, his mouth hot and so familiar against my ear. He tells me, “If you know what’s good for you, you’ll run away. Go back to your room.” I hate that I want to be closer to him, but I do. I know that it’s because he reminds me of an evil version of Andrew, but I don’t care. I like the way I feel when he’s close to me, like a placebo for what I’m actually yearning for. I don’t want it to end.

“Are you—” Kody starts to ask me if I’m okay, I think. To be honest, I forgot he was still there, staring at me like a deer with a freight train headed straight for it.

“Run,” Vaughn says again, letting me go this time and looking at me expectantly. I stand there, rain pouring on me and smile at him.

“I think the only thing you and I will ever agree on is that I’m not afraid of you, and I’ll never beg,” I tell him in that fake preppy voice I’ve tried to adopt before I turn on my heel and walk away as slowly as I can manage down the cobblestone sidewalk. I don’t look back to see what either of them are doing, but the look of surprise that flashed on Vaughn’s face just before I turned away from him is enough to make me feel like I won whatever this dumb little game is.

That bastard probably did leave the snow globe in my room. Now I just need to settle in, barricade my door, and figure out how he knew what that lighthouse means to me.

VAUGHN

I need to get the fuck out of these book stacks. I've reduced myself to skulking around the library like a creep, and I really need to just leave and get my ass to hockey practice before I lose my shit and light this motherfucker up and watch it burn to the ground.

I've been watching my sister for the last few days since our little run-in with that fuckwad Kody. I've made it my entire job, personality, fuck—the only thing I care about is following her around campus and watching her every move. My favorite is when she comes in here to study because it's the only place she seems to let her guard down. She says she isn't afraid of me, and I have no reason not to believe her. She was unwavering in a way that was shocking and also made me want to come at her twice as hard as I have been. At first, I wanted to toy with her, break her resolve a little at a time, but now I just want to break her any way I can.

I haven't figured out if she's toying with me because she knows I'm the one who was in her room. She brings the snow globe with her without fail every time I find her in the library. She sets the lighthouse slightly to her left and above her study material. It's like the item haunts her, but she can't let it go. I watch as she picks it up, almost as if she's admiring it, and shakes it. When she sets it back down on the table, it still has her full attention until the very last speck of fake snow floats to the bottom. In one way, I'm almost jealous of the way she's fixated on it. As much as I want her to be fearful of me, I want her attention solely on me, even if it is an inanimate object.

Every time she picks it up, I want to rip it out of her hand and throw it against the bookcase and revel in the sadness I suspect she'd have as the shattered pieces fall to the ground. The complexities of my mind fight each other because, in another way, the thrill that runs through me knowing that the stupid snow globe I left for her is mocking her is intoxicating.

My sister is safe here in the library for the most part. I'm not worried about her physically because I've already staked my claim publicly. No one will go against me, and if they do, they'll be eliminated. Kody is pushing it, but that's just how the bastard is. Even though I'm not worried about anyone doing anything to her, Reese is my obsession, and I have to know everyone who approaches her, talks to her, and gains her attention.

My sister is like a flame, and everyone is drawn to her, it seems. They always have been, and I fucking hate it. I hate that anyone else gets to look at her, gets to hear her voice—her real voice, not that perky shit she puts on to blend into Hillcrest. I like that soft, buttery tone she has when she thinks no one is paying attention, and the way I can hear her breaths when she laughs genuinely. Reese should only burn for me because she *belongs* to me. She's mine and has been before we even entered this world. I'll own my twin sister in this world and however many there are after we leave it.

And we will leave it together.

Slipping my phone out of my pocket, I quickly shoot a text to my teammates Creed and Levi St. Laurent because I want them to take over watching Reese. They're brothers and the only two fuckers I trust on this campus other than my best friend Camden Kelley, but he's too busy micromanaging his sister's life. It's not the same as the way things are with Reese and me. Camden and Kiara went through something traumatic, but they stuck together through it. They have what Reese and I were supposed to have. I think the fucker is actually in love with her, not that he'll ever admit it.

Pushing off the bookcase I'm leaning on, I adjust my jacket and tie. Everyone complains about having to dress in uniform here at Hillcrest, but it feels just like a regular day for

me. My aunt and uncle insisted the entire time I lived with them on *proper attire*, befitting someone of my stature and not the ‘American rags’ I was used to. I was so fucked up in the head after everything happened, I didn’t even question it. The uniformity and sense of structure were enough to keep me from falling into a depression because I didn’t have any other choice.

Hillcrest’s pretentious nature is fine by me because I fucking love seeing Reese in the uniform. Her legs are toned, and her blouses are tight across her ample breasts. She’s a feast for my eyes that I didn’t know I needed until the first time I saw her in person. Initially, I wanted revenge, but that quickly turned into the intense urge to claim her physically. I want to fuck her within an inch of her life and then revive her only so I can do it a thousand more times.

I see the fucking St. Laurent brothers walking up the staircase toward me. Creed is brooding per usual because he’s pissed that I’ve asked him to miss hockey practice to follow my sister around and report to me everything she does. Levi looks like he needs to expel some steam almost as much as I do. I can tell that he’s ready to unleash his maniacal side on anyone who’s dumb enough to get in his way. I give one last look at my sister’s bent head and the curtain of shimmering blonde hair before I acknowledge Creed and Levi.

“King.” They aren’t even twins, but they fucking talk simultaneously, and I roll my eyes.

“Keep an eye on her and don’t fucking talk to her,” I bite out and I watch as Levi smirks like he’s contemplating if pissing me off would finally rip him out of the cycle of boredom he’s been stuck in lately. Creed, however, looks like he wants to be anywhere but here.

“What? You don’t want us to befriend her? She looks like she’s lonely. She’ll open up to us, we can talk you up to her, and we don’t have to lurk in the library like two bookends about to jack each other off instead of going to practice,” Levi says, grinning at me, but I don’t need to say anything because Creed’s arm swings out and knocks his brother directly in the stomach causing him to let out a huff of air and double over.

“Ouch, fucker,” Levi tries to retaliate, but Creed is too quick and dodges him. I need to get out of here before they get into an all-out brawl.

I hate them, but not nearly as much as I hate most people, so I’ll let this little charade slide. They don’t know that Reese is my sister, they only know there’s something about her that has set me off and just naturally assume it’s because I want her, which isn’t untrue.

“Just keep an eye on her and text me updates. I’ll talk to you two degenerates after practice.” Levi groans and I don’t know if it’s because I’m rubbing it in that he’s going to miss hockey today or if he’s still milking his pseudo injury that his brother just gave him. I realize that Creed hasn’t chimed in, not even to acknowledge that I’ve asked for updates on Reese. I follow his gaze over the balcony that overlooks the first floor of the library, and his eyes are trained on the blonde behind the check-in station. I can tell by the way she’s dressed that she must be a student, but I don’t recognize her.

“Are you here to keep tabs on Reese for me or to stare googly-eyed at the bitch behind the counter?” It’s only when the words ‘bitch behind the counter’ leave my mouth that Creed’s angry green eyes are focused on me. I thought at first he was just attracted to her, but his reaction tells me that she’s someone to him.

A chuckle leaves Levi’s mouth before he starts to tell me, “That’s just ...”

Creed interrupts his brother, “No one. She’s no one.”

I don’t bother responding to either of them because I have less than five minutes to make it to the locker room, change, and make it on the ice, and ultimately, I don’t care about any of it.

My sister and hockey occupy my mind. She’s the only thing that matters when it all comes down to it.

VAUGHN

“Haul some fucking ass, King. My grandmother can skate faster than you. The hell is your problem? Do you need a timeout? Christ.” Coach is yelling across the ice at me, and I feel my blood boiling already. This is why I came here, because the old, bald bastard knows just what to say to push me. He’s not wrong. I am skating slower than usual, but at least I fucking made it here on time. Even though I’ve managed to keep things moving in the right direction with my sister, I needed an outlet to let my rage loose, and this is the only legal way. The more I think about the photos she’s tucked away of me in her room, the more I think about that prom photo of that fucking dead man walking slinked behind her like he knows her in an intimate capacity is enough to make me murderous. I researched him. I know his name, where he goes to school, and where his parents live. I would have left campus to track him down and slit his throat if that didn’t mean I’d have to be away from my sister. That’s the other thing that’s got me all twisted up. I strive to be unaffected, and while I allow my anger toward her to show, I hate the dull ache that throbs in my chest when I’m not close to her. I can feel it starting now and that only makes me angrier at her, but mostly at myself. This isn’t how any of this was supposed to go. She was supposed to be afraid of me, to bow at my every command. I wanted to see the fear in her eyes when she realized how I could take away everything she’s built while burying the memory of me six feet deep. The problem is, I wasn’t supposed to be affected by her. I was only supposed to feel hate, and I find myself wanting to touch her,

be near her, breathe in her scent. I skate harder, purposely bumping into one of my teammates who has no business sharing the ice with me. He crashes into the wall like a dramatic little bitch, and I swing back, slapping the puck into the net and scoring. If I didn't have gloves on, I'd flip Coach off.

If I hadn't come here today and taken my aggression out on my teammates, I know I would have approached her again. I would have bent her over that desk in the library and fucked her in front of everyone. No one would have said a word to me, because unlike my dear sister, they're all afraid of Vaughn King. I could sense how close I was to advancing on her again and despite the training I've had to keep my emotions in check, all that goes right out the window when Reese is involved.

"You good?" Camden Kelley skates by me smug as fuck and if I didn't appreciate the vicious way he protects his sister, I would probably murder him for mocking me.

If I had friends, it would be him. The rest of the team lives in the regular hockey dorm, but the St. Laurents, Camden, and I live in what has been dubbed the Ice House. We're by far the four key players on the team, and the funny thing about that is that none of us really give a shit. Do we like hockey? Sure. Are we good at it? You fucking bet. It's really just something to do to pass the time, to try to drown our demons out the best we can. The problem with demons like ours is that those motherfuckers can swim. Camden has always been protective of Kiara, but after what they went through, he's fucking unhinged when it comes to letting her out of his sight. I grin at him and then let my eyes wander over to the empty bleachers where she's laying down on what I'm guessing is his hoodie, if the size is any indication. She's scrolling on her phone aimlessly and ignoring the textbook she has tucked under her arm.

"She wanted to come today," he says as we skate over to the top corner of the rink, letting the other guys pass the puck around.

“She wants to do anything you tell her to do,” I say, and I hate the jealousy coloring my tone. “Are you fucking her?” I ask bluntly because the worst he can do is throw a punch, and I’d gladly get the rest of my rage out, going round for round with him right now.

“She’s my twin sister,” he says the words, but there’s no hint of disgust in his voice or his expression. He doesn’t deny it, but I know he’s not. Regularly at least. If he was, he wouldn’t be such a fucking asshole to everyone all the time. In fact, I think if he’d just give in and take what he needs from her, he’d be much better company.

“You know what happened,” he says, and I think he’s going to elaborate, but he doesn’t. Instead, his eyes dart over to her, and I can see instantly, even under his hockey gear, that he relaxes a little when she looks up from her phone and gives him a soft smile. Kiara used to live in the same building that Reese lives in now. I don’t know all the details about what happened to Kiara and Camden when they went home one weekend, but when they came back to school, he was having intense night terrors to the point of destroying his room and nearly killing anyone who tried to wake him up. That’s when I noticed his protectiveness of Kiara kicked up twenty notches, and I didn’t balk at the idea of him moving her into the Ice House. She has her own room, and I don’t play hall monitor, but I know she stays in there most nights, but there’s been an occasion or two that I’ve been up at an odd hour and noticed her door open and heard them in his room speaking softly. I don’t know what holds him back, but I suppose I’m not one to ask about the morality of fucking your sister. I do not give a fuck. I want to fuck my own, so who the hell am I to judge?

“I’m just saying, if you don’t, someone else will.” He winces before a scowl takes over his face, probably at the prospect of some other guy taking what’s his. I know that feeling all too well. I’d kill us both before I’d let anyone else put their hands on Reese again.

I shoulder-check Camden as I skate by and prepare for one last ditch effort to make something count during this practice

because I'm suddenly riled up again thinking about her. He kept the puck though, so I guess we're even.

I need a new plan. How do you break someone who's already broken? How do you tap into someone's fears who seems not to care about anything at all? I keep thinking back to the way she looked up at me when my hand wrapped around her throat. There was not one ounce of fear, and that notion does something to me I don't like. Instead of making me angry, it makes me wonder what she's been through. She clearly wanted to put what happened to me behind her because she refused to see me, so I don't buy that she could still be traumatized by that. If someone hurt her, laid one finger on her, they're going on my list and whatever I end up doing to them will be two things. Painful and final.

I manage to easily steal the puck while Camden is distracted, glaring at some fuckhead who chose to cut through the arena to get to the other side of campus more quickly. He made the mistake of acknowledging Kiara, and I'm almost certain I'm about to witness Camden jump over the divider and beat the guy to death with a hockey stick.

"Kelley, don't you fucking do it," Coach snaps and that seems to pull Camden out of whatever murderous fantasy he was having. The random student makes his way out of the arena, probably never realizing how close to the worst beating of his life he was. I force myself to race down the ice. I can feel Camden behind me looming because he didn't get to snap that kid's neck and now I have the puck. The entire team and Coach stop to watch from the sidelines, probably anticipating that we're going to get into it.

"Oh, for fuck's sake. Can you two stop fucking around before one of you gets injured? That's the last fucking thing I need." I tune out Coach and line up to take the shot, releasing the puck and watching it sail right past Downhillier, our goalie. Seconds later, I feel Camden body-check me right into the boards.

"I let you have that one, King." He smirks, but then presses his lips into a thin line and the flip of his personality annoys me. He starts to skate away, but turns back to warn me,

“Stop running your mouth about me and my sister and I’ll forget what I know about yours.” This is why I don’t tell people shit, but I didn’t have a choice because I needed help setting things up to get my sister an invitation to Hillcrest. Camden has an Uncle, Brecken, who is, for lack of a better word, tech-savvy, and a cousin, Elijah, who has very powerful people in his contacts. Camden can blow off steam, but I know he won’t say anything to anyone, just like I won’t open my mouth about whatever little love bubble of hell he’s in with Kiara right now.

“All of you hit the showers and don’t fuck around again on my time.” Coach is yelling again, and like usual, none of us pay him any attention.

I glance over and watch as Camden heads over to sit on the bleachers and I can’t help but watch as she greets him by dropping to her knees and unlacing his skates. He’s lost his gloves already and I watch as he reaches out, rubbing his hand along the top of her skull, grabbing her high ponytail in his hand, and letting the hair glide through his fingers with more reverence than I’ve ever seen anyone give another person.

Despite telling myself that I’m not jealous, I skate off the ice and head straight to the locker room to try to drown my thoughts about Reese and how we should have had whatever the fuck Camden has with his twin among the chatter of the team.

“Yo King, what’s going on with you and that blonde bombshell? Reese, is it? Are you off the market?” Richards, our star left defenseman, wiggles his eyebrows at me. I’ve always thought he was a fucking goofball and here he is, proving it yet again.

I hear the murmurs of some of the others wondering the same thing about Reese.

They’ve never seen me remotely interested in any of the girls on campus and that’s why I haven’t been loud about it. I want to be able to fly under the radar and toy with my sister in peace. I tolerate the female population and use them for whatever I need, but none of them hold my attention. Since I

found my sister, I haven't entertained anyone else for any reason. That fact must be circulating, and I'll be honest that I didn't think of that being an issue. I assumed Reese would garner male attention not only because she's fucking gorgeous but also because Hillcrest has such a small population of students that it would be impossible for her to go unnoticed. I didn't think it would bother me because my whole intention of luring her here was to torment her, but seeing Kody grab her by the arm and try to act like her knight in shining armor shattered that delusion. It took everything in me not to crack his skull against the side of the stone building right in front of her. She brings out the animalistic side of me, and I haven't felt this way in a long time. The last time I remember acting on pure instinct was before my mother tried to kill me. I lived, even at that age, to make sure my sister was okay, and I realize now that not much has changed for me. I can ruin her life and make her pay for leaving me, but no one else will get near her.

Ever.

When Richards elbows me again, I sigh, taking my skates off before I finally answer him, "My business is my own. Do I ask you what's going on with you and the redhead who fucks everyone but you?" He rolls his eyes because he doesn't want to admit that the girl who's been his friend since grade school means more to him.

I decide to give them something though, because I want to make it very clear that they're all about to stay away from Reese. They don't need to know that she's my sister or that she's the only person who has ever been able to hurt me. "I was never on the market. She's mine and no one better fucking *think* about talking to or even looking at her. That's all anyone needs to know."

"Surprised you haven't put out a campus-wide hands-off alert yet." I really should have, but I figured that would have put more of a target on her back, and then, in turn, that would take more of my time away from observing her. I also didn't want it getting back to Reese that I'd threatened everyone to stay away from her. She's not a dumb girl. She's already

wondering why I've taken such an interest in her, but I think that would make her want to investigate.

"I've got eyes on her right now. No one will be getting within ten feet of her and all of you know better. There is one little plebeian, Kody, that has no business being at a place like Hillcrest. I've noticed him talking to her and I know Kelley had words with him about staying away from his sister not too long ago. He doesn't seem to understand the hierarchy around here. He plays football in the quad like a peasant." I give just enough information to get Richards, the team fucking gossip, to sink his teeth into.

"Hold. I'll find out." And just how I knew what would happen. His fingers are flying across his phone and not even thirty seconds later he's got a picture pulled up and turns it to me asking, "This him?"

"That is the one. He was entirely too far into her personal space and making her uncomfortable, which meant I had to gallantly intervene." I'm joking, sort of.

Whoever is left in the locker room snorts before whispering, "Gallantly, my ass," which makes me glare at every last one of them.

"Kody Banner. Got kicked off the football team last year, but his daddy donated enough money to keep him on the team. I just texted Rose," he says the redhead's name that has him wrapped around her finger and pauses, probably to see if I'm going to make a snide comment. When I don't, he continues, "She said he usually hangs out by the Beckett building and we could probably catch him there today." It's endearing that Richards is Team King, but I shake my head.

"Richards, you're on scholarship. Let's keep you clean. I appreciate the information. Now get lost and let's act like we never had this talk." I clap him on the shoulder and walk away.

I don't bother showering because once I'm done having my little chat with Kody, I'll just need another. I strip down and change into clothes that won't get me written up, or a demerit, or whatever the fuck they do at this school. I'm not usually one to conform for the sake of not getting in trouble,

but I don't need any bullshit to slow me down. If anyone makes me miss scaring the shit out of Kody today, they're getting it twice as hard as he's getting. I also don't feel like having to explain to my aunt that she needs to make another donation because I busted up some hall monitor's face. I finish dumping my dirty gear and throw on my shoes and head out through the main entrance of the arena with nothing but my destination in mind.

I trek through campus, nodding here and there at others as we pass each other by. No one tries to speak to me, which I am eternally grateful for. I don't have the patience or time to deal with any of them. I see Creed talking to Camden and Kiara, which means Levi must still be wherever Reese has migrated to. Creed looks mad, which isn't unusual, and I notice the way Kiara is leaning against Camden's side, and his hand is wrapped securely around her wrist. I make a mental note to tell him to grow a pair and hold her hand instead of half-assing it when I see him back at the house tonight.

When I finally reach the Beckett building, I see Kody right away. He's with a gaggle of girls who are giggling and laughing at everything he's saying, like he's a fucking stand-up comedian. Money and power must be the only thing required to enroll at Hillcrest because if they're dimwitted enough to think anything this douche is saying is charming, they must all be sharing the same brain cell. I hang back just silently watching because there is a good chance he will break away from them, eventually. I could approach him now and embarrass him in front of them, which would be funny for me. But I don't feel like dealing with them fawning all over me like any of them have anything I would ever want. I also know what I'm going to do to Kody and I'm not sure I want this many witnesses.

I bide my time like the patient fucker I am, but after twenty minutes go by, I'm just about to walk up to him and politely explain to the lovely ladies that I need to steal their boy toy for a few minutes. I don't have to pull the trigger on that plan though because suddenly they're walking away from him and he's grinning like he thinks he's on *The Bachelor*. I notice one of the girls is Rose, the pussy Richard's slipped and fell in and

didn't make it out alive. He gets on my nerves, but even he deserves better than someone who would look at this dipshit like he hung the moon.

Luckily for me, he's walking this way, but he clearly doesn't see me because he's smiling down at his phone, probably reading a text from some girl he's trying to lure into his bed for six whole seconds of non-orgasmic missionary. As soon as he is within arm's reach, I grab his arm in the exact same way he grabbed my sister's and pull him into the arbor walking path connecting through campus.

"Wha—bro, what the fuck?"

"You wanted to put your hands on Reese, so I'm putting my hands on you." I send my fist straight into his gut and he hunches over in pain and gasps for breath. I simply stand there, waiting for him to pull himself together because I want him to be alert when I'm talking to him. I intend to be clear about my expectations and what will happen to him if he goes near my sister again.

"I'm gonna kick your ass," Kody finally wheezes out, but it lacks any strength behind it.

The washed-up football player has let himself go in this last year that his spot on the team has been pay for play and it shows. I fully intend on letting him limp away with a warning, mostly because I don't feel like the headache it's going to be if I take it too far and can't stop myself. Body removal in broad daylight isn't impossible, but it's also not ideal.

But then he says her name like he fucking knows her, "Reese wants me and that's why you're so pissed. Go fuck one of your other groupies, because that bitch likes it rough. I can sense it."

And that's all it takes for me to go blind with rage. Gripping the back of his head, I force his face down while raising my knee, and the sickening crunch of his nose brings a smile to my face.

I haul him back up before tugging him, so we are looking dead into one another's eyes. The blood gushing from his face,

and the pain that is imminent from the expression he's wearing, are like a small victory. It spurs me on, and I feel my cock harden at the thought of fucking Reese in his blood.

“You know who the fuck I am. Just like I know your family had to scrounge around for the money for your hefty, little donation to stay enrolled. Don't fucking try me. Your family is nothing compared to mine. Stay the fuck away from Reese. Don't touch her. Don't talk to her. Don't even go near her. When you see her, turn around and go the other fucking way. She's King property, and I'll fucking stomp your skull until there's nothing left if you forget it. Spread that shit around,” I spit out at him.

Despite the pain he's in, he doesn't want to let me have this one. “Does she know that? Looks to me like she doesn't fall for your bullshit.” I don't bother fucking answering him with anything other than my fist.

I swing wildly, letting my hands connect with various parts of his body. He doesn't even put up a fight, instead choosing to whimper on the ground asking me to stop.

Chill out, King.

I'm sorry, King.

I won't look at her, King.

Over and over, he repeats himself, but I'm too lost in my rage to be able to pull myself back. It's not until I feel someone pull me off him that I swing around and see Creed with a furrowed brow.

“You planning on killing him right here? Cause I gotta say, broad daylight even secluded like this, ain't it. Do you know how hard it would be to remove a body from here and clean up without attracting any attention?” Levi says to me like I didn't already think of that. When Creed is certain I'm not going to lunge toward Kody who looks like nothing more than a bloody heap of designer clothes at this point, he moves to drag him into a sitting position, probably thinking he'll be less likely to choke on his own blood that way.

Let him fucking choke.

“Why the fuck are you two here and not one of you is watching Reese?” I seethe the words out at them. I don’t know if I’m madder that they stopped me from killing the fucker or for leaving my sister on her own.

“She’s back in her dorm. She was on the phone with the hot brunette roommate. She said that she had a killer headache and was going to go back to the room, listen to some crime podcast, and take a fucking nap. Should I have watched her sleep? I’m down for that, but I have a feeling you would not be,” Levi jokes, grabbing me by the shoulders playfully.

I shrug out of his grip before setting my sights back on Kody. “Do we have a fucking understanding?” He can only nod, which is enough for me because exhaustion is starting to hit me now that the adrenaline is leaving my body. I need a fucking shower. I’m covered in sweat and DNA, and I need both wiped from me.

“Should we just leave him here?” Levi asks, and Creed and I both huff at the same time because it’s an asinine question.

“No, let’s bring him back to the Ice House for a slumber party,” I sneer, and Creed’s lip twitches like he wants to laugh, but doesn’t quite make it.

“Asshole,” Levi swats at me, but I catch his wrist midair, letting him know that I’m not fucking around. None of this is a game, and he’d do well to fall in line.

VAUGHN

I don't have to be quiet when I open my sister's door because I already know she's passed out, sound asleep. I'm happy to see that she's sprawled out on her bed in just her panties and a black t-shirt with Ghostface on it. She's really made this whole horror shit her entire personality, and that's unexpected. I notice the mostly empty bottle of Dr. Pepper held loosely in her limp hand and smile. It was always our favorite, even though our mother wouldn't allow us to drink it. We'd sneak into Dad's stash any chance we could and take one down to the lighthouse and share it. I noticed she doesn't drink them anymore, not at lunch, not at dinner, not even when I've seen her getting snacks for her pathetic little movie nights that she never invites anyone to.

I came up here earlier when I knew she was at the library. I sent Levi to keep an eye on her while I was up here, going through her notebooks. Nothing notable. She keeps all the good shit locked inside that pretty little head of hers, which is why I spiked the Dr. Pepper with Rohypnol. I bought it off of Levi and made sure to give her enough to make her *agreeable*, but not enough to hurt her. She's so fucking uptight. I really thought that she'd take one look at me and know who I am, dyed hair or not. I thought I wanted to play with her, but that shit hurt that she didn't even consider that I might be her long-lost twin who she should be fucking mourning. Tonight, she's going to tell me exactly what she's thinking, and it's going to be just like before when I could hear her every thought inside my mind.

I pull my hood up over my head, concealing my black hair as I approach her with little care. If she wakes up at any point while I'm with her tonight, I don't want my hair color to distract her. I want her to see the real me. I can see the heavy rise and fall of her torso, and I know it's going to be a while before she wakes up. I think about turning the light on, but the glow of her TV is enough for me to see her clearly. I fully intended on keeping this about fucking with her mind tonight, but I'm already hard and I can't keep my eyes from wandering to those fucking little gray panties she has on. Without being able to stop myself, I slap her thigh hard and watch her legs jerk apart. I can see the small wet spot and realize that she must be dreaming about someone. Anger courses through me, even though I know it's insane. I'm angry that she's turned on and it has nothing to do with me, but I'm angrier that I can't get inside her head to find out what has her pussy wet even in a deepened sleep.

"Who the fuck are you dreaming about, little sister?" I growl, grabbing the waist of her panties and tugging them down enough to give me a view of her pussy. She's perfect, and I let one of my fingers dip down to find her clit. Her hips jerk and she turns her head to one side, a short breathy moan leaving her lips. "You haven't been fucked since you stepped foot on this campus. Do you miss it? Are you dying for a thick cock to fill you up?" I grit my teeth and pull my hand away from her pussy, letting her panties snap back into place. My hands go to my sweatpants and tug them down low enough so I can palm my cock in my hand. I could crawl on top of her right now and fuck her so roughly she wouldn't be able to walk tomorrow. My cock jumps at the thought, but I don't want to ruin the fun. The first time I fuck her, I want her wide awake and screaming because she knows who I am. I want her to know what sins she's paying for when I drive my cock in and out of that tight little cunt.

I settle for pushing the head of my dick against her lips. Her mouth doesn't open, but I don't expect it to. I reach down and pull her eyelid up with my thumb and she doesn't have any reaction, other than to close her eye when I let go. I smack her cheek with my cock before rubbing the length back and

forth over her lips. Even in her sleep, she's not giving me the attention I want, so I reach down and pinch her nose closed. After only a few seconds, her mouth opens and I slide the head of my cock inside, but I don't let go of her nose. She's struggling to breathe and that makes me even harder. Her shoulders jerk and I know she's trying to wake up, she's trying to open her eyes, but she can't, and I hope that wherever she is in dreamland, she's screaming for me, begging me to help her. Her mouth is hot and wet, but it's no substitute for how perfect I know her pussy is going to feel wrapped around me. It'll do for now if she lives through tonight. I finally let go of her nose and allow her to breathe, but I shove myself further inside her mouth, hitting the back of her throat. I grunt, unable to control the hard, fast strokes. I planned on playing with her far longer, but I can already feel my orgasm building. Her eyes roll back and for a second, I think she's going to wake up just as her brother comes down her pretty little throat, but she only moans, trying to twist her body away from the intrusion. I reach down, rubbing my hand over her panty-covered pussy one time before I slap her there with a hard stroke. Her hips jerk and if I wasn't deep in her throat right now, I'd pull her panties down and spank her bare pussy until she begged me to fuck her to ease the pain.

She's becoming more lucid because she swallows hard around me, and that's enough to push me over the edge. I pull my cock part way out of her mouth because I want her to taste me on her tongue when she's fully awake. I want her to make no mistake that I was here. I want her to wonder what I've done to her. I want to take up every crevice of her mind all day and all night.

Reese stirs when I'm tucking my dick back in my sweats, and I feel myself already growing hard again. She's looking at me, but she seems like she's still a million miles away. Her tongue darts out and slowly licks the dribble of spit and come that has dripped onto her lip and chin.

"Oh my god," she whispers, and the reverence in her voice makes me far angrier than I anticipated. Her eyes flutter shut again and before I can stop myself, I'm yanking her legs open

and ripping her panties off, shredding the sides and leaving red marks on her pale skin. “Andrew,” she whispers quietly.

“Wake up, slut,” I tell her. “That’s what you are, right? A fucking little whore.” I’m on top of her now, my hand like a perfectly fitting necklace around her throat. “Such a shame. Look how flawlessly we fit,” I taunt her, flexing my hips and rubbing my cock against her pussy. Only my sweatpants separate us, and I don’t think I’m going to be able to hold back if I feel her wet slit against my dick. “Fucking look at me!” I yell at her, and it’s enough to get her eyes to open again. I let go of her throat and push up enough to rip her shirt straight down the middle, exposing her tits to me. I almost forget how angry I am because she’s fucking exquisite. I cup one in my palm. “Perfect fit,” I grit out the words. “I wonder where else we fit together, sister?” I whisper, and she moans softly, her hips rolling up against mine. “That’s right, baby, beg your brother to fuck your little cunt.” I lean down and capture her nipple between my lips, sucking hard like I’m a starving man. I suppose I am, because I feel like I can’t get enough of her, and no matter how many parts of her I’m touching right now, it’s not enough.

It’s never fucking enough.

“Andrew, please,” my sister pleads, and it’s enough to make me pull away from her tits.

I lean up and whisper against her ear, “What do you want, little fire starter? Do you want your twin brother’s cock to rip your pussy apart?”

She gasps but doesn’t answer me. I reach up and slap her cheek enough to demand her eyes are on mine. She looks so fucking beautiful right now with her sleepy brown eyes, my come glossing her full lips, and my spit on her nipples. I can feel the tiniest bit of willpower I have left in me diminishing rapidly. I know I need to leave, but I can’t until I check one thing.

“I want your eyes on me, sister,” I demand, sliding down her body, and she complies, her eyes focusing on my face. “Prop yourself up. I want you to see this,” I tell her, pulling

my now fully hard dick out of my sweats. She tries to obey me but is still too woozy and falls back against the pillow. I don't care at this point; my attention is on her pussy. I stroke my dick a few times before rubbing my fingers along her soaked slit. When I reach her clit, her hips jerk, and her moan is somewhere between a plea and my name. I need to come again or I'm going to end up turning right around when I get home and coming back to fuck her. I grab her by the hips and move her so her legs are dangling lifelessly off the side of the bed. I move up toward her and watch how the length of my dick covers her pussy and extends past her lower belly. I was fucking right. She's going to be perfect. I'm going to fill her cunt like no one else ever has. Despite the fact that I'm sure she's fucked other men, I know that I'm going to fuck their memories out of her brain. When I finally have her, my dick is going to be the only thing that she's ever going to remember.

My sister arches her back and I realize that she's waking up more. I press my hand on her lower stomach, holding her in place. "Hold still or I'm going to fuck your cunt raw right now," I snap at her, and she stills. I start moving my dick against her slit, and my hand returns to her throat. Her eyes are glossed over and staring at me like she's just now seeing me for the first time. My other hand goes to one of her tits because I need to feel every fucking part of her. She moans when my cock rubs across her clit and I'm so close to just shoving myself inside of her, but I don't have time because when she gains enough mobility to reach up and cup my face in her hands, a jolt of pleasure jerks straight to my cock.

"Inside. Please," she whispers, and I feel her lift her hips, almost like she's trying to get my cock to push inside her wet, tight hole. The way she's looking at me has my heart beating wildly in my chest and I hate that she has this effect on me. Tonight was supposed to be about tormenting her, getting inside her head, but she's in mine.

I pull back, pinning her down and rubbing my dick against her viciously until come spurts from my dick and splashes all over her glistening pink pussy. I let out a grunt as I pant to catch my breath. I've never come this hard in my entire life,

and it's simply because she showed me the slightest bit of affection.

I need to get out of here before she turns me into a sniveling little bitch. I toss her legs back up on the bed and tuck my dick back in my pants. I don't turn to look back at her before I leave because the way I'm feeling right now is too dangerous. I'm going to ruin every plan I've made since I found out where she is.

"Please don't leave me again, Andrew," is the last thing I hear before I slam her door shut. I lock it behind me because even in the frame of mind I'm in right now, her safety is at the forefront of my mind.

She's mine to torture. If anyone else thinks about it, they're fucking dead.

REESE

I knew Vaughn was the one who left the Dr. Pepper in my room, but I didn't think for a second that he spiked it. I thought it was his way of letting me know that he'd again somehow dug up an intricate detail from my past. I missed my classes this morning because I woke up feeling as though my soul had been ripped from my body and then shoved back inside. My brain was foggy and all I can remember from last night was Andrew's eyes looking into mine.

Vaughn's eyes.

They're the exact same, but somehow different. Andrew could never have so much there, not even when our mother would punish us. He was always quick to take whatever punishment she doled out and protect me at all costs. It's a fucking travesty that someone like Vaughn could look so much like him, or what my fucked-up brain perceives he would look like. Vaughn didn't fuck me last night. I can feel that much, but with the state I woke up in, he might as well have. There's no telling what he did or why. From the things I've heard about him around campus, he doesn't need to drug someone to get his dick wet. In fact, all he has to do is snap his fingers and some twit would be willing to bend over for him.

I huff as I storm across campus. I didn't even let my hair dry completely because I'm that worked up. I did, however, scrub myself in boiling shower water until it ran cold. I might like the way Vaughn makes me feel when I'm around him, but I'm livid that he took something from me, and I didn't get to reap any benefits from it. I know exactly where he'll be, and I

also know I'm going to pay dearly for what I'm about to do, but I don't give a fuck.

I rip open the door to the annex, where the hockey team practices. No one questions me, probably because I look like someone who would rush over here after class to watch some idiots beat the shit out of each other for a puck.

It's like Vaughn senses me because I see his back go rigid on the ice before he turns to look at me. His lips press into a tight line when he sees what I have in my hand.

"It's rude to spike someone's drink and leave before you get them off," I call out because if he wants a fight, he's going to get one. I'm not dumb enough to think that Vaughn can be embarrassed—he'd have to have a soul for that to happen. But I know that if anyone is capable of pissing him off, it's me.

I don't see their coach, which is probably better for me because I doubt he'd take my side over one of his star players. The other guys on the team make exaggerated movements to look away from me, except for three of his teammates. One looks annoyed, like he wishes the ground would open up and swallow me whole, the other one is grinning at me like he knows every detail of what happened to me last night. My stomach sinks. What if it wasn't just Vaughn? What if he brought his little minions, and I was too out of it to realize what was happening? The third one taps his stick on the ice like he doesn't give a fuck what's going on, but he doesn't want any part of it. Too fucking late. You are the company you keep, and we're all wrapped around Vaughn's finger.

"Fuck off," Vaughn snaps at the smiling one, and only then does he turn his attention away from me. Vaughn angrily skates toward me, barely stopping before his big body collides with the plexiglass divider separating us. "Go back to your room, Reese," Vaughn tells me, gritting his teeth.

"I can't, it's covered in your come. I'm going to have to get a hazmat team to come in," I snap, glaring at him, letting him know that nothing he can do will embarrass me. I'll embarrass myself before he can try. I hear some snickers

coming from his teammates, who are eagerly listening for some locker room gossip.

Vaughn keeps his body facing me, but he snaps his neck toward the rest of the guys. “Showers. Now! Practice is over, fuckers.” I shouldn’t be surprised by how quickly the guys take off skating toward the other side of the arena. It’s only the three fucking stooges who don’t jump to fulfill his order that are left with us.

“Do they get to stay in case you kill me and need witnesses that I cracked my head all by myself?” My words sound bitter, and Vaughn’s lips twist up into a cruel smile. Even with the thick plastic between us, it feels like he’s right up against me. I swear I can feel his breath on my face. I hate that he can infiltrate my mind this way. I can feel him on top of me, his mouth on my nipples, his hardness against my pussy.

“You want to be alone with me? Is that why you want them to leave?” That manipulative motherfucker.

“Yes, that’s it. I came all the way over here to beg you to actually fuck me instead of whatever the fuck it was you did last night,” I snap, stalking around to the half door that leads onto the ice. I toss my ripped shirt at him and, to my surprise, he doesn’t let it fall to the ground. He catches it effortlessly.

He moves closer and I feel the air being sucked out of my lungs. I’m not afraid of him like I should be, but when he’s close, it’s like he takes up space inside my whole body. “Were you disappointed? That your cunt wasn’t thoroughly fucked?” I feel my face flush at his words, and it has nothing to do with how he’s trying to get inside my head and everything to do with the fact that he’s right. “You can report me, you know. You could tell them what you think I did,” he says, and his tone matches the smug look on his handsome face. I won’t dignify him by acknowledging that I’m aware that he could probably drag me out into the center of campus and beat me to death and no one would do a fucking thing to him.

“Yes, actually. I took time out of my busy schedule to let you know that you’re a fucking lousy lay.” I feel vindicated when he scowls at me. “I’m sure your fan club goes wild for

your rendition of whining in missionary, but I need a little bit more than that to be satisfied. If you want, I could ask some of your teammates if they can give you some pointers.” It’s exactly half a second after the last word leaves my mouth that Vaughn has me pinned against the plexiglass, his hand fisting in my damp hair and forcing me to look up at him.

“Watch your mouth, fire starter,” he demands.

“Stay out of my room,” I fire back.

“No,” he clips. “And if you mention letting another man touch you again, I’ll kill every motherfucker on this campus.”

I laugh at his threat, and he only furrows his brow further.

“For someone who hates me, for no reason might I add, you’re a possessive prick.” I lift my hands to press against his chest and even with all of his hockey gear, I can feel how hard his chest and abdomen are. He pushes closer, clearly enjoying the feeling of me trying to push him away from my body.

“Yes. Yes, I am,” he dips his head, practically growling the words against my ear. “You’re mine, Reese. Mine to torment. Mine to touch. Your tears, your screams, your orgasms—they’re all fucking mine and I’ll make sure you never forget that.” He punctuates his little speech by pulling me harder into the wall with his weight, knocking the wind out of me completely.

“Did you enjoy waking up with me on your tongue, Reese? How long did you have to scrub my come off of your pussy until you felt clean?” He’s evil incarnate when he peers down at me. His words are meant to hurt me, but instead, they stir something inside me that I’ve never felt before.

“I don’t,” I finally say, choosing to be completely honest with him for whatever reason. “I still feel dirty. I don’t think I’ll ever be rid of you,” I say, trying to color my tone with the disgust I know I should feel. He sees right through it because he’s smiling again.

Vaughn’s hand moves up to wrap around my neck, and my whole body is on fire. He did this to me when he was in my room last night. I don’t remember every detail, but I remember

the feeling, and I hate how much I want to lean into it. “Good girl. Now run along before I fuck you right here on the ice in front of my friends.”

“Fuck you,” I spit the words because I have nothing else to say. I came here thinking I had some semblance of a plan, but it was shot to shit the moment his mean brown eyes fixed on me.

“Soon, fire starter.” He isn’t being snide; he sounds like he means everything he’s saying as he pushes me off the ice. I can feel his eyes boring into the back of my skull as I walk away from him, and there’s a little voice in the back of my head that sounds just like him telling me to turn back around. I ignore it and get out of there and as far away from Vaughn King as I possibly can.

REESE

Vaughn King follows me everywhere I go, but he hasn't made another late-night visit to my room or even taken the time to try to embarrass me in front of anyone. I can feel his eyes on me, but he almost never lets himself be known. It's a weird sensation knowing that you're being watched, especially when it's been my goal since the moment I arrived at Hillcrest to blend in. I don't love that it's someone as rude as Vaughn who makes me feel this way, but I crave the jolt of adrenaline that shoots through my body when he's near. There's something wildly comforting about him and the unhinged way he storms through campus. I can't make sense of it, and I don't really want to. His warm, unwavering grip around my throat was the first time in a long time that I felt anything at all fill the deep pit of nothingness I've come to know. I haven't figured out what his motive is because skulking around unseen doesn't really seem like something Vaughn King is known for. I haven't said anything to anyone about what he did to me the night he broke into my room, mostly because the only person I have to tell is Regina, and she would flip out if I told her what was going on. She got back from spending time with Alan yesterday morning, but before lunch, she was packing another bag to head to her hometown because her grandmother became unexpectedly ill. I didn't ask questions, but I saw what she was packing, and I have a feeling that her grandmother's fake illness is a ruse to spend more time with Alan.

I don't mind being alone, though, because it gave me the opportunity to spend last night looking at every photo I have

of my brother. I studied the similarities between him and my not-so-secret stalker. I have a theory that if someone photoshopped light blonde hair on one of Vaughn's baby pictures, we'd be triplets, I'm sure of it. My other theory is that Vaughn doesn't have any childhood photos because he was spawned by Satan himself. I'm not right in the head, and I'll admit that, but I'm not wrong about him looking uncannily like Andrew. My stomach sinks because I know that it isn't possible that he's closely related to us and I'm making a huge deal out of literally nothing. Our parents had two children, neither of which had black hair, eyes that could cut your heart out, or a British accent.

"Hey. Reese, right?" I jerk my head up from staring at my palm, well, really staring at the scars left from the knife I tried to wrestle out of my mother's hands when she picked it back up and tried to stab Andrew again even after he'd passed out. At ten years old, I would have died for my brother. I'd trade places with him at this very moment if it were possible. I vaguely hear a soft voice speaking to me again. "I—uh, I didn't mean to bother you, but you seemed kind of zoned out or like—I don't know. Are you okay?"

I realize that I'm in the library and that I've been so lost in my thoughts that I'm practically disassociating and try to snap myself out of it. This hasn't happened for quite some time, and it's a rather dysphoric feeling coming down from it in a public place with strangers all around. I recognize the girl in front of me as Kiara, a student from my art class. I curl my palm closed when I see her gray-blue eyes flash to the scars there. I can see the compassion etched on her face as understanding washes over her. She can't possibly understand how I got the scars, but I don't see pity or judgment anywhere in her expression.

When it's clear that she's not going to walk away, I go ahead and answer her, "Yeah, I'm fine. I just haven't been sleeping lately." One truth, one lie. She looks at me like she doesn't believe anything I've said, and really, I don't care, but I also don't want to be rude to her. She seems nice, from how I've seen her interact with everyone in class. She always speaks in a soft voice, but she has a really distinct laugh. That

thought makes my brain piston to the reason I've heard her laugh. I've seen her walking to and from class with her boyfriend and he's always saying something to make her giggle, but he seems quiet too because I never catch anything that comes out of his mouth. They must be pretty serious because I rarely see her without him. Now that I think about it, I think her boyfriend is on the hockey team with Vaughn, and that's enough to slide my guard back up. I suspect that Vaughn is the reason she's actually talking to me. My eyes dart around the library for any sign of him or even Kiara's boyfriend, but I don't see anyone except students quietly milling through the stacks. Vaughn isn't here right now; I know that for sure. I'd sense him, and right now he feels far away.

"I know how the not sleeping thing goes," she says softly, paired with the most delicate grimace I've ever seen. Her long black hair is pulled up in a high ponytail and she's in her full Hillcrest uniform. She's slim, but curvy, and a few inches shorter than me. She presses her glossy, full lips together and sits down across from me without being invited when I just stare at her. I'm not good at small talk, but I try my best not to bristle.

There's an awkward silence, and she seems to be studying my face like she wants to tell me something but doesn't know how. If she blurts out that she thinks Vaughn is stalking me, I might actually lose it in a fit of laughter. Instead of speaking, she does something that surprises me. She undoes the top two buttons of her crisp white shirt and I lean back in my chair, unsure of what kind of fuckery I'm about to witness in the library today. She tugs the fabric down, giving me a brief glimpse of the raised scar tissue on the top curve of her breast before buttoning her shirt up and looking around like she's afraid she's going to get in trouble for what she just did.

"I don't really have any female friends here, or male ones for that matter," she shakes her head and blinks her long lashes at me. "But I just wanted to tell you if you need anything, I'm always around. Mostly here, looking at books, because there's nothing else to do at Hillcrest that doesn't involve parties or sports," she says, scrunching up her delicately pert nose. "I'm not very sporty."

“Did Vaughn send you here to talk to me?” I cross my arms over my chest and look her in the eyes, trying to determine what her goal is. She doesn’t flinch or look away like she’s been caught.

“Vaughn King?” She looks genuinely confused, so I lower my defenses a smidge. I slowly nod, trying to make her aware that I’m not about to fall for some kind of mind game. I could absolutely see him sending this innocent girl over here to befriend me, to only run back and relay information to him. Part of me wants to feed her information that will only piss him off, but the more dominant part of me knows that despite the fact that I’m not afraid of him the way I should be, he is dangerous.

“Yes, that’s the one,” I say. “He’s bothered by me, it seems.”

“Vaughn is every bit the psycho everyone says he is.” Kiara laughs like she’s not actually scared of him, but she clearly thinks I should avoid him. “He’s a lot of things, but bothered is not one of them.”

“Don’t you date one of his friends? I’ve seen you guys in the dining hall and around campus.” Again, she looks confused, so I elaborate, “Tall, dark, and broody. Pretty face, but looks like he wants to rip a building out of the ground and throw it at people?” I’m being offensive, and I know it, but I don’t really care. That’s exactly how that guy looks.

I swear a blush creeps across her cheeks, and she absolutely fidgets, running her hand over the top of her ponytail and all the way down to the silky-looking ends. “Oh, he’s not my boyfriend. That’s my brother Camden. He’s not as mean as he looks.” She smiles when she says it, and come to think of it, they do look similar. Same black hair and same grayish-blue eyes. I noticed them a few times on campus, and they stand out because of how strikingly beautiful they both are. I assumed by the way he loomed over her and seemed to guide her everywhere they walked that they were lovers, but I guess I was wrong.

“He looks like he wants to kill someone,” I blurt out, and then regret it when her face pales and she looks away from me. I clear my throat and add, “It must be a hockey thing. The two guys Vaughn has had following me around all day look the same way.”

Her eyes brighten when she says, “He has been following you? That’s very unlike him. He usually goes out of his way to avoid talking to anyone.”

“Isn’t that why you’re here right now?” I raise an eyebrow in question, but she shakes her head in the negative. Her expression is still soft, almost sympathetic, which is weird considering I’ve accused her of approaching me for underhanded reasons twice and insulted her brother.

“I literally saw you staring at your scars and it just kind of hit home. I wouldn’t harass you for him, and he wouldn’t ask me to. Camden has essentially put out an all-points bulletin around campus that no guys are to approach me for any reason, and that includes Vaughn. The only time I see him is over at the Ice House,” she says, shrugging. I’ve heard people talk about the building where the elite hockey players live, but I thought it was off-limits to anyone but them.

Kiara must see the wheels turning in my brain because she elaborates, “I live there now because of what happened to me, if that’s why you’re looking confused. They might be kind of heinous on the ice—and sometimes off, I’ll admit that, but they let me have my own room. They don’t let anyone mess with me, so it’s hard for me to look at them the way everyone else does. I know I wouldn’t be treated this way if it weren’t for Camden and his friendship with the three of them, though,” she says, and that makes sense. The two other guys that live at the Ice House must be the ones I’ve caught following me a few times. The shorter one with the lighter hair has made eye contact with me and seems to think he’s stealthier than he is. The other one is taller with a leaner build. His wavy brown hair and glasses give him a softer appeal than Vaughn and Camden, but I suppose his brooding ability is why they’ve let him in their little club. He’s more confusing to me because I’ll think he’s following me for Vaughn and then I’ll catch him

watching the blonde that works in the library with googly eyes like he's never laid eyes on a woman before. I think this must be my toxic trait, you know, because the whole dead brother fixation trumps whatever this is, because as much as I loathe talking to and meeting new people, I like watching them. Despite the fact that I know in my gut that Vaughn had him following me, I want to know why he looks at her that way and why she seems to try to make herself invisible whenever he's around.

I look over at Kiara and finally decide to relax, because I think she's telling me the truth about everything. "I'm a naturally defensive person," I tell her, and that's the most of an apology she's going to get out of me.

"I get it," she says sweetly, smiling and grabbing her bag. I look over and see that Vaughn's shorter, fair-haired minion has arrived and is sitting at a table, blatantly staring at me. If Vaughn asked them to follow me under the radar, he sucks at it. Kiara must notice where I'm looking because she makes eye contact with him and then turns back to me. "I don't think I've ever seen Levi St. Laurent in the library for any reason in all the time that I've known him."

"I'm to blame for that, I'm sure," I say, laughing, but she doesn't join me. Instead, she stands up, her full lips pressing into a tight line. I think at first, she's going to approach him, but instead, she pushes her chair in and gives me her best sympathetic smile. "Hey, where are you headed?" I ask, standing up too and flanking her. If what she said is true, thing one and thing two won't approach me while I'm with her because of her brother's rule. I wonder how they live in a house with her if they're not allowed to speak to her? Or maybe that's only when he's not around.

"Back to my room. I have a paper that has to be turned in by midnight tonight and I haven't started it yet." She gets her backpack on and then turns to me before offering, "I'll walk you to yours if you're worried about Levi. He won't approach you if you're with me." She turns and glares at him and in return, he just gives her a goofy-ass smile like he knows he's the topic of our current conversation. "I'll be right back," she

says suddenly, marching over to the table. I can't hear what she's saying to him, but whatever it is makes him lose his smile immediately. She doesn't hang around long enough to let him retort. Instead, she's grabbing me by the sleeve of my shirt and pulling me to the library exit.

REESE

“**W**hat did you say to him?” I ask her when we’re outside. It’s not raining today, but the crisp air feels wet like it might at any moment. The looming clouds are promising and I’m hoping that I can spend the night listening to the rain tap on my window. I should probably throw myself into schoolwork or even a movie, but I know tonight will end just like last night did. I’ll wake up tomorrow morning surrounded by photos of Andrew with the distinct feeling that he slept next to me all night long.

I should walk away from Kiara. She has enough trouble going on that she doesn’t need my bullshit too, but before I can say anything, she’s already answering my question, “I told him that he was making me *uncomfortable* the way he was watching my new friend,” she chirps and her ponytail bounces when she turns to look at me as we try to navigate this stupid cobblestone walkway. She must see the confusion cross my face because she adds, “My brother—Camden,” she adds his name like she thinks maybe I’ll confuse him with some other broody asshole who walks the hallowed halls of Hillcrest. There are several of those, so I’ll give her that much. “Camden will beat the shit out of him for the simple act of making me uncomfortable, and he knows it. He’s in between a rock and a hard place, though, because Vaughn will probably make his life hell if he doesn’t follow his orders.” She shrugs as if to say that’s not her problem.

“Your brother sounds...” I start, but the intense way Kiara’s eyes snap to mine has me backtracking the sarcastic

comment that was about to roll off my bitter tongue. He sounds like he loves her and protects her, and I'm just jealous, is what I should really say, but I decide to keep my mouth closed.

"Camden has never let me down," she says softly, and I can tell just by her tone how much reverence she has for him. "He might think he has, but not even close. Not even once." I think Kiara and I might have more in common than just our ugly scars.

My lips part to say something, not apologize, but at least change the subject because I don't want to offend her by giving my opinions on a group of guys who have obviously looked after her in some way when she needed them to. I don't get any of the words out that I want to say because I see Kody approaching us with his head down. I recognize him because his wild blonde hair seems in even more disarray than usual, and he's walking with a limp, like it hurts him to extend his leg fully. My stomach rolls, remembering the way he grabbed me by the arm the other day. It's not right, fair, or even understandable that I liked when Vaughn closed his hand around my throat and held me in place, but bristled when Kody snatched me by the arm, but it's how I feel and there's no changing that. There's something about this guy that makes me want to run in the other direction, but I don't have to because he makes a point of veering off the sidewalk and moving into the street, completely avoiding us. I think at first that it's because of what happened between us before Vaughn showed up and manhandled me in front of him. He doesn't strike me as the type to want to be second choice to anyone, especially someone as arrogant as Vaughn King. Someone on a bicycle is headed straight for him and he lifts his head to get out of the street without tripping on the curb. Kiara and I must see his face at the same time, because I hear her gasp and I don't blame her. He looks absolutely mangled.

"Kody?" I call out before I can stop myself. I don't know why I try to stop him, other than the morbid curiosity that perhaps this was Vaughn's doing. I know he's a football player, but there's no way that someone could sustain injuries like this during a football game. He looks like someone held

him down and stomped on his face. His skin is tight with swelling, and I don't know if there's more redness or blue bruising covering his usually fair skin. When he doesn't slow down, I grab Kiara like she's my safety blanket and pull her with me to chase after him. I should feel bad if this has anything to do with me, but I don't. I want to know if Vaughn did this because I need to know how far he's willing to take things. I need to know why I'm important to him, and I don't buy the bullshit that I'm so fucking special to capture the attention of someone like him just because he likes the way I look. Something tells me this all goes much deeper than I'll ever know. "Kody, will you stop? What happened to your face? Who did this?"

Kody begrudgingly does as I've asked, halting his steps, but he doesn't turn toward us. I pull Kiara with me to stand in front of him and when he lifts his chin to look me in the eyes, I realize that his face has been battered so much worse than I even thought. His one eye is swollen shut and the other one is bloodshot, with a darkening bruise under his lower lid. I notice that Kiara isn't at all sympathetic toward him, like I expected her to be. She doesn't speak to him at all and seems to be staring at nothing over his shoulder. Kody avoids looking at Kiara, like his eyes immediately might pop out just from gazing at her. I'm not sure what happened between them, but I don't get the vibe that whatever happened to him has anything to do with her. They seem like this awkwardness between them has been dormant for a while, and if I had time to suspect and spiral down a rabbit hole of what-ifs in my mind, I'd put my money on the theory that her brother doesn't want them near each other.

Kody glares at me the best he can with a swollen eye and a busted lip. "You need to stay away from me. Leave me alone and I'll do the fucking same to you." His tone is nothing like the sugary sweet, fake nice guy routine he had when he approached me, first in the quad and then in the rain just outside the library. Instead, he sounds devastated, wounded, embarrassed, and most notably, he seems to be angry with me.

Ding, ding, ding. We have a winner. Nothing will convince me that Vaughn King isn't the one who used Kody's face as a

punching bag.

Kiara clears her throat but doesn't say a word and I see his spine straighten. I'm new here, but it's like she's giving him a warning for the tone he's using with me. It works because he breathes in deeply before telling me, "I'm sorry." My surprise at how she seems to control him without ever looking or speaking to him feels like an electrical current rushing through my entire body. I glance over at Kiara, and she only gives me a small, encouraging smile of reassurance.

"We should go," she tells me, before turning her neck to look down the sidewalk as if she's expecting someone.

"Who did that to you?" I turn my attention back to Kody, and I'm unsure why he hasn't run away from us like he clearly intended on doing when he first spotted us walking toward him. I want him to confirm my suspicions, not that it necessarily means that it had something to do with me. Vaughn has kept his distance from me since the day he gave me a throat necklace to assert his dominance over Kody. It's like he enjoys watching my every move and trying to scare me, but he has no interest in confronting me. I suppose I should be thankful for that, but I'm not. I need to feel that intense euphoria I had when he was pressed up against me, preventing me from moving.

"Like you don't know," Kody sneers, rubbing a hand through his blonde hair and then wincing like touching his scalp hurts him. "He's probably watching right now, and he'll see that *you* stopped *me*. I followed his demands, so make sure you fucking play the part when he asks you what was said between us." Kody laughs so humorlessly that it sends a spike of fear through me and not in the fun way, like with Vaughn. He walks slowly in a semi-circle and that's when Kiara grabs my hand in her smaller one and pulls me to step away from him. His arms are stretched out to the sides, palms facing upward as if beckoning someone to come toward him. "Come out, you motherfucker. Ask her if I touched her!" he screams the words, spit sliding down the corner of his red and swollen mouth. "You got your fucking way, King! Everyone is willing to bow down to your nonsensical bullshit!" He's breathing

heavily, and I realize that not only did Vaughn bruise his body and probably crack his bones, but his ego has been shredded and stripped away. He must feel helpless, cornered into a place that he knows there's no escaping.

I press my lips into a thin line because I should feel sorry for him, but no matter how hard I try, not an ounce of sympathy comes to the surface. He didn't have any for me when he bulldozed over every cue I was giving him that day, signaling I wanted to be left alone and that he was invading my space. Instead, when I tried to pull away from him, he pulled me closer, making me feel like I was going to suffocate. I know from the way he questioned me about Vaughn being my boyfriend, that he was already highly aware that Vaughn wouldn't like him talking to me, and he did it anyway. I suppose that this spiraling breakdown he's having in the middle of Hillcrest, where any kind of outburst of emotion is frowned upon, is his karma.

I feel my body stiffen when I realize what I'm doing. I'm fully prepared to defend Vaughn with my whole chest when he's clearly done something wrong. What Kody did to make me uncomfortable in the library does not make what Vaughn did to him justified. No matter what my brain tells me, it doesn't matter because I want to make excuses for him, just like I would have defended Andrew. No matter what Andrew did when we were young, I would have covered for him until I was blue in the face, and he did the same for me. I must crave that feeling of loyalty I had with my brother and that's why I'm projecting it onto Vaughn, but at the end of the day, I don't like Kody. To be honest, I don't really care that he's probably in a lot of pain right now, and I figure that maybe next time he'll back off when a girl tells him to.

Kody wheezes, clearly his screaming session is over, but now he's bleeding out of his left nostril and out of the corner of his mouth. "Did you see a doctor?" Kiara asks, but I can see as soon as she does, it's like her body jerks back in defiance. It's like she knows she's not supposed to be concerned for him, but I suspect that's just how Kiara is. Nice.

When he only glares at her, I feel like I want to swing on him, too. “She asked you a polite question,” I snap at him, and his glare turns to me. Kiara’s hand that is still holding mine, squeezes my fingers gently.

“He can’t answer me, he’s not being rude,” she says, and that’s when I break eye contact with Kody to look at my new friend. “I mean, he is, but he isn’t. If Camden finds out and he tells Vaughn—”

“How would Camden find out that he said a word to you? He was just taunting Vaughn openly.” This all sounds so fucking ridiculous. The whole thing. Every person in this equation, including me, is Looney Tunes, and I’m starting to wonder if this is some sort of simulation where we’re really just in an asylum, but we think we’re in college.

REESE

“F uck,” Kody curses and takes off. He’s not quite running, but he’s not quite walking either. It’s a lopsided mixture of the two. The sound of his feet slamming against the sidewalk has me looking at him, but Kiara tugs on my hand and I turn to see her brother heading straight for us. He’s not in his uniform, but rather in heather gray sweatpants and an unzipped black hoodie, with no shirt under it. His hair is wet, like he’s just gotten out of the shower. He looks absolutely lethal, but in a different way than Vaughn King. Vaughn has this naturally evil embodiment, like he was born to wreak havoc on everyone who comes in his path. This guy looks unhinged, but there’s a hint of panic in his dark blue eyes that surprises me. Vaughn enjoys toying with people, and I get the sneaking suspicion that no one else on this earth ever crosses Camden’s mind except his sister. Camden’s gaze zeros in on my hand, that is still locked with Kiara’s. She must notice the way his brow furrows because she shakes her hand free from mine immediately. I don’t know if I should laugh or cry because clearly, we held hands, giving each other support during the confrontation with Kody, but I have a feeling that Camden doesn’t like anyone touching Kiara for any reason.

“He’s dead, just know that,” Camden practically growls, grabbing his sister by her elbow and yanking her into his body. She lets him, no fight or pushback at all, like she’s nothing more than his little rag doll he left in the toy box and is now upset that someone else touched it. “Why weren’t you back at the house after class?” He forces her to look at him by gently placing two fingers under her chin.

“Calm down,” Kiara says in a soothing tone, and I watch as his hand slides down the length of her arm. I’m invested, so curious about these two, that I’m blatantly staring, watching their little tiff unfold like it’s a forbidden movie. I think he’s going to hold her hand, but he doesn’t. He reaches her wrist and presses his fingers there before cupping his hand around the delicate slope. He’s loosely holding her right on her pulse point, two of his fingers moving gently over the place where he can probably feel the thump of her heartbeat. “He was pretty messed up. Did Vaughn do that?” Kiara asks and Camden scowls. It’s honestly like I’m not even here. Kiara sighs, stepping back from him slightly to reach down and hook the zipper of his hoodie in its holder and then tugging it upward to cover his naked chest and abdomen before admonishing her brother with a gentle voice. “I didn’t say his name, just answer me,” she says.

“Yes,” Camden clips out the word and then finally looks at me like he’s just now noticing that I’m here. He was in such a rage when he walked up. I’m convinced Kiara was all he could see. “Stay away from my sister. I don’t want her getting mixed up in whatever game you’re playing with Vaughn.”

“Camden, stop it.” Kiara presses her palm flat against his chest. It doesn’t get past me how he subtly shifts, leaning into her touch. She smiles at me before saying, “Come on, we’ll walk you back to your dorm. It’s on the way to ours.” She sounds so sweet, and Camden now looks like he’s just bit into a lemon.

We start walking, Kiara smiling pleasantly at anyone who passes by and Camden holding her wrist like it was meant to fit in his hand. I glance behind me because I have that feeling again like Andrew is close by, which can only mean one thing. Vaughn is lurking, and I hate that my whole body is buzzing with anticipation. I just can’t place where I’m feeling him, and that’s a little unnerving.

When we get in front of my dorm, Kiara asks me, “Are you staying in for the night?”

“What does it fucking matter, can we go?” Camden finally lets go of her and is shimmying her backpack off her shoulders

and looping it through one of his arms to carry for her. I know he sees the way I'm trying not to laugh at his over-the-top antics, and that's why his brows knit even tighter together. It looks like a mini backpack on his huge frame, and for whatever reason, that's the thing that's going to get me murdered because I can't help the smile spreading across my lips. I should get major points for not addressing him as Polly Pocket right now.

"Yeah, I'm staying in. Wouldn't want the big, bad King to find me," I say it flippantly for Camden's benefit, but I'm smiling, so hopefully Kiara doesn't think I'm being a bitch. Maybe I have a death wish, because I hope Vaughn is close enough to hear my taunt. Maybe I'm trying to summon him because I know that he's the only thing that can bring me closer to Andrew.

"Okay, he will, but sounds good," Camden says quickly, shrugging like he couldn't care less if Vaughn jumped out from behind my building right now and slit my throat. I suspect he might not notice because his attention is back on Kiara already. His large hand wraps around the back of his sister's slender neck and forces her to start walking away from my building. She turns to look back at me, her long lashes fanning over concerned eyes. He's quick to move his palm to the back of her head, directing her to cross the street. I want to hate him because he's obviously a bully and thinks he's better than everyone else at this school, but there is such a gentleness in the way he handles her that I can't ignore. Their pace is slowed now that they're further away, and I see him lift his hand to stroke her ponytail affectionately as she speaks to him animatedly. I hate and love how watching them makes me feel, and I can't help but wish that I could hear what they're saying to each other. Whatever Kiara is telling him has him nodding and smiling, which I feel like I've seen him enough to know that he doesn't do that often.

My chest feels heavy and crowded with an emotion that I hate. I miss Andrew so much it physically hurts me. We were just like Camden and Kiara when we were young. We were so incredibly close that we knew each other's thoughts before either of us said anything out loud. We'd be like that now too

if he were still alive, if I could have saved him in time. I feel my lip tremble and the pressure behind my eyes is the telltale sign that my eyes are going to start watering and I hate feeling weak and unable to control my emotions. I turn to head into the alcove of my building when suddenly I'm enveloped by two strong arms. I don't freak out or even try to pull away because Vaughn's spicy scent envelops me.

"I saw you looking for me," Vaughn says, and I can hear that he's smirking even though all I can see is the rock-hard wall of his chest. I want to melt into him, keep him close to me, but I have a feeling that would send him running in the other direction, especially if he deduced why. He wants me to be his prey, but he also wants me to put up a fight, and I'll play along to keep this feeling a little longer.

"I can feel you when you're skulking around like a creep. You're not as sneaky as you'd like to think you are," I bite out the words and this seems to flip a switch inside of him because the next thing I know, his hand is around my throat and he's slamming me against the cold wall.

"Watch your mouth, fire starter," Vaughn grinds out, and he shifts so quickly and elegantly, like moving my body with his is so natural to him that I don't see it coming. He's pressing his taut body against mine, effectively pinning me between stone and his unrelenting abdomen. I can't say I hate this feeling any more than I hate his hand around my throat or how it takes nothing more than his arrogant stare to soak my panties. I don't know what it is I want from him exactly, but what I am sure of is that I need more of it. I need more of him. I want it to be painful. I want it to be intense. I want it to leave me grieving for something other than the loss I've carried with me for all of these years. My nipples harden against my tight white shirt and I gasp lightly, trying to fill my lungs despite his tight grip. I feel his hard cock jump against my hip at the noise. He likes when I'm at his mercy, but I can see in his eyes that he's losing his edge. Whatever it is that drew him to me, made him so hell-bent on fucking with my head, is depleting and I can't let that happen.

“Are you this hard up? I would have thought the *King* would have an endless string of willing fuck toys,” I spit the words and I see his eyes light up with rage at my assertion. He does have willing girls that would let him do anything and everything his cold little heart desires, but he doesn’t want that. He wants whatever he sees in me. He wants something complicated, because even if he doesn’t want to admit it, that makes him feel something.

“You want me to hurt you, don’t you?” I see confusion in his stormy brown eyes for a brief second before he pulls me away from the wall and then slams me back against the stone, clearly trying to get a reaction out of me. It knocks the air out of my lungs, but it doesn’t hurt, not like I expected it to. Vaughn King has been through something that makes him capable of being insatiably cruel, but for whatever reason he holds back, and it doesn’t escape me that he was careful not to let the back of my head smack into the stone.

“You’re too late if you think you can break me,” I tell him, raising up on my toes because my neck is starting to ache where his hand is pressed tightly. “I’m already broken. I’m not the fresh meat you thought I was.” I smile at him, showing him my true self for the first time on purpose. I suspect he saw it all along beneath the masks I’ve kept in place with everyone else.

He lets go of my throat and I slide down to stand flat on my feet. I think maybe I’ve ruined his little game, but instead of backing away, he pins me roughly with only his hips and grabs the buttons on my white button-down shirt and rips it open, exposing the white lacy bra I’m wearing. I see the way his eyes light up and his cock twitches against me again. I’m surprised that he likes the innocent look because I would have predicted that someone like him would find this boring. I figured he’d prefer his conquests wrapped in something racier. I open my mouth, and I’m not sure what I’m going to say. I just know I want to piss him off. I don’t have to think about it for long because Vaughn’s large hand is covering my lips so roughly that I go stiff in his arms for a moment, giving up my ruse that I’m unaffected by him. He uses his free hand to rip

the cups of my bra down under my tits and squeezes one of them in his palm roughly.

I squeal into his hand when he pinches my nipple so hard and tugs upward that I have no choice but to pivot back up on my toes. “Are you sure you want to make that wager, fire starter? I think there’s plenty of you for me to break down into nothing but dust.” It takes me a moment to realize he’s referring to what I said earlier. He moves to my other breast, pinching the nipple and then tugging on it roughly. “I’ll start with your body, but by the end, your mind will be mine, too.”

I bite his hand hard enough that he lets my mouth go, but his lips are twisted into a cruel smile. I don’t think anyone can hurt Vaughn King either, so I guess we’re equal in that way.

“You can try your hardest, but you’ll never be the one who broke me first or the worst. You could never do anything worse than what’s already been done to me,” I say, and I hate how angry my words sound. It feels less like I’m arguing with him and much more like I’m telling him my darkest secret. I want him to know he’s only a stand-in, that he’s only an option because Andrew isn’t here. Rage infiltrates every micro expression that passes across Vaughn’s face at my words, and I’m sure it’s because he thinks I’m insinuating that he’s not the first man to touch me this way. He absolutely is, but seeing how he spirals at the thought of someone else having had what he’s claimed is his makes me feel powerful.

“I guess I’ll just have to fuck you until you’re within an inch of your life then, won’t I? When I’m done with you, you won’t remember their names, their faces, or the way they felt,” he says, and it’s evident that he’s having a difficult time keeping his voice from shaking in anger. I’ve gotten under his skin and that’s all I wanted. “How many? How many men did you let have you?” he growls out the words, his hand coming back up to grip my hair roughly, forcing me to look up at him. “I’ll do to them exactly what I did to your little boyfriend, Kody. You saw how that turned out.” His voice is calm, but the fact that he’s so close to snapping, becoming unhinged at any moment, is palpable, rippling under the current. “And the fucker you let take you to prom? He’s already on my list, so

don't bother mentioning him." He sneers, and I hate that I almost relax at his words. It was Vaughn in my room, snooping through all my stuff. The only reason I even agreed to go to that dance was because my adoptive mother wouldn't let up about how much I would regret it if I didn't go. I did like my dress and the cute updo I wore that night. My date was my adoptive mom's best friend's son, and I spent the entire night trying to avoid his advances. I won't be shedding any tears over him anytime this century. My adoptive mother insisted that I display it when she helped me move into Hillcrest. She said it was what all the other girls would be doing. I think it reminds her of a good time because she picked out my dress and hairstyle and even the nail polish I wore. So I caved because I could see how much she wanted me to be like all the other girls. I never have been. My mind has always been somewhere else and I suppose I sort of feel guilty for not being the daughter they thought they were adopting.

I avoid Vaughn's question about the men he thinks I've dated and decide to hit him in the metaphorical gut one more time. "If you think for a second that it upset me or made me sad when I saw how you obliterated Kody's face, you don't know me at all for all the stalking you do." I glare at him, and it doesn't escape me that his eyes flash down to my hard nipples poking against his shirt for a fraction of a second before he's glowering at me again. "I enjoyed it. I was glad he got what he deserved for cornering me like that, for not giving me space, for doing exactly what you're doing right now."

His lips press into a hard line, and that confirms my suspicions. He thought I'd be upset, that I wouldn't want to see another person mangled and bruised. He has no fucking idea who he's messing with or how little I care about anything in this life.

"Go to your room and I better not see you on campus tonight," he snaps, backing away, clearly expecting me to fix my bra and shirt, to probably scurry back to my room embarrassed. Instead, I push away from him and grab the door. "Cover up," he demands, and the rage is back in his voice. A thrill zips through me that I've been chasing since our last encounter.

“No, I don’t think I will. I think maybe I’ll wear all my clothes like this around campus since you seem to like me exposed.” It’s an empty threat. I’d be in the Dean’s office in thirty seconds flat if I pulled a stunt like that. I might be bluffing, and I’m sure he’s well aware that I’m not that far gone to actually do it. I enjoy the way his fingers curl into a fist at his side and I can see his body practically vibrating with the anger I’ve incited. “Good night, King.” I smile pretty for him and pull the door to my building shut hard once I’m through the door, careful to keep my arm across my chest in case there’s anyone using this exit. When I’m all buttoned up, I glance back out to the alcove and see that once again, Vaughn King has left me.

VAUGHN

“G ood night, King.”

The words my sister said to me last night echo inside my head. I let her go because I could not only feel myself losing control, but she was the reason. She was not only controlling my every emotion, but she was also enjoying it.

Her pouty pink lips and the instantly haunted look in her eyes are all I can see right now. She's chasing pain, and I hate that I want to know why. She deserves anything bad that's happened in her life since the moment she refused to see me after I got out of the hospital. She should have come to live with me in England. The fact that she would have rather gone and lived with literal strangers than with me and our extended family pisses me off.

When my dear sister thinks no one is looking, her eyes become duller. Her mood darkens as if she's got a whole facade that she slowly fades until you can see the real her if you're looking hard enough. No one looks at her the way I do. No one will ever know her the way I do, not even that prick she let take her to prom. Did she fuck him because she felt obligated to give him what guys expect on that night? There's a sharp stabbing feeling resonating in my chest at an even worse thought. Did she enjoy it? Did she want him? Were there guys before him? I'm working myself up into a rage that I can't afford right now. My obsession is growing at an unhealthy rate. I wanted to find my sister and make her pay for forgetting about me. I wanted to ruin her perfect little life by

throwing away the chance of us growing up together the way we were always supposed to.

Reese isn't what I expected. I thought she'd be some spoiled little princess, but I can see she's tormented by something that has nothing to do with me. All that's on my mind is owning her, putting her broken pieces back together, and erasing everything that came after me.

I can feel my sister is close, and that sensation alone is enough to rip me out of my thoughts. I slip back against the side of the building to wait for her. I've had eyes on her most of the day, but I need more than to watch her right now. After yesterday, even though she left me feeling like I could box a brick wall and win, I can't help but think about how she felt in my hands. I want to explore her entire body, taste every inch of her, even if she doesn't want me to. I've never felt this insatiable desire before her. Sex is a means to an end, but for me at this moment, it's a fucking need.

I hear her voice as she approaches her dorm, and it sounds almost like her real voice. She must be talking to Regina because that's who she seems the most at ease with. "Yes, I'm staying away from Vaughn King and his merry band of hockey fuckers. Tell Alan I say hello. I'm almost back to the dorm for the night. Yes, I ate. No, I'm not falling onto any dicks. Okkkaayy, I will. Bye!" Per usual, I'm right. Regina Jones is a pain in my goddamn ass, but I felt better knowing she was my sister's roommate because none of the dumb fucks on this campus will mess with her. She's a menace. I heard that she pepper sprayed a frat boy at his own damn party and then told the honor board she'd do it again if someone had the audacity to approach her with disrespect again. I heard it through people who heard it through other people, but I don't fucking doubt it went down just like that.

Reese pauses after hanging up and looks around. I know she can feel me watching her again, but she doesn't know from where. I fucking love that she can feel my presence, in fact, the thought has me rock hard. She's affected by me, and I don't have to even touch her to make that happen.

“You’re a fucking creep, Vaughn. Don’t you have something else you could be doing? Stalking some other poor girl? I’d like to sleep tonight without looking over my shoulder.” She hefts her backpack up higher, not waiting for my response, before stomping away right into her dorm building. She already knows the answer. She’s the only one I like to watch. It’s always fucking been her.

VAUGHN

I t's dusk and I've got a couple of hours to kill before I decide to pay my little fire starter a visit in her room. I could go up there now and still get what I want from her, but I like the thought of her pacing around, looking out her window, and wondering when I'll show up. She knows tonight's the night. I can feel the tension between us without even being in the same room as my sister. She's so attuned to me that there's no way she isn't anticipating that I'll break into her room. I want to surprise her, take her off guard so that I can get a glimpse of how she's really feeling instead of what she wants me to think is going on in that pretty little brain of hers.

I stroll inside the building and immediately I'm annoyed. Destiny, the R.A., is hanging out in the common area because she has no semblance of a life other than making sure no one is breaking any of Hillcrest's stupid rules. I only remember her name because I sweet-talked her into letting me *study* in their common room so I could keep an eye on who's coming and going. Usually, it's closed to only building inhabitants and their guests, but Destiny has a crush on Creed, so getting her on board with my needs was as simple as inviting her to one of Levi's Ice House parties. Creed was pissed because she followed him around the entire night, but that's really not my fucking problem. I tried to get him to take one for the team, but apparently, he's on some moral high horse about not fucking girls he can't stand. Levi swooped in and she didn't seem to mind the tradeoff. I don't care whose dick she's on as long as she's off mine and out of my fucking way.

The next two hours go by without interruption, and I'm able to catch up on a few emails to Elijah and Brecken. My plan may have gone to shit with Reese, but there *is* still a plan. I don't know exactly how it'll come to be, but I do know how it'll end and unfortunately, I need their help to make that happen. Slipping my computer back into my bag, I make sure everything else is securely put away and I haven't left anything out. Destiny left about forty-five minutes ago when Levi showed up to entertain her for the evening. She seems to think they're dating, and he—well, I don't know what the fuck is up with that guy, but he shows up when I need him to and that's all that matters. I have no issues slipping into the elevator and going up to Reese's floor.

I pull her room key from my pocket that she'd be fucking livid if she knew I had and slowly unlock and push the door open. The sounds of her TV play but nothing else can be heard, so I ease myself in, shutting and locking the door behind me.

She's fast asleep on her bed, bare legs tangled with her blankets, and I glance at the screen whose lights are playing over her face. I snicker because she has a horror movie marathon she found streaming playing, after she bitches about me stalking her, invading her dreams.

I haven't seen her sleeping since the night I spiked her drink. I have to stop and watch her because she's fucking beautiful. She still sleeps wildly with her hands tucked near her chin. I'm unable to resist and I run my fingers through the glossy blonde hair lying across her pillow. It would be so easy to grab ahold of it and jerk her head back, but I lay the strands back down, moving to run my fingers delicately over her cheek and finally down her throat.

My hands itch to wrap around her there again, controlling when she breathes. If she woke up, would she fight me? Would she get so turned on that she'd beg me to fuck her?

She starts to shift, causing me to move backward because I'm not quite ready for her to wake up. As she rolls over onto her stomach, her body is further exposed, and her pale ass cheeks are staring at me from the barely there black thong

she's wearing. She couldn't have been that concerned about me breaking in tonight, otherwise, she would have put some fucking pants on.

Fuck me.

I bite my fist to keep from losing control. I want to bite each globe, sucking hard and fast until I litter bruises up and down to mark her as claimed.

Walking over to her desk, I reach into her cup of pens and pull the first permanent marker out I see, and it happens to be classic black in color. I return to the side of Reese's bed, uncapping the marker before bending down and touching the tip to her right cheek. With more precision than I even have on the ice, and careful to not press hard enough to alert her, I write out a singular word and then put the lid back on, dropping the entire pen to the ground.

My ego is swollen inside my chest, looking at the decoration I've added to her flawless skin. My name scrawled, marking my ownership, makes me feel untamed and raw. I'm too impatient to wait any longer. I don't give a shit if she wakes up, I need her too much. I cup one side of her ass, stroking my thumb over the skin and feeling the heat of her body warm up my hand. I let my hand travel between the small opening in between her thighs and rub up against her center. The warmth of her ass has nothing on the damp heat of her cunt. She's not even soaking through the small strip resting against her, and I know it wouldn't take much to have her dripping for me.

"Wake up, fire starter. I want to see those brown eyes move from sleepy to alert. I want to watch the realization cross your face when you see me looming over you in your most vulnerable state." I don't shout, but my voice is louder than a whisper and I hate how needy I sound. I'm meant to be intimidating, to dominate her into a state of submission, but instead, it comes out like a pleading demand.

When she doesn't stir, I get my wits about me and snap, "Reese. Wake up before I decide to fuck your prone body into consciousness. We both know I'm just fucked up enough to

follow through with it.” I can see her body slowly fighting its way to wakefulness.

“What—goddamn it Vaughn. What the hell are you doing in here, again? You can’t just show up in people’s rooms, invade their privacy, and fuck with them in their sleep. I should call the campus police on you.” Her words are angry, but her tone lacks the bite to it, so I know there’s no way she’s going to be calling anyone.

“I think you protest too much. You like my attention. You can say whatever you think makes you sound less like the little whore you are, but we both know the truth. You practically fell to your knees for me that first time we met. You wanted me then and you want me now.” I’m goading her because I want her wound up for what I’m about to do.

My sister doesn’t react to the name-calling or accusations I’m tossing out, but I know I’ve affected her because her top lip pulls up just like it always used to when she was trying not to cry. She speaks slowly, carefully trying to hide any emotion from me when she says, “Take me off your radar. Whatever this is, forget it and move on to your next victim. You don’t have a drought of pretty girls here at Hillcrest and beyond, ready to worship at the King’s altar. I can’t—” She cuts herself off and works to gain some semblance of control of the emotions leaking out of her voice.

Cocking my head, I just stare at her. Her body shifts, thighs clenched together, and she’s flipped on her back so I can see the hard points of her nipples poking clear through her threadbare t-shirt.

I move back three steps to where my bag is. I grab the silky material I’m looking for and lock eyes with my sister before starting to work the material into knots. She watches but doesn’t say anything. No protesting. She wants to see how far I’ll go and if I had to bet; she wants to see how far she’ll let me. I don’t see any fear in her eyes, and that tells me all I need to know right there.

Sliding her wrists through the knots I’ve made, I tighten each one and immobilize her hands.

“Well, you have me at your mercy, Vaughn. What is the mighty King going to do now? Is this what you were picturing happening when you snuck in here tonight? Color me intrigued. I want to know what goes on inside your head.” She’s trying to ruin this for me. She thinks I want her pain, and I do, but I also just want her. Touching her, tasting her, being here with her will be enough that no matter what she does or says won’t matter.

There are so many things I want to do and not all of them can fit in right now. “No, I was just going to fuck with you while you slept because it makes my dick hard. That went out the window because I much prefer to see that fire lighting up your eyes. Just like it is right now.” I glare at her, and she glares right back, matching me every step of the way, just like she always has.

Trailing my fingers down her shirt, I run them over a nipple, and I feel her body contract before she pushes up toward me involuntarily. She either wants me as much as I want her, or she’s starved for affection. I’ve cockblocked her the entire time she’s been at Hillcrest, but I like to think she’s so responsive because she likes the way my touch makes her feel.

“So fucking beautiful,” I let the words of praise slip out in a whisper, but I know Reese heard me. She blushes, which is unusual for her. She’s always full of fire and spitting sass.

When I roughly grab the hem of her shirt, all it takes is just a little pull, and it rips right down the middle, exposing her breasts to me. Full, pale breasts with bright pink nipples stare at me. I want to bury my face in between them and lave them with my tongue. I loathe the fact that I’m here to make her miserable, to taunt her, torment her, and all I want to do is hear her moan in pleasure. I want her to say my name. I kneel down next to the bed before tugging her sideways until her legs are hanging over the edge.

“Okay, you’ve rendered me helpless. You’ve got an eyeful again. You’ve embarrassed me. You can go.” It’s cute how she thinks this is all I’m going to do. Her voice is dull, emotionless, but I can feel how her thighs are quivering.

“No, Reese. I won’t be going just yet. Do you know why I call you fire starter?” I ask, but she doesn’t answer me.

“Everyone that sees you on campus, with your pretty platinum blonde hair and your perfectly pressed Hillcrest blouse, blazer, and skirt, would see a Mary Sue. But they miss the way your eyes have flames in them when no one is looking. They don’t see your dark, horror-loving personality that covers every inch of this room. Just one spark is all it would take and everything around you would turn to ashes.” My little speech is over, and I see the goose bumps dotting her calves. She keeps her eyes neutral, but I see the way her fingertips curl into her palms. She wants to touch me, and that thought alone makes my dick jump.

Gliding my palms up and down her legs, I continue speaking, “You have power, little fire starter, and all you have to do is wield it. Don’t you want to burn it all and stand in the ashes? Shed your shell and be who you really are?” My words hold a double meaning, but I’m distracting her enough that I know she isn’t putting the pieces together.

“I like my life, or I did until you came barreling in. I don’t know what I did to get on your radar, but I’m over it. You’ve stalked me, had me followed, and broke into my room. Multiple freaking times, might I add? Now, you’re here and have me yet again, at a disadvantage. You fucking haunt me and I can’t shake you. Just what the fuck do you want from me, King?” Everything and nothing. I want her to see that I’m her brother. I want her to feel it. I don’t want to have to tell her. It’s another huge slap in the face. I grind my molars at her words. Four little words out of everything she’s just said ring in my ears.

I like my life.

She’s happy thinking that her twin is out there somewhere and wants nothing to fucking do with him because she wants to live her own life. She has my mood shifting and if I’m not careful, this will be it. This is where things go from bad to worse.

“Tell me, Reese. How many pathetic losers have you let between these thighs?” I grip the soft flesh hard, allowing the pads of my fingers to depress her skin. I need to leave my mark. No one will ever get close enough to her to see these sweet, milky inner thighs again, but just knowing that I’ve branded her is enough to ease some of my anger.

“Why? Does it make your dick hard to think about others touching me?” she quips back, but her voice is shaky, belying a nervousness to her. “Is that your secret, King? Do you like to watch?”

I don’t have it in me right now to play any games with her head. I’m honest when I tell her, “It makes me livid. I want their names. I want to hunt them down and remove any part of them that has touched you. Every single part of you is mine, and soon you will fully comprehend what I mean.” I slide my hands up until they rest against her hips, right along the waistband of her panties.

I tug and rip the thin material on both sides, causing her to jerk upward from the way it dug into her skin before breaking.

“Jesus, Vaughn. You keep destroying my things and I’ll have no clothes. Not all of us are made of money.” A growl escapes me, knowing that she’s worried about money. She would have been a pampered princess if she’d chosen me instead of that fucking couple that adopted her.

“I’ll replace them. I’ll send you a hundred pretty black intimates to wear underneath your clothes... as long as you’re aware that I’m the only one who ever fucking sees them.” I don’t want her smart-mouth commentary, so before she can even formulate a response, I lean forward, angling my head down and breathing in deeply.

I exhale, letting my breath blow across her pretty, pink pussy and as much as she wants to deny it, I can see how she’s already glistening with desire. She’s turned on and I have barely touched her.

“You look good enough to eat, and I’m feeling ravenous.” So, I fucking eat.

I dive in, licking and sucking every inch of her center I can. Her mewls are loud and sound like a symphony when combined with the groaning sounds of absolute ecstasy I make as I devour her cunt.

I pull back to bite her thighs, suctioning myself to them after each nip of my teeth, leaving more marks. When I'm done with her tonight, she'll be covered in bruises. My dick throbs painfully beneath my pants, aching to be let out, but I force myself to maintain focus on the task at hand. If I take her right now, it'll ruin everything. I don't think I can sink my cock inside her perfect pussy and not let it slip who I am. I want her to know who's claiming her when I bottom out inside of her. She needs to know who owns her; she needs to know that she's always belonged to her twin brother. She's not ready for that right now, and neither am I.

I want her to be a desperate, begging mess. I want her juices flooding my face and to erase anyone else who's ever occupied residence in her body and mind. I will fuck their memories out of her one orgasm at a time.

"You taste like sin and darkness, baby. You like when I suck your sweet little pussy? You gonna be my little fire starter and come all over my mouth?" Her moans increase, and her back arches up off the bed when I can't help but shove one of my fingers into her tight hole.

Fuck, she might not have waited for me, but she's so goddamn tight that when I do finally fuck her, it's going to hurt the both of us. I shiver in anticipation. I can't wait for it to hurt. I want to feel her pain and give her my own.

"Vaughn?" I hear the question and hesitation in her voice, but I don't want to hear anything she has to say.

I pump my finger in and out shallowly as I resume consuming her essence. The depravity of the situation isn't lost on me, and I embrace it and the way it has precome leaking out of the head of my cock.

My not-so-little twin sister is spread out before me, humping my finger and mouth. What we're doing is illegal

and I do love fucking with authority. If our mother could see us now, she'd wish she was dead like she should be.

“I think I'm coming. Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh shit. That feels...” Reese trails off like she's confused. Those fuckers must not have ever fucked her good enough to make her come, and that thought makes me feel a little less murderous. Her pussy clenches down and her orgasm washes over her and I pull my digit out, watching as the last remnants of her own come squirt out, splattering my face.

I lick every drop from my hand before reaching down and rearranging my painful erection. Harsh pants coming from her mouth are blended with the murderous screams coming from the television and somehow, it's fitting. It's as if everything is coming full circle, and that's a comforting feeling.

“You can say you hate me all you want, little fire starter, but your body doesn't. She responds to me in ways that give it away.” I run my face back and forth on her thighs, wiping the wetness she left across my face on her skin. Against my better judgment, I press a kiss there, and she flinches at the gesture.

My sister tries to control her breathing and my eyes meet hers in time to see that she's ready to hide from me again. “Just because you made me come doesn't mean anything, Vaughn. I got off and got you on your knees. Look at how pretty you look,” she snarks back at me and I'm fucking torn. On the one hand, I'm proud of her that she's not letting me get under her skin. On the other hand, I want to be the one to break her. I want to watch her fall apart so I can put her back together and do it all over again.

I decide that I need to leave now or she's going to say enough to push me right over the edge. “Go to bed,” I tell her, but before I can stop myself, I'm demanding, “and stay the fuck away from the assholes on this campus. You fucking belong to me now. Do you understand me?” Grabbing her chin, I cave and kiss her like I've been dying to. I shove my tongue into her mouth and make her taste herself from my lips.

When I pull away, she bites out, “Even kings fall, Vaughn. Now get the fuck out of my room and stop fucking stalking

me. I don't belong to you, and I never will. I belong to someone else, and I always will."

I don't think she realizes the words that just left her mouth and the significance they hold. Flashbacks come reeling back into my head of how I felt when they told me that my sister, the only fucking person that meant anything to me, didn't want to see me. Whatever else I had planned will have to wait. I need to leave and get myself under control before I wrap my fingers around her sweet little throat and fuck her until her soul leaves her body.

"I'll be seeing you, Reese. Sleep tight. Check under your bed for any evil little leprechauns. Would hate for them to slice your Achilles tendons." I untie the restraints, and I shake my head because I doubt she'll even get my reference to that movie we watched once, but I couldn't help the parting shot.

I have to get away from her because I'm not strong enough to resist the sad look in her eyes. I take a few steps and bend down to grab my bag and shuffle things around to snatch my hockey hoodie I purposely brought for her tonight. I throw it at her bed, and even though it has my new last name on it, the thought of seeing her branded like that turns me on more than it should. I guarantee she'll be wrapped in it five seconds after I walk out the door.

I open it just enough for me to slip out when I hear her voice reach me. Everything in me stiffens at her words, "There's been no one else by the way." She pauses and in a move so unlike me, I stay quiet. The tension is so thick between us right now, and I know that whatever it is she wants to say is going to impact me.

"What do you mean?" I finally ask, but I don't turn back to look at her. I flex my hands into fists at my sides because it's taking every ounce of control I barely have not to lock this door behind me and spend the rest of the night fucking her until she can't keep her eyes open. The obsession I thought was purely driven by revenge is bleeding through my veins now and I know it'll never go away. I will spend the rest of my life chasing the feeling she gives me.

“I- I don’t know why I’m telling you this,” she says, and I can tell by the tone of voice that her words are meant only for herself. She clears her throat and I want to turn back and see if she’s blushing. “I guess I just wanted you to know that before you go on your psychotic murdering spree, you can rest assured that I’m a virgin.” My dick throbs at her words, but still, I resist looking back at her. “But thank you for my first non-self-induced orgasm, I guess.” I know what she’s trying to do. She’s thanking me so that I don’t feel like I took anything from her. I don’t know if she’s telling me the truth, but either way, I know I’m gonna end up beating the life out of my dick once I get back to the Ice House.

REESE

I loathe Vaughn King.
Hate him.

With a fucking passion.

It should be because he broke into my room again, and this time he tied me up, and made sure I was wide awake so I'd know everything he did to me. I should hate him so much for that. I shouldn't have liked it. All of those things are true, but that isn't why I hate the King of Hillcrest University.

I hate him because it's been three days and I haven't seen him one time since he left me a boneless mess in my room. I hate him because I've looked for him every single day, waiting for the warm feeling to envelop me that only comes when he's around, watching me. I haven't seen him glaring at me across the courtyard or even, seemingly his favorite, observing my every move from the depth of the stacks in the library. He wanted me to know he was following me all those times that I caught him, I'm sure of that. He doesn't know I can sense him the way that I do, or if he does, he can't possibly grasp the magnitude. I hate him because despite the things he's done and said to me, I'm missing him, and I've never missed anyone except for Andrew.

I thought maybe he'd show up earlier this afternoon when I was walking back from class. Kody approached me, calling me every offensive name his puny little brain could conjure up. I ignored him, obviously, but he caught up to me before I could grab the door handle. He stole Vaughn's signature move

and grabbed me by the throat. He was going on and on about the football team and how it was my fault that he'd been kicked off again. I didn't give him a chance to do anything else and kneed him right in the dick. He dropped harder and quicker than I thought he would. I left him there in the alcove of my building and didn't bother reporting him. I'm smart enough to know that power and money around here rule all, and drawing attention to the fact that I have neither, by causing waves for someone like Kody, is the last thing I need to do.

I chew on my bottom lip and pace back and forth in front of the full-length mirror in my room. It's nearly 1 am and I'm wired. I can't help but think of the way he tensed up when I told him I'm still a virgin. It's like everything in him became stiff as a board and the tension that rolled off him was palpable. I don't know if he was making comments about me having been with other guys because he wanted me to volunteer that information or what his game was. I don't know why I told him what I did, but it just fell out of my mouth, and I instantly regretted it. I look in the mirror and my stomach twists at my appearance. I look rough, and I know it's one hundred percent because I haven't been sleeping. I have on Andrew's shirt from when we were young. It's so worn out that it looks like one of those distressed crop tops that are coming back in style. I should stop wearing it. It doesn't make me feel closer to him anymore. Nothing really does, not even the pictures, or my tattoo. It's like his memory is so far away and I can't get it back.

That's the real reason I hate Vaughn King. He's replaced my brother, and really, I hate myself for letting that happen. Just thinking about it makes my hands tremble. Andrew wouldn't understand if he knew what was going on. He was so fiercely loyal to me when we were young that I'm certain if it had been the other way around, he'd never have forgotten me. He would never let some dark-haired, evil version of me take my place just because he was attracted to her. I rub my hand around my neck and sigh at the whole clusterfuck of a situation. The light smattering of bruises is nothing but a shadow right now from where Kody grabbed me, but I'm sure by tomorrow they'll be darker and more pronounced. I don't

care about any of that, but I am terrified that I'm going to forget my brother. And I hate to admit that I'm even more afraid that Vaughn has lost interest in his play toy, and I'll never feel the way I do when his hands are on me again. I let my hand slide up my stomach and over one of my breasts, squeezing my hard nipple and imagining that it's him. He can pretend that nothing affects him, but I see the way his gaze lights up when he's touching me.

I've tried everything I can think of to feel the twin connection with Andrew, but to no avail. Even though I haven't had that prickly, chills up the back of my neck, sensation when I know Vaughn is nearby, watching me, I know it'll resurface as soon as he comes back around. Both Andrew and Vaughn have brought me the same zing of excitement, and oddly enough, the same feeling of peace in different ways. I fight with Vaughn because that's what my brain tells me to do, but logically I know he's a psycho and I should be afraid of him, or at the very least, stay away from him. My body doesn't feel that way, though, and he knows it. I crave his touch, and I hate that, too. He started all of this between us, and he doesn't get to dip out without any sort of closure. He lured me in, and now I'm hooked. When he didn't come barging into my dorm room after the incident with Kody, I hate to admit it, but I felt defeated. I clearly don't need Vaughn to be my knight in shining armor. It's the fact that he didn't storm in and have a tantrum about Kody touching me that makes me feel like maybe he doesn't have a use for me any longer.

Well, I'm not through with him, so I suppose I'll need to go after what I need.

I can't believe I'm going to do this tonight, but I guess we'll see if Vaughn King has decided that I'm no longer his favorite toy. My stomach drops at the thought that he could have moved on to someone else. It's stupid, and I'm aware of that, but I feel it, nonetheless. I stomp away from the mirror and over to my dresser to grab my keys. Not that it really matters, if he wants to get in here while I'm gone, he won't need the keys, but I'm sure Kody is pissed about earlier and I don't need to come back here to find him waiting for me. I

hate that I want to come back and find Vaughn in my bed. He's rough, mean, and shows no signs of any sort of kindness, but I fucking want to know what it would feel like to wake up with him next to me. His touch is gentler than I would have imagined. I thought I wanted him to hurt me, to really rip the sadness out of my soul, but my breath catches in my throat as I remember what his rough hands felt like on my much softer skin. The way he called me beautiful that night is still burned into my mind, and the fact that he seemed as surprised that the words came from his lips as I was. It wasn't a game, a way to get an advantage over me.

I head out into the hallway and straighten my too-short, black pleated skirt before I insert the key into the lock and check it twice before I head out to the front of the building. The fishnets I'm wearing rub deliciously as I make it down to the third stone step in front of my building, and that's when I feel it. Cold chills crawl down my spine and fan out over the back of my neck. The baby hairs there raise, and I look left, then right, and breathe in a deep relief filled sigh.

"I know you're here, Vaughn," I say, and my lips twist up into a psychotic smile, and I'm certain it rivals the ones I've seen on his handsome face. I know that tonight could very well end with me choked out and tossed off a cliff to rot, but I don't care. The fact that he's here, clearly waiting for me, tells me that he still wants me. I also know that Vaughn has a mean possessive streak that I've never seen rivaled by any man. He's going to hate what I'm wearing. It's going to enrage him, and that brings joy to my little black soul. If he kills me, I'll just be one step closer to seeing Andrew again. Another wave of heat envelops me, even though he hasn't made himself known. It's clear to me that he's really close by. Chills cover my entire body now in anticipation. "Come out, come out, wherever you are. I'm bored. Maybe I'll head over to the football dorm. Do you think they'd let me in wearing this?" I don't mention Kody specifically because I can't stomach saying his name right now.

I reach the last step and head out on the cobblestone. The street is dark except for one light between my dorm and the one next to it. Everyone is either tucked away in their own

dorm for the night or they've already picked a party house to hang out in, I suppose. It's just me, Vaughn King, and my brother's ghost out here tonight, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

I sigh, a nervous laugh falling from my mouth when I feel Vaughn's tight grip around my hair, yanking my head back so roughly that I think he might snap my neck. Instead, I'm pulled back against his hard body and my nipples instantly harden. I can already feel my panties dampen from his proximity, his crisp masculine scent, and the rough way he's handling me right now. Vaughn's other hand comes up to grip my jaw, tipping my head back further to look up at him fully. His eyes are murderous, and his lips are so close to mine that if I lifted up on my tiptoes, we'd be breathing each other's breaths.

"What the fuck are you doing out here?" Vaughn barks the words, squeezing my jaw so hard I cry out. I lift my foot and stomp on the top of his booted foot. He has no reaction because even all my weight isn't enough to do any damage to him. He grins at me, but there is absolutely no playfulness in his eyes. He's livid, and I'm guessing he's going to let me know exactly what has sent him over the tipping point because he lets go of my hair so he can turn me to face him by my jaw. He squeezes me so hard that I know I'm going to have his fingerprints etched in bruises on my skin by tomorrow morning. Matching the slightly yellowish-tinged ones slowly fading from my thighs from our last meeting. Pleasure zips through me at the memory. I want him to drag me upstairs and have his way with me again. I want to touch him. I want to feel every inch of him, and I want to know what it feels like to have him inside me, groaning against my neck in pleasure.

"Feisty little bitch, aren't you?" The venom in his voice brings me out of my fantasy. This isn't a game. There's a very real possibility that I won't make it out of tonight alive. His warm breath fans over my face and I try to jerk away from him because I've gotten my thrill and I don't actually want to die because Vaughn King lost the tiny thread of sanity he's hanging by and bounced my head against the stone walkway.

“I’ve had my fix. You can let me go now,” I say to him, wincing when his fingertips press harder, his eyes lighting up when he sees my pain. “I’ll go back up to my room. I was bored, and this was a really dumb idea.” He has to at least give it to me that I’m self-aware. I know exactly why I did all of this, and that I wouldn’t be in this situation if I didn’t want to be.

“Didn’t you miss me? You seem like you did, why else would you be out here dressed like a fucking whore, like you’re looking to get fucked,” he sneers, using his free hand to slap one of my breasts. His eyes watch it bounce under my tiny top and I see his expression change suddenly. He’s looking at the logo on my brother’s shirt like he recognizes it. If he knew that it belonged to another guy, despite who it is, I feel like Vaughn would be livid. He only lets go of my jaw so that he can lift my top up over my bare breasts, and when I instinctively move to cover myself because we’re in the middle of the walkway where anyone could see me if they happened to be walking this way, Vaughn slaps my hands away. His eyes lack the anger that they once held, and now I can see the lust swirling in the depths. He doesn’t reprimand me for trying to shield myself from him, instead, he uses both hands to tug on my pebbled nipples. I suddenly feel panicked, but it has nothing to do with the fact that I’m half-naked and in public with what is most likely a homicidal maniac. The feelings I’m having right now with Vaughn are so overwhelming that I feel even further away from Andrew. I can’t let anything, not even someone who makes me feel this way, come between what I had with my brother. I hate that I’m panicking over something I knew was happening before I came out here chasing this exact moment with Vaughn, but I can’t help it.

“Stop. Vaughn,” I say his name, but he doesn’t acknowledge that I’m even speaking to him. “I want to go back inside. I shouldn’t have come out here. I shouldn’t have taunted you,” I tell him, and his eyes flash up to mine then. He grips my nipples harder, tugging me hard toward him. I thud against his chest. His abdomen is hard, and warm, and as much as my mind is screaming at me to run away from him,

my body is melting against him in a way that I'd never let myself be with anyone else.

“You should have thought about that, little fire starter, before you came out here for me to find you,” he growls, pulling my shirt down over my tits, and that's when I see it. He scowls as he covers my chest, depriving himself of the view that he wants. The way his brows move, and his bottom lip pops out just the tiniest bit, has my heart pounding and my stomach clenching.

He looks just like Andrew. My brother used to do the same exact thing when our parents would separate us for any reason. He loathed when Mom wouldn't allow us to sleep in the same room anymore. If she or Dad caught him sneaking into my room and separated us, that was the exact way his face would look. I know I'm fucked up; I know I have a wild imagination, but I'm fucking sure of it.

“Do that again.” My voice is nothing but a breathy whisper. “Please. Look at me that way again, like you're annoyed at the thought of being away from me.”

He seems to know exactly what I'm talking about because he doesn't question it. Instead of doing as I've asked, he glowers at me in a much harsher way. “No,” is all he says before he has me by the wrist and is dragging me down the cobblestone sidewalk.

“Where are we going?” I don't know why I'm asking because it's not like it matters. We're going to end up wherever he wants us to. I have no control over how tonight ends, and I never did. If he wanted me tonight, he would have come in and gotten me. His rigid silence is enough to make me jerk my arm, trying to get out of his hold, but he doesn't falter one step. “Why haven't you been around for three days?” I hate how absurd that sounds coming out of my mouth, but this does get him to slow his steps and meet my eyes.

Vaughn King, the guy who both hates me and claims to own me, suddenly stops and hauls me against him, looking down at me with a punishing stare. “You are delusional if you think my eyes have been off of you for one second since you

arrived at this school.” He studies my face for a long moment, and I watch his eyes drop to my neck.

He knows about Kody.

REESE

“**Y**ou should really drop out and become a burglar,” I tell Vaughn as he picks the lock to the ice hockey arena. He ignores me just as I expect him to, but I see his top lip quirk up at my comment. Once we’re inside, I watch as he closes the heavy double doors and locks them from the inside. When he grabs my hand in his, I feel like my heart stops in my chest. He’s done way more intimate things to me, and he’s certainly done entirely more violent things that should have made my heartbeat cease to exist. Something about the way he presses his thumb on each one of my knuckles is entirely too intimate and all too familiar. Andrew used to do the same exact thing to calm himself down, or maybe me, I don’t fucking know, but Vaughn’s action just unlocked a memory I’d completely forgotten. I yank my hand away from him and press my back against the rough stone wall of the corridor that will lead us out to the rink.

Vaughn doesn’t look confused or even angry that I’ve pulled away. He’s smug, like he knows something I don’t. It’s as if he can see exactly what’s going on in my mind right now and I can’t figure out how he knows. “Do you miss him that much?” Vaughn grins, advancing on me. “Is that why you were out tonight, looking for my attention? Was it better than sitting in your room thinking about how you let him down?”

“How do you know about my brother? I swear you even look like him sometimes,” I say honestly, because I really have nothing to lose in this situation. I shake my head, trying to get rid of the thoughts. He’s dead. He’s buried. He’s not standing

in front of me with the face of the most beautiful devil who ever lived.

“I know everything about you, fire starter.” Vaughn rubs his thumb along my bottom lip, and I shiver. “You think you’re losing your mind because I remind you of your brother that you abandoned? You can feel him when I touch you, can’t you?” He presses against me, holding me against the wall, letting me feel every hard line of his large frame. Suddenly I wish I’d worn more clothes because I know it would only take a few flicks of his wrist to be inside me right now. “You feel guilty because you’re falling in love with me, the same way you used to love him.”

My eyes snap up to glare at him. Unblinking, I say, “I’ll never love anyone the way I love my brother. You can do or say whatever you want, but I’ll never fucking love you.” I feel my face heating, the pressure pushing at the back of my eyeballs. I don’t know why I’m getting so emotional, other than the fact that it feels like an extreme violation that he clearly has information on Andrew. For so long, everything regarding my brother has been solely mine, and I’m not willing to share him, not even with Vaughn.

“I wouldn’t make promises you can’t keep, Reese,” he says, grabbing me roughly and pulling me toward the door that leads into the rink. It’s dimly lit, like only some of the smaller lights are turned on and my stomach sinks. Whatever he has planned can’t end well for me.

We’re not even fully inside, and I’m already regretting wearing this stupid skirt and tiny top. I don’t see what Vaughn touches on the wall, but with one quick movement, he turns all the lights on in the area. Very quickly, I realize that he didn’t bring me here to torture me on the ice.

“Where the fuck have you been?” Kiara’s brother, Camden, snaps from where he’s standing on the ice. I see Kody lying on the ice face down with what looks like blood near his mouth. The one whose name I’ve learned to be Levi has his foot on Kody’s back, but he doesn’t look like he’s exerting too much energy to keep him down. Creed is sitting on top of the goalie net like he’s bored, and his thoughts are

somewhere else. He lifts his hand to adjust his glasses and pulls out his phone to scroll as if he isn't about to witness, or most likely, participate in something violent.

Vaughn grabs me by the elbow and pulls me out on the ice. I don't have time to slip because he's walking so fast that I'm practically sliding behind him. "I got held up. Why the fuck is he bleeding? This is my fucking deal," Vaughn says angrily. I realize now that this was his plan all along. He must not have intervened when Kody grabbed me earlier, because I dropped him to the ground by myself quickly. I guess they've been holding him here, waiting for Vaughn to show up with me.

"Held up fucking," Levi says guffawing, but no one laughs.

"I beat the fuck out of him," Camden says, looking down at Kody, who is now putting up more of a fight. "Before he caught up with Reese, he was fucking with my sister while I was talking to Coach," Camden growls, kicking Kody in the ribcage once so hard I swear it echoes. He crouches down, his eyes practically burning holes into the side of Kody's head. "No one fucks with my sister and lives."

"What are you going to do?" I ask Vaughn, but instead of answering me, he reaches out with his hand that isn't wrapped around my arm to catch the hockey stick that Camden tosses to him once he's stood back up. Creed pulls a puck out of the front pocket of his hoodie and tosses it toward us. Vaughn stops it with the side of his shoe before reaching down to flip it over on the other side.

"After this, you'll say you love me," Vaughn tells me, his voice low, so sure of himself, and meant only for me to hear. I've never seen such glee in his eyes.

"Stop! Reese, stop him!" Kody suddenly seems to have more life in him, but Levi squashes all his energy by lifting his foot and stomping down on his back. "Fuck!"

Vaughn lets me go only long enough to grip the hockey stick with both hands, swings back, and whips the puck right at Kody's face. Kody whales in agony before there's any contact between him and the hard rubber. There's more blood

dripping on the ice than I've ever seen in my life, and I've seen a lot. Creed nonchalantly tosses another puck toward us, and Vaughn swings back and says to Kody, "I told you to stop touching what's mine," just before he smacks the puck full force against Kody's face. I can't say I feel bad for him. He hurt me and would have done much worse if I hadn't been ready for him. He wanted to make me a victim, but I've played that part way too long. The blood dripping from Kody's face and swirling on the ice is calming in a way that it shouldn't be. He lets out one more blood-curdling scream just before the fourth puck hits him in the teeth and blood spatters and then starts oozing out. He's gurgling, but not able to speak any longer.

"She didn't flinch," Levi says, laughing but quickly sobers his expression when both Vaughn and Camden cut him looks meant to shut him up. I think maybe Vaughn is done with him, so I'm surprised when he grabs me again, pulling me over to Kody.

"This is what fucking happens when you touch what's mine." Vaughn lifts his booted foot and kicks him in the face repeatedly until he stops moving altogether.

"What a fucking mess." Camden looks down at Kody and over to Vaughn and me. "When are they coming to get rid of the prick?"

"It's taken care of," Vaughn says, but offers no other information, his arm wrapping around my back. His hand slides down over my ass and dips under my skirt. His fingers rub over the fishnets covering my bare ass and they feel so warm against my chilled skin.

"Good enough for me," Camden clips out before he turns and starts walking out. I suspect he didn't come here for the same reason as Levi and Creed. They're here because Vaughn ordered them to be. Camden was here to take his rage out on Kody for touching his sister.

"Leave," Vaughn says, looking directly at Levi, but the order seems to be meant for his brother as well. Levi grins, looking over Kody's lifeless body one more time. Wordlessly,

Creed is already heading off the ice and Levi scurries to catch up with him.

“You don’t seem freaked out,” Vaughn says to me, bringing me out of my haze. I would have thought seeing this much blood again in person would have freaked me out, brought me back to seeing my brother covered in blood. It doesn’t. I only feel relief and there’s something comforting about that.

“I’m not. Blood doesn’t bother me,” I tell him. Uneasiness creeps back into my chest when Vaughn moves behind me. My senses must be on high alert because he knocks my feet out from under me. He catches me at the last second, breaking my fall before I hit the ice. He lowers me gently into the spattered blood and then straddles the back of my thighs.

“What are you doing?” It could be anything. He could fuck me or bash my head against the ice until my blood mingles with Kody’s.

He lifts my skirt and I hear his groan when his fingers rub over my ass cheek that he wrote his name on. I scrubbed, but the permanent marker wouldn’t give, even with soap. “I thought maybe you would have carved up your skin to get my mark off of you.” The way he murmurs makes me think that he’s talking to himself rather than to me.

“I’m cold,” I say, and I try to keep the panic out of my voice. Vaughn loves my panic more than anything. My brother’s thin t-shirt is no comfort from the brutal chill of the ice.

“Don’t worry, I’m going to warm you up,” he says, moving up to whisper against my ear. “Did I change your mind? Do you love me as much as you love your precious brother?” he taunts me.

“I’ll never love you the way I love him. I can swear on that,” I grit out, and I feel Vaughn shift. The next thing I hear is Vaughn King whispering. His British accent is gone and the words come out in the most perfect cadence to match my brother’s. He rips my arms behind me, keeping my hands

fanned out across my back. “A swear is a swear, sweet sister. No crosses count.”

“Andrew,” I breathe his name. “You’re dead. This isn’t funny, Vaughn,” I squeak out the words because I feel like I can’t breathe. I feel like I’ve been punched in the stomach. “I don’t know how you know about him.” I’m angry now. “They told me he died. They said he died. How do you know all of this? The people who adopted me changed my name. How did you find out?” I’m on the verge of panic and I’m shivering from the freezing surface I’m pinned against.

“Dead? Do you wish I was dead, sweet sister? Do you even know the hoops I jumped through to get you here, where I could torture you for forgetting me?” His British accent is gone, but I can hear a tinge of it, like he’s fighting against it. “I couldn’t feel you, or hear you in my mind for so long. But when our aunt and uncle said that the people who were looking after you while they helped me recover from the stab wounds wanted to adopt you, I begged them to let me see you.” His voice is getting harder with every word that comes out of his mouth. “They told me what you said, *Reese*,” he punctuates my new name, indicating that he doesn’t like it. “They told me that you wanted to forget our life, that you wanted to move on and leave it all behind, including me. That turned me into this monster. Mom trying to kill me was nothing compared to losing you,” he growls out the words.

I begin crying, tears of joy? Heartache? I don’t even know. I want to tell him that everything he’s saying is wrong, that it never happened, but I can’t get the words out. I think I’m in shock, but I try to flip over because I want to look at him. I need to see his face and look into his eyes.

“You’re fucked up just like me, though. I didn’t anticipate that when I lured you here. I thought I was going to get a sweet, pampered version of you. Instead, I got the sister who would rather die than deny me. Always a surprise with you, isn’t it?” He doesn’t sound angry, but rather curious. “For someone who wanted to forget me so badly, you sure would have thrown yourself on a sword before you let anyone say a bad word about me.”

“None of that is true,” I whisper, and I wriggle against him. I can feel his hard cock pressing into my bare ass. He’s holding my arms behind me with one hand and his other hand rips my fishnets so that he can trace his fingers along the thin fabric of my lacy black thong. “They told me you were dead and that they couldn’t commit to raising me. The people who adopted me were my only option,” I finally get out and a silent sob wracks my body. He’s been alive this entire time and now he thinks I abandoned him when he was fighting for his life in the hospital. Why would my aunt and uncle do that? I twist again, trying to get a glimpse of my brother, but he holds me in place. “Andrew, please.” He pauses when I say his name but doesn’t indicate that he believes me.

He moves slightly, spreading my legs with his knee and using his hand that isn’t holding me captive to rub along my pussy. He ignores everything I’ve said and shifts to the side so that our eyes can meet. “If you’re not lying, I guess our aunt and uncle are next on my list.” His eyes scan mine for an indication that I’ll be upset, and he frowns with a hum of disapproval.

“You thought I was dead?” he asks, and his tone is hard. He grabs my jaw because my teeth are starting to chatter. I feel tears rolling down my cheeks, but the sensation is muted from the cold. “Swear it,” he demands.

“I swear it, no crosses count,” I whisper, and I feel him take in a deep breath before he leans down to press his lips to mine so softly that butterflies seem to take flight from my stomach up through my ribcage before they flutter around in my chest.

“Say what you said before about never loving anyone else,” he grinds out the words and if I didn’t know what need sounded like from him, I’d think he was angry. He doesn’t wait for me to comply, because he’s righted himself, still holding me down on the ice.

“I never stopped loving you, and no one could ever take your place,” I tell him earnestly, trying once again to flip over. I never want to stop looking at him. I’m so afraid this is all a

dream and I'm going to wake up in my bed alone, with no indication that my brother is still alive.

My brother slaps my ass hard, making me jerk up from the ice, but he presses me back down and grinds his hard cock against my ass. "Good girl," is all he says before he asks, "Are you this wet because you liked watching me kill Kody for touching what should have always been mine?" He rubs two fingers along my slit, and I feel my pussy contract, almost like it's begging him to push his thick fingers inside me. I can't answer him. I can only whimper. "Or is your tight little cunt soaked because your brother is about to fuck you?"

I moan his real name when he sinks two fingers halfway inside of me and he groans before saying, "That's right, baby. You were never supposed to be anyone else's."

He pulls his fingers out of my slick heat as roughly as he pushed them inside. Flipping me over on my back, he pushes my hands to rest above my head and takes his place between my thighs.

"I'm going to hurt you, and you're going to love it," my brother tells me, and that's when I start fighting him.

VAUGHN

“Andrew, please,” She pleads with me, not even realizing which name comes out of her mouth. “I don’t care if you hurt me, but I need you to know that I didn’t willingly leave you,” Reese’s voice is trembling, and tears are trickling down her cheeks, both of which combined with the thrill of killing Kody makes my dick even harder. She thinks I don’t believe her, and that’s all she cares about right now, but it isn’t that. I have to claim her, own her, and make her understand that life as she knows it is over. She’s meant to be whatever I need, and right now I need to be inside her.

“It’s Vaughn, fire starter. That’s my name now, just like yours is Reese. Andrew fucking died the day Allison left him, and good fucking riddance. We’re starting over.” She’s kicking out her legs and swinging her arms, trying to get away from me and I loosen my hold on her because I’m worked up enough that her thrashing is turning me on even more. We glide across the slick ice. She’s scrambling to get away and I’m trying to get her flipped back over onto her belly so I can overpower her and drive my cock right into her wet center.

Her foot actually connects with my chest, slightly knocking the wind out of me so that my grip loosens. Slipping away, she’s up and trying to run across the rink. I don’t really think she’s trying to fully escape because she keeps looking back at me. Her eyes tracing over every inch of my face and traveling down my body. I know she’s picturing me right now

but with bright blonde hair to match her own. Her other half, her twin flame.

“C’mon, Reese. Come play with me. You know you want to,” I tease and egg her on just like I did when we were children, being sure to keep up my American accent that I never actually lost. The British accent wasn’t hard to mimic because I spent so much time in England around people who spoke that way.

Looking left and right, she can’t decide what to do, but her eyes land on the blood pool that has started to ice over. The LaRue brother’s clean-up crew should be here in an hour to clean this fucking place up. I paid them good fucking money to be on call and I need every bit of their knowledge so that coach doesn’t see this shit.

She’s not used to walking on ice and while I’m usually on here with blades, I know exactly how to step and let myself eat up the distance between us. She tries to run, but I’m fucking tired of this game already.

I want to claim her.

Snatching her up, she gives me more of a fight, but if she really wanted to have gotten away, she had her chance. “Stop it. We both know you want to be here. You want what I’m about to do. You want me. Stop being fucking delusional, sister.”

Pushing her down to the ice, she lands hard on her knees, and I know how painful the cold has to be on her bare flesh. She fucking should have thought about that before coming outside in that goddamn skirt. I’m in a rage all over again, thinking about how she’s dressed and what could have happened to her if I hadn’t been out there waiting for her. I knew she’d come looking for me. I could feel it.

Blood is dotted across her t-shirt and stomach, and I can’t wait to add my come to the canvas. Pulling my dick out of my sweats, I grasp the base before thumping her right on her right cheek.

“What the fu—” She reacts exactly how I imagined she would, and I use this opportunity to shove the head of my dick right into her open mouth.

“Don’t fucking bite me. Or do and see what the fuck happens. Now be a good little sister and suck your brother’s fat cock so I can come until you swallow me right down. I’m going to infiltrate every fucking part of you.” I thrust once, testing to see if she’ll use her teeth.

Well, my dick is still intact, so I start thrusting in and out, holding her head and trying to keep my fucking balance. What the fuck was I thinking, trying to do this on the ice?

I can feel her muffled cries vibrate against my cock, and I finally give in and pull out.

“Can we at least get off the ice? I think my knees are frostbitten,” my sister’s voice is soft, and I can hear the sadness that lies within her tone. I can’t let that pull me out of the headspace I’m in right now, because if I back off and we talk, she could change her mind. She could decide that she doesn’t want this, and it’s too fucking late for that. I planned to fuck her on the rink, but I didn’t think that through. There is no way we can have sex on here and I sure as fuck don’t want my bare ass touching it.

I grunt out, “Get up. I can’t even fuck your face hard enough out here.”

I don’t bother pulling my sweats back up, instead, I haul her body up toward mine, keeping a tight grip on her forearm before walking us back to the boards before we step off and set our feet on hard ground.

“Get back on your knees.”

“And if I don’t?” she snarks back at me, but all it takes is one glare from me before she lowers herself back down.

I think she fucking likes being talked down to, at least by me. No one else better be talking to her like this. I’d shove a puck so far down their fucking throats until they asphyxiated.

When I slap my cock against her lips, she involuntarily opens and starts sucking me in as far as I can go before she

starts to gag. It doesn't slow her down as she starts using her tongue and brings her hands up to stroke the parts she can't swallow.

I can feel my balls laying heavy between my legs, ready to draw up with my orgasm, when I hear, "Hey. Oh shit. Oh fuck. Oh my god. Okay, James. What to do, what to do?"

Goddamn it. None of the campus security should be here right now.

Reese looks up at me, shock on her face before I pull out of her mouth.

"Stay here and stay fucking quiet. I'm gonna go take care of our little visitor, and if you leave, I'll fucking hunt you down and make it a hundred times worse than it would have been." I lean down, forcing my tongue into her mouth and the salty taste of my precome and the tangy apricot from her chapstick flood my tastebuds.

I'm so distracted by kissing her that I momentarily forget about the guard until he's almost right in front of us.

"Hey, you kids. What the fuck are you doing? Holy fuck, Vaughn King. Wait... don't you see the bod—fuck, you're the one who did it. Everyone says you're a psychopath on the ice and off." He reaches for his little rent-a-cop walkie-talkie getting ready to radio in, and I can't have that.

Swatting the little radio out of his hand, I pull him into me before locking my arms around his neck, choking him as he struggles for air. With a quick jerk, his neck snaps, and all fight leaves his body and I drop him at our feet.

"You can't keep killing people. What is wrong with you? What if you get caught?" Reese snaps at me, clearly not worried about the double homicide I've committed tonight, but rather about if I'm good enough to get away with it.

"Can't I? I can do whatever the fuck I want, when I want, and with who I want. He was a problem, and I dealt with it. Just like I will deal with any other fucking problems that crop up." I shrug my shoulders, waiting to see her reaction. I want her to say it, say she's worried about me. I haven't felt that

from her in so long, and I didn't realize that I needed it so badly. I thought I wanted to take things from her, but that isn't fully the case.

"I won't lose you again, Andrew. I refuse." My sister's bottom lip quivers and I know it's not from the cold air that's probably stinging her skin. "If you get caught doing this shit, they'll—" She cuts herself off, probably not knowing how to articulate the emotions whirling through her right now. I've put her through a lot tonight, well really, since she's been at Hillcrest, and I'm not finished yet. When I'm finished, there will be no doubt who she belongs to. My sister gets up, poking me in the chest in her anger.

"Don't fucking call me that. He's fucking dead, remember? Isn't that why you turned into such a fucking whore? Did you even look for me?" I can see the pain in her eyes at my words and that's what I want, to be honest. I know I'm being unnecessarily mean, but I need to know how deep her love for me runs. I need to know that I consume her every thought. Tears are streaming down her face, and I think I might have broken her. I do like broken things. I shove her against the plexiglass, pushing her face against the cold material.

"For years. I don't give a fuck if you believe me or not. I know what I've been through without you," my sister bites out the words. "Even when I thought you were dead, I searched for where you were buried because my adoptive parents wouldn't tell me. They said that it would only dredge up bad memories, but I needed to find you. I never could and it killed me," she says between gasps. She's so worked up and it shouldn't be turning me on as much as it is. I should take her back to the Ice House and fuck her in my warm bed, but I can't wait that long. She tries to jerk out of my hold, but there's no fucking way she can escape me this time.

"I thought maybe this would be fun for both of us, but I see that you're still fighting me. The sooner you accept the past, the quicker we can move on. There are no fucking choices anymore." Shoving my fingers past the fabric covering her pussy and sinking into her center, I say, "Feel that? Feel how your body takes me, how wet you are, and how good it

feels? Your mind might be fucking with you, but your body is showing you what you need from me.”

I pump my fingers in and out as my body weight holds her immobile against the barrier. The hum of the lights can be heard, and the sloppy wet squelches her body makes as I finger her, getting her ready before I tear through her tight pussy.

I put my lips right next to her ear before whispering, “Did you really remain a virgin for your twin? Did you lie to me so I wouldn’t be angry? Did you keep all those promises we used to make in the dandelion fields? You’re mine. This is mine and I better see your virgin blood on my dick when I’m through with you. I’m going to come deep in this pussy, flooding you with everything I have.” She clamps down on my fingers and with my other hand, I pinch her clit. It takes barely any stimulation from me at all before she’s coming, shoving her face into her forearm, refusing to give me her screams.

Pulling the digits out, I reach around and shove them between her arm and face, hooking them into her cheek. “Suck and taste yourself. You came all over your brother’s fingers like the filthy girl you are.”

I thrust against her lower half, forcing my cock between her thighs, letting her pussy lips cup and drag across my shaft repeatedly. I could fucking come just like this and one day I will. I will spend the rest of our lives fulfilling every single fantasy that I’ve ever had about my sister.

I stop until the head of my dick is just at her entrance. This is going to hurt the both of us, but I’ve gotten her as ready as I’m willing. I want to fuck her through the pain. “You ready to bleed for me, little sister? Bleed for me, just like I bled for you so many years ago.”

I sink into her body in one solid thrust, spearing into her so roughly that her whole body locks up at the painful intrusion. She refuses to cry out and I’m slightly proud of her. My sister is a lot of things, but a liar isn’t one of them. I felt her virgin barrier stretch and rip with the weight of my cock fucking into

her body. Fuck me, she's goddamn tight. I don't even know if I can move.

I slide one hand up to cup a breast and slip a nipple between my fingers, teasing and tugging until I feel a flood of wetness release from her, and her body becomes a little more languid. At least enough tension has left her body in order for me to start thoroughly fucking her.

“How does it feel to finally give yourself to me? It was always you and me, fire starter. Be here with me. Be mine. Own your body. Take back your life. We are the end game. They tried to keep us apart, but all they did was sign their own death warrants. I was always meant to claim you, and nothing was going to stop me, not even you.” My thrusts turn more erratic as my words cause my rage to boil, thinking of everything that kept us apart for ten years.

I feel Reese start to move and at first, I think she's trying to get away from me, so I lean on her further before I feel her fucking herself against my cock.

“Please, Vaughn. More. I need more. It hurts. Fuck, it hurts and I deserve it. I deserve all of it. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so fucking sorry,” she keeps mumbling she's sorry, and it takes a minute for it to click that she's referring to what happened all those years ago.

“I should have known. Why didn't I know?” she's spiraling, and I need to bring her back to the present, so I slap her across the face.

“Reese, come back, baby. That's my girl. You feel yourself split open and stretched wide around my cock. Your body, your heart, your soul are all mine now. Mine to do with as I please. Mine to keep safe. Mine to break. You gonna come all over your brother's dick, baby? Coat me in your cream and mark me as yours. Because just as much as you are mine, I am yours, Reese, and you are a King befitting another King.”

Words leave both of us as we furiously fuck each other through all the pain of the last decade until her hands slam against the glass and she's coming, triggering my own release.

My balls draw up tight and fast until I thrust hard enough to really hurt and still, spilling my come in the deepest parts of her I can reach.

I know I'm probably suffocating my sister, but I can't seem to help it. I'm spent and both of us are limp. Slowly, I ease out of her body until just the head of my cock is still tucked snugly in her. I draw back, watching as I finally fall out and the streaks of red smeared with my come shine on my dick.

Proof of her broken virginity lines my cock and when I finally look at the juncture of her legs, our combined come is leaking out and it's slightly tinged pink. I fucking didn't think it would be possible, but I can already feel myself start to harden again.

The large clock on the opposite side of the rink glares at me, and I need to get us the fuck out of here before the clean-up crew I've ordered shows up.

"Fuck, I can see my come rolling down your legs and I need to fuck you again. Goddamn it, we don't have time for this. Let's go, baby. We've got a few minutes before the clean-up crew gets here and nobody gets to see you like this but me. I'd have to add another couple of bodies to the heap."

I scoop her up in my arms because she's barely holding on. I don't know if it's an adrenaline crash, fatigue, and chill, or she's just in orgasm heaven. I walk us to the locker room and head to the bank where my cubby is. Sitting her down on the bench, I enter my code and open the door to pull out the spare sweats I keep in here.

I bend down in front of her, shoving her small legs into the opening, and they slip right through. Once I have both in, I stand her up and pull the cotton up and over in order to cover her lower half. I'm not happy about the fucking crop top, but it's dark enough no one should notice the blood splatters on either of us.

Grabbing her back up, I walk us out of the rink and cut through the back parking lot, and move through the crop of trees separating the Ice House and the large athletic building.

It's late and I don't feel like dealing with everyone here, so I enter through the side door that has a staircase going up to the second floor.

Once I enter my room, I lay Reese on my bed before stripping her of all her clothes and leaving her naked. I need to clean her up, at least remove the blood off her, and these clothes are fucking filthy.

I walk to my bathroom, returning with a wet cloth, and wipe down her skin, and she murmurs in her sleep.

"I've got you, baby. I'm here and I'm not going anywhere. Go back to sleep."

I climb into my bed and pull her into my arms before closing my own eyes to relax as I wait to hear back from the LaRue brothers that the job is done.

REESE

I wake up and I have no idea where I am or what day it is. I feel like I've been run over by an eighteen-wheeler, then tied to the back bumper and dragged for twenty miles. That's what it feels like to be fucked by Vaughn King, I suppose. That thought has me squeezing my eyes shut tighter as I remember everything from last night.

Not Vaughn King.

Andrew Marin.

Except he *is* Vaughn now. Just like I'm Reese. But in my heart, he'll always be Andrew.

I try to move, but I realize that I'm pinned down to the bed by a large arm that can only belong to one person. I shift and realize that he's lying next to me and that must be why I'm so fucking warm.

"You're not leaving," my brother says, his voice deep from sleep. He sounds as exhausted as I feel.

"I wasn't trying to." My voice sounds small, but I don't *feel* small. I turn in his arms, my eyes finally peeling open when I'm facing him. His gaze is on my face, unblinking, and I wonder if he's been like this the entire time. "You like watching me," I say dumbly because I suddenly feel shy. I want to curl into his chest and disappear. I don't know if I'm still in shock that my brother, who is supposed to be dead, has turned out to be very much alive and is also a raging sociopath. I reach up and touch his face gently and I expect him to jerk away from me, but instead, he leans into my palms

and wraps his arm around my bare back and tugs me against his warm chest. We must be in his room because the entire place smells just like him, and we're definitely not in mine.

I let out a small gasp when I feel his hard cock growing even bigger against my lower belly. "Don't worry, I'm not going to fuck you again," he says grimly, and his voice is tense with the restraint that I suspect he's barely holding onto.

"Ever?" I ask, instinctively moving closer to him. When my soft skin rubs against his bare cock, he closes his eyes and his sharp jaw flexes underneath my fingertips.

"Fuck," he groans, his hand coming up to grip my hair, flexing his fingers into a fist of need.

"You liked when your twin brother held you down and fucked you like a dirty little fuck toy, didn't you?" he practically growls the words like he's regretting saying he isn't going to fuck me. "I was rough on you," he finally says, loosening his hold on my hair and letting his hand fall to trail down my back. He's being gentler than I ever could have imagined he'd be. "It wouldn't have been like that if we hadn't been separated," he says, and my stomach clenches when I sense the sadness in his tone. As ruthless as he is, I get the distinct feeling that he regrets how he took me last night. "But I've got time to show you what it would have been like," he tells me, leaning down and pressing a kiss against my mouth and squeezing me tighter against him.

"I can't believe you're real. You're alive," I say softly, my eyes roving over his face in a way that I'd never have let myself look at Vaughn King. This is my brother. My other half. I'm still afraid if I blink one too many times or breathe too deeply that he might disappear, that this might be all a figment of my fucked-up imagination. "I thought I was going insane. You knew so much, but I watched my brother die in front of me. They told me you were gone before I even managed to get to the neighbors to call for help." I stop speaking when he scowls; I suspect it's because I'm speaking about him like he's still in the past.

His lips press into a thin line. I look away from him, but he tips my chin up to force me to look at him. “I know what I did to you, Reese. I should be fucking sorry, but I’m not. I want to permanently etch you into my skin, imprint you there so I’ll never lose you again,” he tells me and for a brief second his mask falls, the hardened exterior he keeps firmly in place so that no one can ever hurt him again. “My biggest fear is that you’ll forget me. I need to make sure that never happens.”

“I wished and hoped that one day I’d wake up and find that you dying was all a terrible nightmare. I don’t care how I got you back or how much you played with my mind or how rough you were on my body. None of it matters. I’ve got you back, and that’s the only thing I’ve ever wished for,” I tell him honestly, and my tone lacks the bite that I’ve acquired over the years. I feel so soft and safe right now. Even if he doesn’t like what I’ve said. If he decides to kill me right now, I got to see my brother again, and that’s all I care about.

Something dawns on me out of nowhere and I frown because I realize that he never said he was going to fuck me again, so that must mean that he only did it to punish me, not because he really wanted me. I sound like a lovesick schoolgirl instead of an adult who should be grateful that her twin brother is alive and that I have the opportunity to have a relationship with him of any kind.

“Where are you right now?” my brother’s voice brings me out of my thoughts.

“You just fucked me to punish me because you were mad at me, not because you—” I cut myself off because I sound so ridiculous. I expect him to start laughing because he’s my blood, my actual birth brother, and I should not be lying here completely naked, wrapped up in his limbs like this, wondering what it means to him.

He does laugh, but there’s no humor in it. “That’s what you’re worried about, fire starter? You’re worried I don’t want you? I have not thought about anything else since the moment I found out where you were. I took one look at you and the insatiable urge to claim you hasn’t left me since.” His lips press together, and his arm tightens around me.

“I thought I was sick, insane maybe, too. I missed you so much all these years that I’d try to imagine what you might look like now.” I bite my bottom lip and his eyes flicker to my mouth for a moment before his gaze meets mine again. “I imagined you looking just like you do, but with light hair obviously, and without the British accent,” I chuckle at the absurdity of this conversation.

“I thought the black hair was a nice touch, but I’ll be glad to get rid of it,” he tells me, his top lip quirking up like he really thinks he’s funny, just like it used to when we were kids and he’d make up some joke with a punchline that made no sense.

“Why did they tell me you were dead?” I ask suddenly, and I feel his arm move against my skin when he shrugs.

“Fuck if I know. But they all have an expiration date now. Everyone who kept us apart is going to die slowly and brutally,” he tells me, and I find myself nodding in agreement. I think back to all the times they told me to get over it. He was gone, and he’d never be back. “And we’re going to do it together.”

“I couldn’t feel you for the longest time,” I tell him, not even bristling at the idea that he wants me to kill my adoptive parents. I reach up to rub my hand through his hair. “Then it was like I could feel you around me all the time when I got to Hillcrest. When you showed up as Vaughn, it was really messing with me,” I tell him and now it’s his turn to look away from me for a moment, like he feels bad for how we met for the second time in our lives. “I’ve never felt anything for any other guy, and I couldn’t figure out why I did with—” I pause, raising one of my hands to do air quotes when I say his new name, “Vaughn, of all people.”

“I thought you forgot about me. I thought you were so happy, even though I wasn’t around to be with you. I stalked you until I found out exactly where you were. I watched you for the longest time and you were laughing and joking with your friends,” he says, and my breath catches in my throat. The times at my previous college when I felt like my brother was close to me, he was really there.

“I could feel you,” I tell him, interrupting what he’s trying to tell me. He rolls me under him and presses his palm against my mouth so I can no longer interrupt.

“I was so angry at you. I thought you were happy without me. I didn’t know they’d told you I died. I thought you knew that I was alive, and you just didn’t care enough to try to find me or want to see me.” He shifts his hips and his cock rubs across my bruised and extremely sore pussy. Despite how roughly he took me last night, I’m soaking wet and waiting for him to take me this morning. “Fuck, baby. I know you need a break, but I have to—” he grunts out the words. “Just the tip,” he tells me, stretching my sore entrance with the head of his cock. Instinctively, I lift my legs to wrap around his hips, encouraging him to sink all the way inside me. “If you don’t stop, I’m going to hold you down and rough fuck you again. It’s been on my mind way too long; I lose control with you. I should be able to be gentle with you, but I can’t. It’s like I need to bury my cock as deep inside you as I possibly can,” he tells me, sinking in a few inches further. I suck in a sharp breath, but I welcome the intrusion. He groans before whispering, “I always knew my twin sister’s pussy was meant to stretch around her brother’s cock.”

He moves his hand slightly when I begin to speak. “I love how unhinged you are. It makes me feel less psychotic myself,” I tell him, and he grabs my shoulders roughly, pushing himself all the way inside of my wet, greedy pussy. He fills me so full that it burns in the best fucking way. I feel complete like this, with my twin brother buried to the hilt inside of me. I should tell him no, that I’m too sore, but instead, I moan his name, his real one.

“Watch yourself, fire starter,” he whispers, leaning down and kissing me gently on the lips. My pussy clenches, gripping him, trying to pull him deeper inside me. “Fuck, you feel so good.” Despite saying he doesn’t want to fuck me while I’m healing from last night, he pulls all the way out of me and then slams his hips back against mine, pleasure and pain shooting through my entire body. My brother is in control of every nerve ending, every thought, and I don’t want it any other way. He stills, pressing his cock as deep inside me as he can go

before withdrawing and rolling over on his back and pulling me to cuddle up at his side. He chuckles at my huffy moans of protest.

“Do you still want to break me?” I ask him softly and that question prompts him to turn on his side to face me again. We’re starting all over and I’m fairly sure that by the time this is over, he’ll have me pinned on my back again with his hips pistoning against me.

“Yes, because I’m irreversibly fucked up. I want to break you down into nothing so no one can ever take you away from me again. You’re mine. You’ll never be anything else,” he bites out. “But I won’t because I love you. I realized early on that you didn’t forget me completely. The way you’d look at me, it was like you were searching for Andrew. I think deep down, I knew that was the only reason you entertained Vaughn. I wasn’t ready to accept that I spent all these years hating you for something you didn’t do,” he says, and his tone softens considerably.

“I love you too, Andrew,” I tell him. “I love you in ways I shouldn’t, and I’m just as fucked up as you are. I’d gladly let you break me down into nothing but dust if that meant I could be with you,” I tell him, my eyes searching his face, and I’m happy to see the way it lights up at my words.

“My mark is all over you,” he tells me, letting his fingertips trace over the bruises he’s left on my neck and collarbone, and I imagine that his overshadow the faint ones from my run-in with Kody. “I never want these to fade. When they do, I’ll give you new ones so that I’m always with you.” He lets his hand slide down to cup one of my tits in his hand. His eyes never leave mine, but he squeezes much more gently than he did any of the other times he’s touched me.

“Swear we’ll never be apart again,” I implore him, cupping his handsome face in my hands. “Swear it, brother.” My eyes flutter shut when instead of answering me, he dips his head down to allow his mouth to close around the hard bud of my nipple. I run my fingers through his hair. I can’t wait to see him with his natural hair, to see how much he looks like the

version of my brother that has been haunting me for all these years.

My brother continues to ignore me because he's busy alternating between biting and sucking on my nipple. He looks up at me and lets his tongue flick across the sensitive peak. I think maybe he's done torturing me because he scrapes his teeth along my nipple and then lets it fall from his mouth with a loud 'pop'. I shift, trying to shimmy away from him because I want him to swear, and I've been making this whole thing entirely too easy for him. I don't need an apology from my brother. As far as I'm concerned, having him back is the only thing I have ever wanted. He leans down and kisses my lips before moving his mouth down to my neglected breast. It doesn't take him long to suck it inside his mouth and begin biting and pulling in a way that has my clit pulsing with anticipation.

"I love your tits, they're fucking perfect," he tells me, and there's a breathless quality in his voice that sounds so vulnerable that it makes me emotional for some reason. How many years did he sit and wait for me? How many years was he miserable because he couldn't find me? Because he thought I wanted to forget him? I wrap my arms around him, one of my hands combing through the dark waves of hair at the base of his head, encouraging him to keep sucking.

"You didn't answer me, Andrew," I say it just to irritate him and it works because suddenly he has my hands above my head and he's nudging my thighs apart with his knee and letting the weight of his body settle between my thighs.

"You will call me Vaughn," he tells me, his lips pressed hard together and his eyes narrowing at me like he's trying very hard right now not to murder me.

"If you kill me, then you have to wait the rest of your life to see me again," I tease him because I know he'll never do that to me.

My brother rocks his hips against mine and lowers his mouth to press a kiss to my slightly parted lips. "I have a lot of people I plan on killing, baby, but you're not one of them. I'm

going to track down every single person who had even the smallest hand in keeping us apart,” he tells me, his mouth only a whisper away from me. “We’re going to murder them together, starting with your adoptive parents, then our aunt and uncle, and finally our mother. The perfect team. I will never be without you again for any reason. Where I go, you go,” he tells me just before giving me one more kiss that is longer, slower, and more sensual.

When he pulls away to allow us both to breathe, I ask him one more time, even though I already know the answer. “Do you swear?”

He grins at me, saying, “I fucking swear,” before diving in for another kiss.

EPILOGUE

“Fire starter, we have to go.” I say the words and I watch as they barely register. I know she can hear me, but she’s zoned out. I would imagine for her, it’s like hearing someone talk while underwater.

She dips her fingers in the blood pooling out from the body before reaching into her pocket and bringing out the piece of lined paper folded up tightly. She flicks it open before drawing a line through the first two names on the list.

It’s been two years since we found our way back to each other and I promised her that everyone who kept us apart would die.

And a swear is a swear, after all.

What I didn’t expect was her vehemently wanting to not only tag along but also partake in the violence.

We made it through graduation with no issues. No one really knew we were siblings, and that’s exactly how we wanted it. People speculated how we could be related once I stopped dying my hair black, but that was easy to wave away.

My obsession with Reese only grew, and I counted down the days until we could start our quest for vengeance.

Our first stop was her *parents*.

They bought a child on the black market, knowingly. It doesn’t matter that they were good parents to her. They didn’t do anything to her except give her a good life. They couldn’t get approved for adoption through legal means because of

criminal history and as such, they greased the palms to take my little sister off our aunt and uncle's hands.

Our aunt and uncle. The real goddamn masterminds of keeping us apart. For what reason? I have no idea, but anything they say will be irrelevant.

“Reese King. Quit playing in the blood, baby. We’ve got to get cleaned up and then the LaRue brothers are going to be heading this way for another clean-up.” She smirks up at me but still refuses to budge.

I stalk over to her and bend down until we’re at eye level, and I can grip her throat.

“Why are you pushing me right now, little fire starter? You know how I am after a kill. I can barely contain myself,” I groan out, tightening my hand around her neck, effectively cutting off most of her air supply.

She pushes up against my palm while reaching her arm out and cupping the front of my jeans. I’ve created a cock hungry little slut and her lust for violence only adds fuel to the raging fire.

I pull her up from the ground and her lips meet mine without hesitation. “We don’t have time, but your ass is mine when we get back to the car,” I promise her.

“Everything I’ve got is yours,” she promises right back. She bites my lower lip and then pushes up on her toes to wrap her arms around my neck. I fucking love when she does that because it makes me feel like her protector.

“Swear on your life, twin sister,” I demand before I scoop her up, letting her legs wrap around my waist, and walk to the kitchen door that will lead us out into the yard.

“I swear it,” she tells me, trying to nuzzle closer to me.

“That’s my good girl,” I tell her, kissing the side of her head and using my gloved hand to close the door behind me.

I don’t put her down as I’m walking on the well-lit path to the car that is untraceable to either one of us, because the thought of not having her pressed against me so intimately like

this is too much to comprehend. I've had her back for a significant period of time, but it feels like just yesterday I was seething with the emptiness her absence left in my life. So I hold her any chance I get, which is often.

“Where to next, brother?” she whispers against my neck.

“England sounds nice this time of year, don't you think?” I ask her cheekily and I feel her smile against my neck with her sleepy little nod.

“I'll show you the world and let you set it aflame, little fire starter. You'll never be away from me. I'll sew your body to mine before I ever let you disappear again.” I feel her smile against me and I tighten my arms, crushing her to me even more.

The world tried to keep us apart and the curse of Marin men threatened us...

...but I'm not a Marin.

I'm a goddamn King.

SNEAK PEEK

Read on for a sneak peek at **Little Dancer**

Obedience *noun*

- an act or instance of obeying for one's pleasure

Degradation *noun*

- the act or process of degrading for one's pleasure

Praise *noun*

- an expression of approval

I command. They obey.

I degrade and we both feel pleasure.

I praise for a job well done.

It may seem simple, but it's so much more.

You have to find the ones you connect with, that are willing to explore. To go outside the box of what society deems appropriate.

I quell my thirst with frequent trips to Club Opal and a revolving door of suitable paramours that I have tirelessly worked to establish.

Until her.

A pretty little swan - pristine white feathers proclaiming her innocence.

Until you look closer.

Feathers start to molt, and slowly new plumes emerge tinged with gray.

The little swan is now tainted.

I have tainted the innocent and molded them into my ideal example of beauty and grace.

As I disgraced their bodies with my sordid thoughts and desires.

Debased them for my pleasure and their own.

Who is this version of Aphrodite incarnate?

As I stare down at the sweet girl below me, tears running down her face and mixing with the come I just released on her skin.

She's naked and bare, both in body and soul.

She nuzzles my hand as I pet her hair.

“Good girl. Such a good fucking girl for me. You please me so much. My beautiful girl. Now rub it in, baby.”

She doesn't even hesitate as she brings both hands up and rubs my seed into her skin as if it's moisturizer. The thrill that runs through my body as my mark sinks into her pores is electric.

She finishes and looks up at me as she slowly shoves her fingers into her mouth, pushing as far as she can go before she gags on the digits. The little minx knows exactly what she's doing. The sounds of her gagging are music to my ears and she's pushing me to punish her.

And I will, just not the way she's expecting. She's getting too complacent.

Time for my girl to learn another lesson.

How did I get to be so tangled up in sin and delved right past what society frowns on and instead bathed in the utter demoralization of my character?

To explain myself, I have to start at the beginning.

It was a Tuesday night, and I was preparing to head to the club and see what flavor of desire I could get myself into.

Tuesday nights are considered introductory nights.

It's the time when new members can come and only the most experienced and those with the longest-held memberships can interact. It's meant to be used as bridging a gap and a *mentorship* of sorts.

It's a goddamn free-for-all for us to get first pick of all the delicious options newly brought out to the buffet and if anyone says otherwise, they are lying.

My phone is ringing, and I ignore it as I finish knotting my black and gray tie and then I pull on my suit jacket.

The phone keeps ringing. Whoever is trying to reach me can wait. There is no emergency warranting the incessant trill.

Sliding my cufflinks in and securing them, I look at myself in the full mirror running along the entire expanse of the closet.

I make sure every inch of my hair is perfectly styled and that my beard is shaped, and no errant strands are poking out. I make absurd amounts of money, but the need to groom my own facial hair is carried over from my youth and watching my father.

Again, the phone goes off and I angrily answer it, "What? What could possibly be so important that you choose to call me repeatedly on a Tuesday night at... nine p.m. Is the company crashing? Did I lose all my money?" I ask sarcastically, letting the annoyance infuse every word.

"Mr. Astor? Mr. Clark Astor?" An odd voice sounds in my ear. It's no one I know, and I pull the phone away to look at the screen and it's a number I don't have stored or recognized. I can tell it's local. Well, local is relative, but the number is for Morgan Creek.

A city I've never been to, but I know, nonetheless.

It's the city where my only child, Christopher, lives.

"Yes, this is he. Who is this?"

“Sir, I’m sorry to call you like this, but this is Martin Henson. I was the legal counsel for Mr. Christopher Astor. Your son.” He says my son as if I don’t fucking know who Christopher is.

Until my mind blanks on his use of *was*.

“Speak. Now. What is going on?”

He clears his throat, his nervousness apparent. “Mr. And Mrs. Astor, well, they’ve passed away.”

The silence stretches on. I have no words. I never have no words.

“Sir, did you hear me? Your son and his wife have died. They had a terrible, unfortunate accident two days ago.” Two days.

My son has been dead for two days and I’m just being notified. Why?

“Why did it take two goddamn days for someone to call me?” I seethe.

“You aren’t the next of kin. Mr. Astor didn’t even have you down in any of his documentation. I’m only reaching out to you because Miss Astor mumbled your name when I spoke with her last.” Miss Astor. My granddaughter.

“Do you need anything from me, Mr. Henson?”

I hear him simper like a fucking weasel. “No sir, unless you have any need of my services?”

He questions, and immediately I feel disgusted. I despise attorneys like him.

I hang up the phone and move to sit on the edge of my bed.

Minutes tick by before I loosen the material at my throat and shed my jacket.

I won’t be going out tonight.

I need eyes on my granddaughter. I won’t lose another Astor.

I refuse.

I respected Christopher's wishes in regard to his daughter, Caroline, but no more.

And thus began my descent into depravity more wicked than any I had ever experienced before.

This is the story of my little dancer and how I ruined her.

And how she ruined me.

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To everyone on social media who stays tagging us we see you and we love you!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tate & Rory spend most of their time fucking around, writing toxic shit, and just repeating to each other “I hate this for us.”

Text messages between us go like this

RORY:

Who are we?

TATE:

I don't know but I really love this world we've created.

RORY:

Feels like we should probably fuck something up soon...

TATE:

Lets plan that for when Jackie is out of town next.

Find us in our Facebook group [Banned Baddies](#)

ALSO BY THE AUTHORS

Rory Ireland

Indecent Infatuation

Violent Peak

Twisted in Flames

United in Ashes

Crooked Cove - Only Available on Banned Baddies

Kill Your Darlings - Only Available on Banned Baddies

Tate Monroe

Daddy's Home - Only Available on Banned Baddies

Kink'd Up

Co-Writes w/ Tate Monroe

Pandemonium - Only Available on Banned Baddies

Little Dancer - Only Available on Banned Baddies

Edge of Insanity - Only Available on Banned Baddies

Fu*k Around & Find Out

Good Fu*king Girl - Coming 2023

Zero Fu*ks Given - Coming 2023

Our Illicit Desires